

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 13 September 2011

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Presentation

The House proceeded to Government House at 10.03 a.m., there to present to the Governor its Address-in-Reply to the Speech Her Excellency had been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament on opening the session.

The House returned at 12.06 p.m.

The Speaker reported that the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech had been presented, and that Her Excellency had been pleased to give thereto the following answer:

MARIE BASHIR
Governor

Office of the Governor
Sydney, 13 September 2011

It gives me much pleasure to receive your Address and to thank you for your expression of loyalty to Australia and the people of New South Wales.

I am also glad to have your assurance that earnest consideration will be given to the measures to be submitted to you and the necessary provision for the Public Services made in due course.

I have every confidence that your labours will advance the general welfare and happiness of the people of this State.

IDENTIFICATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 12 September 2011.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [12.10 p.m.]: I continue to quote the majority opinion of the electorate, as summarised by a constituent:

Just letting you know I support the legislation. This is no different to having a person wear a full bike helmet. In such a case the police can ask you to remove the helmet so you could be properly identified. The same should apply to full face coverings.

Why is the legislation required? Australia is celebrated around the world for its democracy and freedom, and that is why so many people choose to make Australia their home. It is one of those celebrated aspects that make Australia famous. Special characteristics of Australia are its safety and its security. People are able to live and work in a free, egalitarian society. Police officers hold a special position in our society because they make it safe and secure. They run into situations where most of us would run out—similar to firemen. Police serve and protect our society, and make it safe. They do some awful jobs, such as apprehending suspected criminals or people committing antisocial behaviour. We need to strengthen their powers and give police the right tools—the legislation—to effectively do their jobs. It is then about police using those tools sensitively and I know that all police in the Parramatta area and right around the State will use that power sensitively. Police officers should be given adequate power to make clear identification, and that is what this legislation addresses.

The legislation is complementary to other legislation. I commend the Attorney General for the legislation he has brought before this and the other House, such as the Court Security Amendment Bill 2011, which extends past court operation areas or court premises, allows judicial officers to direct that a person may not return to court premises for a time not exceeding 28 days, and restricts alcohol and animals. Other legislation that the Attorney General has brought forward is the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities)

Amendment (Move On Directions) Bill 2011, which further strengthens the ability of police to do their job and makes our society a safer place to live, and the Summary Offences Amendment (Intoxicated and Disorderly Conduct) Bill 2011. The bill does not criminalise drunkenness unless a person persists in being drunk and disorderly in a public place after being given a move-on order.

The bill also gives police the power to detain intoxicated persons who have not yet committed an offence but, due to their level of intoxication, are viewed as a danger to themselves and others. The bill is about the care and safety of the intoxicated person and those around them. It gives people a chance to sober up in a safe environment, and no offence would be recorded in those instances. I commend the Premier, Mr Barry O'Farrell, for his leadership and sentiments in supporting this legislation. The New South Wales Government is determined to ensure law enforcement officers can properly identify people while carrying out their duties. The Premier's message to motorists and others asked to provide proper identification is clear: Comply with a request to remove any face covering or face tough penalties. I will leave the last words to the Attorney General, who said:

This bill is about ensuring that police, juvenile justice officers, officers authorised by Corrective Services and court security officers have the power to require that a person remove a face covering to enable the person's face to be seen for the purpose of identification. The new powers are designed so that these officers are able to function effectively to ensure the security and safety of our community and its citizens. The bill also provides that a police officer can request a person to identify himself or herself when the officer proposes to give that person a move-on direction.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [12.12 p.m.]: I support the Identification Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. More than anything, this bill aims to crystallise in law something that is really a matter of common sense, but has come up often enough to warrant the enacting of legislation. The bill amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and other Acts to confer a power on police officers, juvenile justice officers authorised by Corrective Services and court security staff to request the removal of face coverings in certain circumstances. It also amends the Oaths Act 1900 to require a person witnessing a statutory declaration or an affidavit to identify the person swearing the declaration or affidavit.

I firstly will deal with the amendments to the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. The proposed amendments to the Act will, one, allow a police officer to require that a person remove a face covering to enable an officer to see the person's face in circumstances where police are able to lawfully require a person to identify himself or herself or require photographic identification and, two, provide that a police officer proposing to give a move-on direction to a person can request that person to identify himself or herself. The term "lawfully required" is defined in schedule 1 to mean:

... lawfully required or requested to provide the identification or information concerned in circumstances where a failure or refusal to comply with a requirement or request of that kind may constitute an offence.

In most cases, the penalty for failing to comply with a police requirement to remove a face covering will be two penalty units, or \$220. Where police are exercising the power when requiring identification in relation to vehicles used in indictable offences, as provided for in section 14 of the Act, the penalty matches the higher penalty that non-compliance with section 14 attracts, that is, 50 penalty units, or \$5,500 and/or 12 months' imprisonment. The bill also amends the Court Security Act 2005, the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2008, the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 and the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2010 to provide court security officers, officers authorised by Corrective Services and juvenile justice officers with a power to require that a person remove a face covering to enable the officer to see the person's face when that person is seeking entry to premises or in circumstances where they are on a particular regulated premises.

The provisions in the bill provide that the face covering is to be removed only for so long and so much as is necessary for the face to be seen. All officers will be required, as far as reasonably practicable, to ask for the person's cooperation, to conduct the identification in reasonable privacy, if requested, and to conduct the identification quickly. In addition, juvenile justice officers, officers authorised by Corrective Services and court security officers will be required, where reasonably practicable, to ensure the identification is carried out by an officer of the same gender, if requested. Failure to comply with a requirement made by a court security officer carries a maximum fine of \$550. Failure to comply with a requirement made by a juvenile justice officer or officer authorised by Corrective Services may result in denial of access to the facility.

The bill also amends the Oaths Act 1900 to require a witness, firstly, to see the face of a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit and, secondly, to see identification documentation if the witness does not

personally know the person and to certify these requirements on the document. The maximum penalty for non-compliance with these requirements is \$220. Affidavits and statutory declarations are written statements of fact sworn or affirmed or declared by the person to be true in the presence of a person authorised to be a witness, usually a legal practitioner or justice of the peace. A person who swears a false affidavit commits perjury and those who make a false declaration in an affidavit commit a serious offence. In the circumstances, it is good public policy to ensure that the person witnessing the signing of such an important document can identify the person who signed it. This is particularly necessary in circumstances where the statements made in the document are brought into question.

As I referred to above, safeguards provided in the bill will allow privacy for those removing face coverings for the purposes of identification. Further, I note in the Attorney General's agreement in principle speech that these legislative safeguards will be accompanied by a direction issued by the Commissioner of Police explaining the bill and reinforcing a person's right to dignity and privacy. It will include a paragraph that provides that, where reasonably practicable, the viewing of the person's face be conducted in a way that provides reasonable privacy if the person requests it—for example, at a police station. It is important to note that the bill also provides a monitoring mechanism that will require the New South Wales Ombudsman to review the operation of the police powers for a 12-month period from when the legislation commences. Such a review will ensure that this new power is independently scrutinised and accountable and that the new power is not abused, with the final review being reported back to Parliament.

The ability to identify an individual is crucial to the operation of the judicial and executive arms of government. For the time being at least, and I would suggest for a long time to come, the face is key to this process of identification. We could speculate on future technologies that would identify DNA with a scratch of the finger or facial transplants that could confound our current methods of identification, but this is not our present concern. Facial recognition is an important part of human interaction. Scientific research asserts this, but it has been known for a very long time. The Greek word "prosopon" means both "face" and "person", having been first used in the Greek theatre. It was known then that faces are intimately linked to our identity as individuals. Facial recognition is crucial to some basic functions of the State. At the same time, everyone has a right to privacy and this right extends to the idea that we have a right not to be identified as we go about our ordinary, private business.

The matter, therefore, is a question of balance between the individual's right to privacy and the individual's civic duty, specifically to identify oneself. The former is applicable for most of the time engaged in ordinary activities but there are many public acts which demand the latter, including the investigation of an offence, the taking of an oath or the entering of a regulated space such as a court or a prison facility. The bill aims to ensure that individuals can be identified in necessary circumstances, and if a person fails to comply with their civic duties in those circumstances it provides for a course of action. It also provides reasonable and practical measures to ensure that the identification process is carried out in a way sensitive to an individual's right to privacy.

Citizens of this country have a right to privacy, but that right is not absolute. From time to time circumstances do arise where, to facilitate the proper functioning of this State, people are required to be identified. All people are created equal and we should all strive to treat our fellow men and women as equals; however, with equality comes shared rights and obligations. The obligation to be identified in court or when swearing an affidavit or making a declaration falls within this ambit and it is essential to the proper functioning of our legal and judicial system. I am sure that consensus on that in Australia would be much more marked than, for example, consensus among a cultural group where privacy requires the covering of one's face. In fact, the latter consensus does not exist.

The bill prevents the ludicrous scenario in which a person accused of an offence can be defended on the basis that he or she could not be identified at the time the offence was committed because he or she was exercising his or her right not to be identified. Bizarre as that sounds, that could plausibly be offered as a defence. To claim that right is to put oneself above and outside not only the law but also the legal framework itself. The bill is an assertion that to live in our society certain very basic, indispensable standards of cooperation are demanded; namely, standards that transcend cultural boundaries and pertain to all our civic duties. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [12.21 p.m.]: As a policeman of 27-years standing, as a chief inspector and as the most senior police officer to have ever entered the New South Wales Parliament it gives me great pleasure to support the Identification Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. I am pleased that the weighted

measures of this bill will provide good community balance. The bill will provide appropriate powers to persons, including police, juvenile justice, corrective services and court security officers, to require a person to remove a face covering for identification purposes. In traffic policing, for example, the people being dealt with must be able to be identified. The bill will also provide police with appropriate powers to identify people when giving a move-on direction.

Identification includes the name and address of a person, matching a person against photographic identification and requiring a person to remove a face covering. The bill provides a readily understood definition of "face": from the top of one's forehead to the bottom of one's chin and within the space between one's ears. Madam Acting-Speaker has no doubt frequented the odd football game. In my former role as a public order policeman I attended many major football games. Sometimes people turned up to those games wearing gorilla masks. I often found that people who turned up at sporting events with their faces concealed felt much freer and more open to engage in antisocial behaviour but once the masks were removed and the person's identity was revealed it was much easier to apply the process of the law. Madam Acting-Speaker would also be familiar with those hoodlum elements that sometimes slink around shopping centres with their faces concealed.

Mr Andrew Constance: Parliament.

MR BRYAN DOYLE: I thank the Minister for his interjection. I will come to that shortly. The bill provides police with appropriate powers to deal with the identification of those persons who slink around in balaclavas and hoodies. Similarly, in juvenile justice and corrective services it is important to identify those visiting our places of detention. The old adage that justice should be seen to be done will also apply to the identity of those entering our courts. The application of this bill to the Oaths Act is particularly interesting; namely, the obligation on the person witnessing a statutory declaration or affidavit to positively identify the person making the statutory declaration or affidavit. Affidavits and statutory declarations are usually written statements of fact sworn or affirmed to be true in the presence of an authorised person or witness—a justice of the peace, a legal practitioner or a public notary. False swearing is a serious offence, as was highlighted by the recent case where a false complaint was made against a member of the Macquarie Fields Highway Patrol who was performing his duty. That was a classic example of the importance of knowing the identification of people making statutory declarations.

The bill provides that if a person refuses to remove their face covering for the purposes of identification the witness—normally a justice of the peace—will not be able to witness the document. It would surprise me, even in the absence of the bill, that any justice of the peace would witness a document if he or she was unable to identify the person seeking to have the document witnessed. I am proud to be a justice of the peace. My great grandmother, Catherine Hislop, was one of the original justices of the peace to be sworn in New South Wales, and she went on to become the President of the Women's Justices Association—an august group that worked for the betterment of the State, particularly for women. I am also pleased to be the Patron of the Macarthur Justice of the Peace Association—an association committed to the ongoing professional education of its fellow justices of the peace. That august association addressed the importance of identification before this legislation was conceived. I look forward to hosting a visit by Macarthur Justice of the Peace Association with its secretary, Peter Enderby, JP, to this Parliament.

A large amount of community consultation has been undertaken in the development of this bill, which is indicative of the willingness of the O'Farrell Government to engage with all community members, including members of the Muslim community. I know that my friends in the Campbelltown Muslim community are very pleased with the way in which the Government has conducted this process. The bill provides that people will be required to remove a face covering for as long as it takes to identify them, and we are committed to ensuring that that identification process proceeds as quickly as practicable. This legislation is long overdue. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [12.29 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Identification Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The bill amends five New South Wales statutes and two regulations for the purpose of requiring a person to remove any face covering in certain circumstances to ensure that the person is appropriately identified. The bill seeks to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to provide additional authority for police officers, juvenile justice officers, officers authorised by corrective services and court security staff to request the removal of face coverings in circumstances in which those officers require a person to identify themselves or they require photographic identification. The term "face covering" means an item of clothing, a helmet, a mask or any other thing that is worn by a person which prevents the person's face from being seen, whether wholly or partly.

The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 will amend the following statutes where identification needs to be established for specific situations: the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987, to enable juvenile justice officers to have the power to ensure visitors are identified; the Court Security Act 2005, to enable court security officers to have the power to identify a person seeking to enter the court premises or to identify people who are arrested; and the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, to enable an authorised officer to verify the identification of a visitor to an adult correctional centre.

The community relies heavily upon police to ensure that the laws of the State are enforced. In many situations effective law enforcement requires that police are able to identify people in the community, whether they are suspects, witnesses or offenders. This bill will also enable police officers who are proposing to give a move-on direction to a person to request that person to identify themselves. The new powers are designed so that these officers are able to function effectively to ensure the security and safety of our community and its citizens. The amendments achieve an appropriate balance between enabling juvenile justice and correctional officers to continue to ensure that visitors who are seeking entry to, or are in, juvenile detention centres and correctional centres are properly identified to ensure the secure and proper operation of those facilities and respecting religious and cultural beliefs and practices.

I take this opportunity to commend the staff and management of Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre in the electorate of Mulgoa. The centre is currently undergoing major renovation works and the facilities are being improved for the detainees. I give my full support to the management and staff, who do an incredible job. I also commend other community workers, particularly the St Marys RSL Sub-Branch, for their strong support of the young men who are in the centre and for assisting them to overcome some of their troubles.

A visitor who fails to comply with a requirement to remove a face covering may be denied entry to a facility or may be required to leave the premises. The bill creates an offence of failing to comply with a direction by a police officer to remove a face covering. The maximum penalty for non-compliance will match the maximum penalty applicable for failing to provide identification under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002. In most cases the penalty for failing to comply with a police requirement to remove a face covering will be a maximum fine of \$220, or two penalty units. Where police are exercising the power when requiring identification in relation to vehicles used in indictable offences the penalty matches the higher penalty that non-compliance with section 14 attracts, which is 50 penalty units or \$5,500 and/or 12 months imprisonment.

The bill contains certain safeguards and oversight mechanisms, which include asking for the person's cooperation; the requirement to remove the face covering only for so long and as much as is necessary for the face to be seen; the provision of privacy, if requested; the provision of an officer of the same gender to carry out the identification; acceptance of a legitimate refusal to remove the face covering for special justification, such as recent surgery or bandages; and the requirement for police to provide the person with evidence that they are a police officer, their name and place of duty, and the reason for the exercise of the power, and warnings and notification that non-compliance may be an offence. In addition to those safeguards, the Commissioner of Police has already issued a direction instructing officers on the proper exercise of the power.

The bill also requires that the actions of police be independently monitored by the Ombudsman, whose report will be submitted to Parliament. This review by the Ombudsman will ensure that the exercise of the powers is independently scrutinised and accountable. The bill reinforces that there is a need for the community to comply with lawful requests of a police officer and other authorised officers. On balance, the bill reinforces that police and other authorised officers execute these powers, to the extent practicable, with respect for the dignity and privacy of the individual.

The bill also amends the Oaths Act 1900 to require a person who is witnessing a statutory declaration or affidavit to identify the person making the declaration or affidavit. Only certain people, including justices of the peace, legal practitioners and notary publics, are authorised to witness these documents. Affidavits and statutory declarations are extremely important documents and crucial within our business and legal systems, and to this end the authorised witnesses of these documents need to be confident that they have been made by the person whose name and signature appear on them. If the witness does not know the person making the statutory declaration or affidavit, the bill requires that they confirm the person's identity in accordance with the regulations. The effect of the bill is that a person who wishes to swear, affirm or declare an affidavit or statutory declaration will have to show their face and produce some identification if he or she is not personally known to the witness. These are reasonable safeguards designed to ensure the identity of the person

As members have already mentioned, this bill is in direct response to the controversy surrounding the Carnita Matthews incident in June 2010. The incident involved Carnita Matthews falsely accusing a police officer and supplying a statutory declaration claiming that the police officer who had stopped her had attempted to tear the burqa off her face, a claim that was proven untrue by the police patrol car video camera. That incident stirred a strong reaction in the community about the behaviour exhibited by this one Muslim woman towards a police officer. The current legislation in relation to police powers regarding face coverings is not clear. The legislation will be clarified by the adoption of this bill.

I commend the strong leadership action of the O'Farrell Government, the Attorney General and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities in this matter. The O'Farrell Government undertook significant consultation with the Muslim community in the development of these new laws. The consultations included a multi-stakeholder working party to identify any concerns and experiences in relation to religious head coverings. The Australian National Imams Council and the Islamic Council of New South Wales demonstrated strong leadership at the time of the Carnita Matthews incident and they issued media releases clarifying circumstances in which a woman must show her face to verify her identity.

The Muslim community is to be thanked for its hard work and commitment in working with the O'Farrell Government. Organisations such as the Islamic Council of New South Wales and the United Muslim Women's Association have indicated their support for the Government's approach. It should be reaffirmed that the freedom of religion is the law in New South Wales and that these new laws ensure there is a balance between the need for identification and respect for cultural and religious practice. The Government will continue to work closely with the New South Wales Muslim community on this matter and on other matters as they arise and the laws will be reviewed in 12 months to measure their effectiveness in both law enforcement and respect for diversity in religious and cultural practices in New South Wales.

We live in a wonderful country. Australia is a beautiful and desirable country. When we travel around the world we realise that Australia is a wonderful place in which to live and raise a family. People who come from different backgrounds and different countries with different languages and cultures can come to Australia and live in peace, harmony and prosperity under one set of laws. I fully support the adoption of this bill as it will strengthen police powers and it will make it very clear to everyone in our country what are the rights and responsibilities of all good citizens and that this law will apply to all face coverings, whether that be a burqa, a balaclava, a helmet or mask. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TONY ISSA (Granville) [12.39 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support the excellent Identification Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, which confers on police and other specified officers a power to require that a person remove a face covering to enable an officer to see that person's face for the purpose of identification. This bill is not about discriminating against any group; it is about making our State safer. It is about enabling the people of New South Wales to live happily and safely, and to trust the police with the hard work. This bill was introduced after much consultation with the community.

As we know, the community relies heavily on the police to ensure that the laws of the State are enforced. In many situations effective law enforcement requires that police are able to identify people in the community, whether they are suspects, witnesses or offenders. Examples of the circumstances in which police operate are seemingly endless. They may be investigating an offence in a public place or a private home; they may be undertaking random breath testing by the roadside; they may be managing crowds after a large event; or they may be securing an area after an incident. Clearly, it will assist police in the execution of their duties if they can see the faces of the people they are dealing with.

The bill amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to provide that police will have this power in circumstances where they already have the power to require that a person identify himself or herself, or that the person provide photographic identification. The bill is not without safeguards. Legislative provisions already exist in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and additional ones are being inserted to ensure that these powers are exercised appropriately. The bill requires that police must, as far as is reasonably practicable, ask for the person's cooperation. Conducting the viewing of the person's face in a way that it is reasonably practicable to comply with will depend on the circumstances of each case.

In addition to the legislative safeguards, the Commissioner of Police has undertaken to issue a direction instructing officers in the proper exercise of the power. The bill also requires that the actions of police be independently monitored by the Ombudsman, whose report will be submitted to the Parliament. The bill

reinforces that there is a need for the community to comply with lawful requests of a police officer and for police to execute these powers, to the extent practicable, with respect for the dignity and privacy of the individual. The bill amends the Oaths Act 1900 to require a person witnessing a statutory declaration or affidavit to identify the person making the declaration or affidavit. Only certain people, including justices of the peace, legal practitioners and notary publics, are authorised to witness these documents.

Affidavits and statutory declarations are important documents and people need to be confident that they have been made by the person whose name and signature appear on them. The bill also requires that an authorised person see the face of a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit. Requiring a witness to see the face of the person who is making the affidavit or statutory declaration will ensure that the witness can later identify the person if there is any dispute about this. Much can be said about this bill. I have contacted many people in my community. As I said, this bill is not about discrimination. I talked to people who normally wear helmets while riding motorcycles. They are happy to support the police and the bill.

I have spoken to leaders of the Muslim community who are part of my community. They encouraged me to support the Government's bill because they believe there is no law in their religion to allow people to cover their face. These people encouraged me to ensure that the House supports the bill because they are concerned about ensuring that New South Wales is a safer State for everyone. For these reasons I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [12.45 p.m.]: In discussing the Identification Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 in my electorate I received a great deal of advice—there was wide consultation. At the outset I thank members of the various ethnic communities in my electorate, as well as my predecessor, Mr Wayne Merton, and members of the Police Force, past and present, whom I discussed this legislation with in preparation for both this debate and the eventual passing of the legislation. We must identify from the outset that this bill has nothing to do with race, religion or creed. This legislation is simply a reflection of our modern society. It is ironic, if not disappointing, that it had to be brought up in a debate in which accusations of racism and the like have been made by various extreme elements in the community.

There is nothing racist or untoward about this legislation. The legislation is not suggesting to anybody that their religion or culture is any better or any worse than other cultures and nationalities that are represented in modern Australian society. This legislation simply grants New South Wales police the power to identify a person by removing their face covering. That removal will occur because individuals need to be identified. We live in a community in which, unfortunately, we see criminal acts, acts of terrorism and irregular acts which can easily go unpunished simply because we fail to identify individuals. We have a growth in identification theft in modern Australian society. We have a growth in simple retail theft, bank robberies and robberies in retail outlets. In my view this legislation will assist the police and other law enforcement authorities in identifying the culprits.

This amendment will enhance the ability of police to execute their duty to enforce the laws of New South Wales. I do not think one will find a policeman in New South Wales who is happy to have this authority. Despite what one will hear from various extreme elements in the community, no-one wants to deny somebody their cultural identity or force someone to do anything they do not want to do. This legislation is simply giving law enforcement officers, people who are sworn defenders of our legislation, the ability to rightly identify anyone who might be the culprit of a crime. This amendment is not about affecting any particular groups within our community.

We note that this amendment applies equally to all coverings. As mentioned by the member for Granville, we are not simply attacking one gender or one nationality. We are not simply attacking one group in the community that has a certain practice. Everyone will be required to remove any facial covering for the purpose of identifying an individual. Whether it is a female wearing a burqa or a courier wearing a helmet, everybody will need to comply with the same legislation. This legislation is important because it reinforces the Australian respect for the rule of law. We have a great Australian tradition that embraces the need for a fair go, for people to be honest and for people to understand that the law is there to protect us, not punish us.

This amendment will effectively maintain these laws and will protect and benefit our community. I note that this is not an excessive expansion of police powers. In fact, the tolerance that is displayed by New South Wales police and other law enforcement agencies in Australia proves that we take a moderate approach to arrest powers and to those powers that police might need in order to identify culprits. The powers entrusted in

police in some countries in Western Europe, and certainly in the Middle East, are quite horrific from an Australian point of view. This legislation is a reasonably moderate measure that introduces a law governing every person who might seek to cover their face for any reason.

It is mentioned in the legislation that community expectations regarding face coverings will be adequately safeguarded. That is an important message for us to communicate. Under common law, people will always have the right to appeal a decision from prosecution or enforcement. This legislation will continue the safeguard mechanism that is so vital in western democracies. As mentioned before, this legislation will not allow a policeman on the beat to march up and force somebody to remove their face covering; the police must seek cooperation first. With these safeguards, the police will be required to seek the assistance of anybody who may have their face covered at an inappropriate time. That person will be invited to comply, and will be supported and assisted by the police in going about their duties. This amending bill allows for mandatory facial identifications in circumstances where identification is already required. Again, there is nothing terribly new about that.

As the Attorney General has already stated, the new mechanism will be subject to review by the Ombudsman for the next 12 months. This goes one step beyond normal legislative practice in that the bill is not only providing safeguards but also suggesting to the community that the Government will be prepared to make amendments within the next 12 months. We have given the independent Ombudsman the authority to conduct that review. As I have said already, this bill is not about any particular group in the community but about protecting our laws and our way of life. For that reason the community accepts that this legislation is an unfortunate reality. It is important to note that all community groups who may be affected by this legislation have been consulted. This includes the diverse Muslim community in Sydney. Some Muslims choose to wear the burqa; others do not. That is why the Islamic community in Sydney has expressed a variety of views on this subject. It has been consulted by the Attorney General and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities.

I have also consulted with the Muslim community, as I am sure have many other members of this House. This amendment has been introduced with the cooperation of that community. I acknowledge the responsible manner in which Ministers have engaged with the Muslim community to ensure that everybody is satisfied with the outcome of the bill. Several Muslim community groups have indicated their support for the legislation. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the diverse ethnic community in my electorate and throughout The Hills has provided advice and the courtesy of their engagement in preparing the legislation introduced in the Legislative Assembly. People have acknowledged that this is an unfortunate reality of modern society. The bill places security, law enforcement and protection of the individual at the heart of public administration in New South Wales, and I commend it to the House.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [12.54 p.m.]: The purpose of the Identification Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 is to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and other Acts to confer a power on police officers, juvenile justice officers, officers authorised by Corrective Services and court security staff to request the removal of face coverings in certain circumstances. Another purpose is to amend the Oaths Act 1990 to require a person witnessing a statutory declaration or affidavit to identify the person swearing the declaration or affidavit. Fundamentally, the legislation is about enabling the practical functioning of certain elements of our law enforcement system. Effective law enforcement requires that police are able to identify people in the community, whether they are suspects, witnesses or offenders. The legislation will assist police in the execution of their duties by enabling them to see the faces of the people they are dealing with. The legislation is not about any religion, nor is it about any piece of clothing. As Premier O'Farrell has said:

This is not about banning a piece of clothing. This is about ensuring whether if someone is wearing a motor cycle helmet, a burqa, if they're in the snow wearing a balaclava, if they're wearing some other face mask. If police have concern and reasonable grounds for suspecting that breaches of security or laws may have occurred or will occur, that they can require those people to make their identification clear. So this is not about discrimination in favour of any religion or against any religion, in favour of any racial background or against any racial background, it's about giving police the powers consistently for the whole community in relation to identifying people suspected of criminal breaches.

In line with the Premier's comments, the Government has taken great care to ensure that the bill is comprehensively non-discriminatory. Significant consultation was undertaken to ensure this and to make sure that we act sensitively towards those who might be affected. Indeed, the O'Farrell Government undertook many productive and inclusive discussions with the Muslim community in developing the new laws. This included the work of a multi-stakeholder working party that was ably convened and conducted by the Community Relations Commission and involved the participation of other government agencies such as the police. I commend the

efforts of the chairperson of the Community Relations Commission, Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian, for his work throughout this consultation. We were keen mutually to identify and work through any concerns and experiences in relation to religious head coverings.

The Attorney General and I met with Muslim community leaders on several occasions to discuss the most appropriate approach. We talked about ensuring that the approach was non-discriminatory and also took into account the sensitivities of women wearing a burqa or niqab. I believe those discussions have been fruitful. The community asked for the legislation to be in no way discriminatory—and it is not—and for privacy considerations to be accounted for, and they have been. On the one hand, the bill does not single out any group of people based on their race, religious affiliation or the type of facial covering involved. On the other hand, our overall approach includes provisions that people will be required to remove a face covering only for as long as it takes to identify them and a commitment to ensure that identification occurs as quickly as possible. The bill requests that police must, as far as reasonably practicable, ask for the person's cooperation and conduct the viewing of the person's face in a way that is reasonably practicable.

Furthermore, only the face needs to be shown and, as developed in discussion with the Muslim community, those who want to be identified privately for cultural or religious reasons can request to go to a police station. This aspect will be enshrined in a police commissioner's directive that will be released after the legislation's assent and will be in line with the culturally sensitive approach already taken by the New South Wales Police Force, whom I again commend for their efforts. The bill also requires that the actions of the police be independently monitored by the Ombudsman, whose support will be submitted to Parliament.

I can also advise the House that the Government's legislation will soon be complemented by a Premier's memorandum to all government departments and employees that outlines the appropriate approach to be taken in client interactions that are not based in the law enforcement system. The policy document "Identity and Full Face Covering for New South Wales Public Sector Agencies" acknowledges that there may be other circumstances when it is necessary for a person in the New South Wales public sector to ascertain the identity of a person who wishes to access a service or facility. It provides that a person may be requested to remove a face covering and that choosing not to do so may deny that person access to that service or facility.

At the same time, the policy also guides all our public servants that: first, health, safety, cultural and religious considerations should be taken into account and, where appropriate, other means of identification should be considered; secondly, the request should be for a face covering to be removed only for the period needed and to the extent necessary to establish identity; thirdly, a person should not be requested to remove garments or equipment that cover the person's hair if their face is otherwise visible; fourthly, where operationally feasible a face covering worn for reasons of modesty should be removed only in the presence of persons of the same gender and preferably where only the identifier can view the face of the person who needs to be identified; and, fifthly, the policy be implemented by all government agencies through their Multicultural Policies and Services Program.

The policy I have outlined has also been significantly discussed and, equally, has received the acknowledgement of the Muslim community. All this shows the willingness and dedication of the New South Wales Muslim community to work positively with the State Government. Indeed, it should be noted that in June 2011, at the time of the controversy around Carnita Matthews' court case, both the Australian National Imams Council and the Islamic Council of New South Wales demonstrated exceptional leadership and issued media releases clarifying circumstances when a woman must show her face to verify her identity. As I said, this is not an issue of religion but a great example of citizenship and of our society's multicultural system working very effectively. Discussions between the Muslim community and the Government were open, honest, cooperative and based on goodwill from all parties. It was a civilised discussion in a civilised society.

I thank and acknowledge the Muslim community for its hard work and its commitment to working with the O'Farrell Government. This includes Samier Dandan of the Lebanese Muslim Association, Khaled Sukkarieh of the Islamic Council of New South Wales, and Maha Abdo of the United Muslim Women's Association as well as other dedicated and wise leaders whom we have contacted throughout the passage of this bill. It should be reaffirmed that freedom of religion is the law in New South Wales and that the new laws and policy approach ensure balance between the need for identification and respect for cultural and religious practice.

I also strongly affirm in this House that the O'Farrell Government remains opposed to suggested bans on Islamic religious dress. This bill and the associated policy approach represent a workable and balanced

solution to a practical problem. One of the reasons it is workable is that it is based on strong engagement and inclusiveness with one group possibly affected, the Australian-Muslim community—a proud, productive, law-abiding and tolerant group of citizens in our wonderfully multicultural New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

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

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: This is a very poor start. We have not even begun questions and there are interjections across the Chamber. Interjections will cease and all members, including Ministers, will come to order.

ELECTRICITY ASSETS SALE

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Does the appointment of the well-known privatisation advocate Tony Owen to the Tamberlin inquiry not confirm that the Premier always intended to sell electricity generators, poles and wires?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The short answer is no, because the inquiry is being conducted by Justice Brian Tamberlin and he will write the report. He is consulting a whole range of people. As I said before the election campaign and when I announced the inquiry, he will not be instructed by the Government. We want the best possible solution. We want him to identify the best way forward, particularly to try to keep electricity prices down for consumers across this State. He will also get to the bottom of the power deal signed up to by the Leader of the Opposition when he was in Cabinet. The hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition is simply extraordinary. He made his political career within the Labor Party opposing the first wholesale privatisation proposed by Morris Iemma.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: He then headed Unions NSW and encouraged 27 members of caucus to withdraw their support for Morris Iemma—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: And that is why that legislation did not proceed. It is why ultimately, a week or two later, Morris Iemma's political career was on the scrap heap. Then we had, in the lead-up to last December, the flogging off of the State's power assets by the member for Heffron and the former Treasurer, the Hon. Eric Roozendaal—or the dishonourable Eric Roozendaal, frankly—flogging them off for a song. The member for Heffron was out there saying that we received billions and billions and billions of dollars for those assets. Yet what was found out? Once again taxpayers were sold a pup by the previous Government, and especially by a former Treasurer who simply wanted to have the sale of those assets on his CV. Where was the Leader of the Opposition's concerns then? Where was the Leader of the Opposition's opposition to the flogging off of those power assets?

On so many issues the Leader of the Opposition cannot take a single position. He did not want to reveal his position on the carbon tax—until, helpfully, someone who sat around the Cabinet table leaked it to the

media. He did not want to reveal his position on compulsory pre-commitment regarding gaming machines in clubs—until, helpfully, someone who sits very close to him on the front bench leaked that to the media. On this issue, less than a week ago, on Friday night he railed against electricity privatisation—having sat in a Cabinet six months ago that stamped the sale of the electricity industry. Within two days of that sale and our commitment, we witnessed that extraordinary and naïve act by the member for Heffron that cemented this issue in the minds of people across this State when she shut down the Parliament early to avoid a parliamentary inquiry.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point is taken under Standing Order 129. This is the sixth time we have asked the Premier to rule out privatisation of this asset. The answer is either yes or no. If the Premier does not know, he will have to wait for the inquiry.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order and I ruled on it a number of times yesterday. I cannot direct the Premier how to answer a question, other than that he be relevant—and at the moment he is being relevant.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: What you have directed them to do in the past, Madam Speaker, is look at the way in which their questions are drafted. The question asked: Was the appointment of Mr Owen to the inquiry a sign-off? I said no, the appointment was an issue for Justice Tamberlin, who has been given terms of reference that seek to get to the bottom of the Labor Government's grubby power sale, the connections that the member for Heffron and the member of the upper House had in selling those assets for a song, and the best course forward. So we have been absolutely upfront. Our commitment two days after their power sale, just before they shut down the House, was to have an inquiry. I announced at the launch of our campaign at Penrith that there would be an independent inquiry: an inquiry that looked at their sale and that sought to set the course forward.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: This Government will not apologise for making policy and decisions on the basis of facts and what is best for the public interest—rather than what is best for political parties, their donors or their mates overseas.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Dr GEOFF LEE: My question is directed to the Premier. What progress has the Government made in setting up a Public Service Commission?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Parramatta for his question. It seems that every day I come into this Chamber I demonstrate that the Government is honouring yet another election commitment. Yesterday it was an election commitment in relation to campaign finance reforms. And won't that be a test for the Labor Party—to see if its members support genuine reforms to clean up State politics, or whether they remain hooked on the donations of their union mates? I would say to the member for Balmain, if he were here, that it is also going to be a test for The Greens, who last year did a grubby deal with the Labor Party to give the unions a free pass through campaign finance laws, and to see whether The Greens will stand up on this occasion for the principles that last year they stood by.

I am pleased to advise that the Government is honouring its election commitment to establish a Public Service Commission. We are determined to have the best public service in Australia. We are determined to restore integrity and accountability to the way in which our public services are run. The Public Service Commission will have four main goals: establishing and enforcing high ethical standards through a clear code of conduct for public service employees; creating a culture that attracts and retains the best employees in the New South Wales public service; ensuring public sector appointments are made on merit—something alien to those opposite—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: One need only look at the member for Keira to be aware of Labor's record.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: How does the member for Keira, whose only claim to fame was being chief of staff to a former notorious member of this House, end up being Deputy Director General of Transport?

Mr Nathan Rees: Unlike yourself.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We got some 2.1 million votes, which was more than the member for Toongabbie got—although he would have done better than the member for Heffron. The fourth goal of the Public Service Commission will be putting the public first when it comes to the delivery of public services. I have previously announced that Professor Peter Shergold will be chairman of the board of the new commission. He is one of the most experienced and respected administrators in Australia—

Mr John Robertson: He's a well-known independent, Peter Shergold.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Is there anyone the Leader of the Opposition will not attack? Professor Peter Shergold will be an ideal person for the role. I put on the record the attack by the Leader of the Opposition on Peter Shergold, AC. Today, I am pleased to advise the House that Graeme Head will be the inaugural Public Service Commissioner. Mr Head has held a variety of senior positions in the New South Wales and Commonwealth public service. He has been Deputy Director-General of the New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Services, Technology and Administration, and he was the former Chief Executive of the Sydney Catchment Authority. Mr Head currently is Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. He has a strong track record in implementing complex reforms. Under his stewardship I have no doubt that we can restore public confidence in the public service.

[Interruption]

Does the Opposition want to attack Mr Head as well?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Keira is letting his mind out today. It should not be out on its own because it is so small.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is our intention to make the New South Wales public service the best in the country and an employer of choice. New South Wales is the biggest State and we should have the best public service. Under Professor Shergold and Mr Head I have no doubt that New South Wales will become known for its strong approach to innovation. As respect for our public service increases, we will attract the best people because they will want a career in the New South Wales public service. The Coalition Government is again delivering on its commitments—something that never happened under those opposite. We are taking the first steps towards delivering a public service that is not only the best in Australia, but also eventually among a world leader.

ELECTRICITY PRIVATISATION

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Before the election the Premier told the *Lithgow Mercury*:

We have absolutely no plans to privatise either the generators or the poles and wires.

Does the Premier stand by that comment?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I stand by the commitment I made at Penrith. It was shown on television and was widely broadcast at the election launch. It was widely reported also in the next days' newspapers, which stated that we would appoint an independent inquiry into the State's electricity assets to get to the bottom of Labor's grubby sale and to set the best possible course forward.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked the question and he should listen to the answer.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It would have been easy to have gone to the election launch saying that we oppose this or we will do that. But we said we would establish that inquiry. And what was the result? The Leader of the Opposition in the upper House described the election result as cataclysmic and a bloodbath. According to the Hon. Luke Foley, it was the worst election result for Labor in a century, with 2.1 million people supporting members coming into this Parliament on a platform of an independent inquiry into the State's electricity assets and to set the best possible course. That is what is happening. We have had one interim report from Brian Tamberlin, and it sets out what has been done to date. The final report will come to Cabinet and to this Parliament and when that happens we will make the best decisions for the people of this State.

SYDNEY WATER PRIVATISATION

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer. In light of the Treasurer's recent remarks that he was looking at further contestability in the provision of government services, will he rule out franchising, leasing out or privatising Sydney Water?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This is a really tough one. Yes.

GRAFFITI IN SCHOOLS

Mr GARETH WARD: My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. Will the Minister please update the House on what the Government is doing to address the problem of graffiti in our public schools?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I thank the member for Kiama for his very timely question and his support for the Liberal-Nationals policy to crack down on graffiti in New South Wales. "You Spray You Pay" is a terrific policy that was launched by the Liberals and Nationals prior to the election. We came into this Parliament with a huge mandate—those opposite have been reduced to 20—and introduced a measure upon which we campaigned, but they voted it down. They watered it down.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The Minister is misleading the House. The Opposition supported that bill, but in the upper House—

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not what Standing Order 129 says. The Minister has the call.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The Labor Party, together with The Greens and the Shooters and Fishers Party, watered down our proposed legislation. We were committed to get tough with people who commit acts of graffiti but those opposite watered down our proposed legislation. They cannot say it was the fault of members in the upper House because I assume they get together with their colleagues in that place at some stage during the week and agree on things. They watered it down. The consequence of watering down that initiative was graffiti outrage at Pleasant Heights Public School. On 25 August Labor voted down the proposed legislation by changing it and watering it down. Then on the weekend of 3 and 4 September the graffiti vandals struck at Pleasant Heights Public School. The great irony is that I received a letter from the member for Keira that asked, "What are you doing about graffiti? What are you doing about getting tough on graffiti?"

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Members opposite should read the *Business Paper*. This is their chance to stand up for those school kids because it cost \$2,200 to clean up their school. Members opposite have a chance to do something about this. They should support proposed legislation as introduced by the Liberals and Nationals to crack down on graffiti. Graffiti costs public schools across New South Wales almost \$900,000 each year—money that every member in this Chamber would prefer to see go to school maintenance, programs for school kids and numeracy and literacy. Instead it goes to cleaning up graffiti. This side of the House is trying to do something about graffiti; those opposite are doing absolutely nothing about it.

Mr John Robertson: What are you doing?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: What was that? What are we doing about it? We are introducing legislation. This is a Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! I advise the Minister not to respond to interjections.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We introduced legislation. Members opposite have the opportunity to support it or oppose it. I am sure many who attended last Thursday's rally outside Parliament House, including many teachers, would like tougher rules on graffiti, which they do not like to see displayed. While Opposition members were briefly talking to people last Thursday at the rally perhaps they should have asked them, "What do you think the Government should do about getting tough on graffiti?"

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The Leader of the Opposition certainly did not stick around because he had seen the polling. The polling stated, "Don't look like a union thug." That is what the polling said; we saw it.

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

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order. My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked a question about what the Government is going to do to address graffiti in public schools. I have not heard him tell the House one thing the Government is going to do to address graffiti in our schools. I ask that he be directed to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I accept that point of order. I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The challenge for the Leader of the Opposition is to support the legislation. His second challenge is to try to stop looking like a union thug. He should try it right now.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order is that the Minister is making personal reflections about a member. I ask that he be directed to resume his seat because his remarks clearly are unacceptable.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should be mindful of some of his comments and return to the leave of the question.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: To crack down on graffiti a government cannot be asked to do anything more than introduce legislation to get tough on those who perpetrate graffiti. That is precisely what we are doing. The challenge to the Opposition is to support the proposed legislation upon which we campaigned and took to the election. That is the challenge for Opposition members. Will they pass the test?

ELECTRONIC INTEGRATED TICKETING

Mr TONY ISSA: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. What progress has the Government made to finally introduce an integrated electronic ticket for public transport?

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Some members will find themselves outside the Chamber if they continue to interject. I am sure the people in the gallery are very unimpressed with the behaviour of members during question time specifically and with the Legislative Assembly generally. The Minister has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Granville for his question and for the opportunity to inform all members about the latest developments in this important project, which those opposite failed to deliver.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: London has the Oyster card. Hong Kong has the Octopus card.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Sydney will have the Opal card: that is the name for the new electronic public transport system. This system will transform the lives of commuters and provide a better experience for our tourists. By the end of next year passengers on Sydney ferries will be able to swipe the Opal card to travel on the world's best harbour. The Opal card will become the ticket to ride for one and a half million commuters and thousands of other travellers who use the trains, buses, ferries and light rail services, making their journeys easy and seamless. The name "opal" is short, it is easy to say and it is Australian. As well as being our national gemstone the black opal is our State's gemstone, as the member for Barwon knows all too well.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This ticket will make using our public transport system quicker and easier; it will be a draw card in our efforts to encourage people to leave their cars at home. We have all waited too long for this card, but because of Labor's bungling and broken promises public transport commuters will not get a taste of their Opal card until the year of the London Olympics. That is ironic because we know that the Labor Party promised to deliver electronic ticketing in an Olympic year, but that was 12 years ago at the Sydney Olympics. Do members recall that? Labor had promised that the people who watched Cathy Freeman win gold on that famous night at the Olympic Stadium at Homebush would be able to use a smart card to travel home on a bus, train or ferry. Unlike Cathy Freeman, public transport under Labor lost again. Next was the Athens Olympics in 2004.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Had the New South Wales Labor Government got its act together by the Athens Olympics? No. As Ian Thorpe was winning gold in an Athens pool were the people of Sydney able to move around their city using electronic ticketing? No.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What about the Beijing Olympics? Surely in the eight years after they missed the deadline for the Sydney Olympics the Labor Government was able to deliver electronic ticketing by the Beijing Olympics? As Steve Hooker pole vaulted into Olympic history in Beijing in 2008 people in Sydney were fumbling around on a clumsy paper-based ticket.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the Olympic year 2012 the O'Farrell Government will begin the roll out of an electronic ticketing system that was first announced by those opposite in 1998. Of all the Labor stuff-ups—and there have been a lot of them—public transport ticketing will go down as one of the worst. Labor spent more than \$100 million of taxpayer's money with nothing to show for it except that \$100 million was wasted and a lengthy court case that is still ongoing because of Labor's bungling. But where Labor failed miserably the Coalition Government is making steady progress. Our customers will start to see changes around the network as we prepare for the system and the introduction of a smart card.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government is pleased to announce that the redundant ticketing equipment, including poles and brackets from Labor's failed attempt, have been removed from 60 rail stations. I wonder how long it will be before the Opposition gets rid of its redundant members? But to more important points: we are continuing discussions with a privately-owned light rail operator to ensure that light rail is included as part of the ticketing system—something that the former Labor Government did not bother to do. When electronic ticketing is introduced by the O'Farrell Government customers can expect to have access to a smart card that will be easy to use. They will not need to hunt for change or queue for a ticket on a Monday morning.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government is determined to make good all the mistakes that those opposite made with electronic ticketing, and I am pleased to advise the House that in that regard progress is steady and ongoing. [*Time expired.*]

PORT BOTANY PRIVATISATION

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that the Treasurer announced the privatisation of Port Botany less than a month after the Minister for Roads and Ports ruled it out, how can the people of New South Wales have any faith in anything his Government says about privatisation?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This is almost humorous, Madam Speaker. Members of the Opposition have put questions to the Premier about the electricity sector. Does anyone remember what the Labor Government said about electricity in the lead-up to the 2007 election, and what Labor was going to do? It was not going to sell anything; it was not going to do anything. Then what happened? Labor then spent four years trying to sell the electricity industry. Labor says say one thing before an election and does something different after an election. Members opposite are not used to a government keeping its word, and that is what they dislike so much the budget.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government has announced that it is meeting our election commitments. I think it is fantastic that over the weekend the member for Maroubra and the Leader of the Opposition have read past page three of the budget. If we are talking about opportunities for outsourcing, I have an idea. The criteria for outsourcing has a framework—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: One should outsource if one needs to rectify a business function that was difficult to manage in-house. That is one of the principles. One must also look for cost reductions—for example, if there is an inability to manage costs. One must consider quality, either product or service related: is there enough quality in what is being offered. Also, one should determine whether there is a lack of skills or expertise. Those are the things that one needs to look for. I have examined all the workings of government and I have found something that we need to outsource: the Opposition. When one considers every single criterion for outsourcing it is obvious that there is no point to the Opposition. With regard to rectifying business functions that are difficult to manage in-house, the member for Toongabbie said when he became Premier, "The soap opera is over". It was a soap opera. It was difficult to manage in-house.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: The question was about Port Botany. Under Standing Order 129 the member is well off the topic of Port Botany.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister has been generally relevant to the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If one goes through every point—first, cost reduction—one can see that the former Government spent \$12 billion more than it budgeted over the past seven years. The former Government could not manage costs in any way, shape or form. A review by John Watkins indicated that the Labor party selected candidates who should never have been in Parliament.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. Is the member for Macquarie Fields going to take the same point of order?

Dr Andrew McDonald: It is the same point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister has been generally relevant to the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The last criterion is a lack of skills or expertise that was highlighted by the management team led by "Captain Solar", who oversaw the solar bonus scheme. In relation to Port Botany the Government is very excited to have an opportunity to deliver funds for infrastructure that the State desperately needs. The Government is proud to say that on the back of that transaction the Pacific Highway will be funded.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: All the members whose electorates come in contact with the Pacific Highway wonder why the former Government dillydallied while lives were being lost. This Government is proud to get to work for the people of New South Wales and deliver the infrastructure they need. It is about time that a responsible government was in power in New South Wales, and the O'Farrell Government is that responsible government.

STATE BUDGET AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr JOHN FLOWERS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast. How has the budget assisted local government in New South Wales?

Mr DONALD PAGE: I thank the member for Rockdale for his question and acknowledge his longstanding interest in local government matters. The first budget delivered by this Government was very beneficial for local government. By way of background, members may recall that back in 2006 the former head of Treasury Percy Allan reported on the finances of local government and found essentially two issues: first, half the councils in New South Wales were suffering severe financial difficulty and, secondly, councils had a significant infrastructure maintenance backlog.

The Coalition in opposition at the time said something had to be done and initiated a policy to create a local infrastructure scheme. I am proud to acknowledge the contribution of the former shadow Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Chris Hartcher, in bringing forward that innovative policy. The policy was designed to address the infrastructure backlog that had been identified by Percy Allan in 2006 and had grown worse under the administration of the previous Labor Government. The first budget by the O'Farrell-Stoner Government delivers on our promise to introduce a local infrastructure renewal scheme.

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

Mr DONALD PAGE: The scheme is based on a \$70 million interest rate subsidy over five years on borrowings by local government to address the infrastructure backlog. This innovative scheme is expected to deliver about \$1 billion in extra investment by councils to their infrastructure backlog. As I said, it is a very innovative scheme. The infrastructure backlog to be addressed by councils includes community halls, repair or replacement of local roads, unreliable sewerage schemes, inadequate water supplies, bridges, playing fields and libraries. Provided councils meet the eligibility criteria they will be able to access the subsidy, which will be 50 per cent of the interest on a loan. Although eligibility criteria will apply, the amount of money that will be considered generally is for projects worth \$1 million or more. If councils put together a proposal for two or three projects adding up to \$1 million, those applications will also be considered.

The Government's budget was beneficial for local government in a number of other areas as well. The budget allocated \$200 million for local roads managed by councils, \$84 million for country town water supply and sewerage programs, \$76 million for eligible pensioner rebates on council rates, \$45 million for improved waste management and increased recycling, \$26 million for estuary, coastal and flood plain management including, I am delighted to say, money for dredging of waterways, \$35 million over two years for the Community Building Partnership Program, \$39 million for park, reserves and open spaces maintenance, \$20 million Community Grants money, \$12 million over four years for better water safety measures, \$4 million for regional libraries and \$2.8 million for councils to protect their local heritage.

One of the outcomes of the recent Destination 2036 summit that was held in Dubbo was recognition of the diversity of councils in New South Wales. On the one hand, we have councils as large as Blacktown City Council which services 300,000 people and, on the other, Urana Council in the western part of the State which services 2,000 people. Hunters Hill Council has an area of seven square kilometres and Central Darling has 55,000 square kilometres. The message is one size does not fit all. One of the key outcomes of the Destination 2036 summit in Dubbo was a requirement to look at new financial models to assist local councils that need a hand. I welcome the positive feedback from the Destination 2036 summit, including from Labor mayors. At the conclusion of Destination 2036 the Labor Mayor for Lismore, Jenny Dowell, tweeted:

2036 winding up. Great that Minister for Local Government Don Page was here for the entire time. Better relationship with State Government is a great start.

LAKE MACQUARIE TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

Mr GREG PIPER: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given the Commonwealth's recent failure to commit funding for the Lake Macquarie transport interchange, will the Treasurer advise whether the State's \$15 million commitment will be available on receipt of future Commonwealth funding to allow for the commencement of stage one during this term of Government?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. As I have said before about the member for Lake Macquarie and other Independent members, it is great to see members fighting for issues in their community. Their attitude is in stark contrast to that of Opposition members. The Government was as disappointed as the member for Lake Macquarie to hear the news from the Federal Government. We have heard many reasons over the past not only days and weeks but years from the Federal Government as to why it cannot fund infrastructure in this State. We have had enough. The State Government absolutely stands by its election commitment of \$15 million.

We will stand alongside the member and the council while they negotiate with the Federal Government to commit funding to this project and urge the Federal member to look after his community on this critical project. The difference between the approach of the O'Farrell Government and that of the previous Government is that we stand by our word. This Government will help the council in any way it can to put forward a bid for infrastructure funding from the Commonwealth Government. As I said, our commitment remains and we hope to be able to deliver this project through a joint effort with the Federal Government in support of the Lake Macquarie community.

ClubGRANTS FUND

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. How is the Government supporting the State's sporting organisations and the services they provide to local communities?

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

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I thank the member for Drummoyne for his question and his genuine interest in the local community that he proudly represents. Most people in this State are passionate about sport. It has the rare ability to lift our spirits and unite our communities. At this time of year, with finals fever in the air, one only has to drive through any electorate in the State on a Saturday or Sunday morning to see the wonderful health and lifestyle benefits that sport can deliver. Having been involved in sport for many years, I can attest to the value that people place on sport in their local communities. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is also aware of the important role that sport plays in the wider community.

That is why we are absolutely committed to honouring our sports and recreation election promises. It is important to acknowledge the mechanism that will primarily ensure that local sporting organisations throughout New South Wales continue to provide quality services to their respective communities. The ClubGRANTS fund has been designed specifically to give back to communities. Through the efforts of my colleague the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts, the club industry and the New South Wales Government have reached a historic agreement aimed at ensuring the health and longevity of local clubs throughout New South Wales, as well as the sporting organisations that service those communities. It is important to note that, contrary to what is happening with the attack on the clubs industry generally at the Federal Government—

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

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: —the New South Wales Government is absolutely committed to supporting the club industry. Up to \$49 million is expected to accrue in the ClubGRANTS fund over the next four years. Of that total \$9 million has been forecast to accrue in the 2011-12 budget year, which will be utilised primarily to honour sport and recreation election commitments made by the Government.

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

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: My aim to increase participation in sports and recreational activities will see ClubGRANTS fund money go towards the funding of community infrastructure projects. Last Friday night I was privileged to attend the Apia Leichhardt Tigers Football Club annual awards gala dinner as a guest of the

club, and gave up the opportunity to watch the National Rugby League finals match. Joining me at the function were my parliamentary colleagues the member for Drummoyne, the member for Strathfield, the President of the Legislative Council and the member for Balmain.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Despite confusing reports in today's *Inner West Courier* I confirm that at the dinner I said I was confident that the promised \$2.2 million in funding for the upgrade of Lambert Park—the home of Apia Leichhardt since 1954—will be made available to the club in the current financial year. Tony Raciti, Apia Leichhardt's president, was extremely pleased to hear the news, which will now assist in ensuring the long-term future of Apia Leichhardt Tigers at Lambert Park. The funds will go towards a new synthetic playing field surface, lighting, fixed seating, new amenities and change rooms, and a new fence around the perimeter of the playing field.

Apia Leichhardt Tigers is an iconic football club in this State, boasting six decades of tradition. The New South Wales Government is proud to have been able to assist in ensuring its future. The good news does not stop there. Western Sydney and the Central Coast will also receive funds to improve sporting facilities, which will benefit local communities. I reaffirm the New South Wales Government's commitment to allocate \$5 million to assist in the refurbishment of the sporting and community infrastructure at Valentine Park, Riverstone—the home of Football NSW.

Mr John Sidoti: I ask that the Minister be given an extension of time to provide additional information.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has a further two minutes to provide additional information.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: In a joint initiative with Football NSW, the State Government contribution will assist in funding the project, which includes a sports college, sports medicine facilities, state-of-the-art football fields, a 3,000-seat stadium, an indoor sports centre, hotel accommodation and a function centre. I am certain that the member for The Entrance, the member for Terrigal, the member for Wyong and the member for Gosford will be pleased to hear that Plum Park, on the picturesque Central Coast, will receive \$3 million in funding. These funds will assist to upgrade the playing surfaces of three fields, extend the car park, and provide new office space and amenities. Upgrades to the grandstand, seating, lighting, fencing and scoreboards also form part of this major refurbishment aimed at restoring facilities for the benefit of the local community. All of these projects are absolute priorities and will be met as the ClubGRANTS fund continues to accrue. As the Premier has stated on many occasions—

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

Ms Noreen Hay: Why do you hate the Dragons?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Because the Premier supports the Tigers.

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

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: As the Premier has stated on many occasions, the New South Wales Government is determined to deliver on its election commitments, and sport and recreation facilities will be no exception.

KIRKCONNELL CORRECTIONAL CENTRE CLOSURE

Mr PAUL LYNCH: My question is directed to the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. What advice has the Attorney General received regarding the economic impact on the Central West region as a result of the closure of Kirkconnell jail?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Education to order.

Mr GREG SMITH: It was a shame that we had to close any jails, but we have room for 11,500 prisoners and we have only 9,700 prisoners. Therefore there is no need to keep all the jails going. The

jails that have closed have been replaced, to an extent, by more modern jails—and we do not criticise the former Government for getting on with that on the good advice of the commissioner and others in the department. In relation to Kirkconnell and other jails that will close, steps have been taken to relocate the staff and to ensure that prisoners are able to continue their work by moving that work to the jails to which they will be transferred. We have been able to cut the excess prison budget. The negligent former Government allowed the prison budget to go over budget by \$113 million last year. We will balance this budget and we will look after the communities that have been temporarily inconvenienced.

Question time concluded at 3.07 p.m.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

Dr Geoff Lee, on behalf of the Chair, tabled the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest 4/55", dated 13 September 2011.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Dr Geoff Lee.

PETITIONS

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

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**.

Mental Health Services

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

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

State Budget and Central Coast

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyang) [3.09 p.m.]: This motion should be accorded priority because the Coalition Government's first budget will deliver much-needed infrastructure and services to the Central Coast. For 16 long years the former Labor Government presented the Central Coast with promise after promise and glossy brochure after glossy brochure. Labor promised fairness for families, but after 16 years of the most unfair government in Australian history the people of the Central Coast had enough. Labor told us there was more to do but that it was headed in the right direction. That direction saw six Ministers for the Central Coast in five years. Only two of those Ministers actually lived on the Central Coast.

This motion should be accorded priority to highlight that this Government is delivering on its election commitments, unlike the former Government with its litany of broken promises. We all remember the Central Coast Action for Transport 2010 plan released in 1999—just in time for that year's election. It promised a Central Coast fast train, which was to be completed in 2010. There is still no fast train. Though Federal Labor re-opened old wounds by announcing a new fast train plan, ironically it was announced before the 2010 Federal election at a time when Central Coast residents should have been boarding the original 1999 fast train for the first time.

Year after year Labor promised to build a new police station at Wyong. After almost a decade of promises, the station will be finished in the near future under a Coalition Government. Labor had tried to rush

construction of the station prior to the last election, but it was not enough: the people of Wyong and the Central Coast saw through the spin. In recent years Labor's pet promise has been the Warnervale town centre. Labor held meetings, public rallies, issued more glossy brochures, maps, plans and press releases, and claimed everything was on track. But when the Government changed and the good people from planning at the Roads and Traffic Authority came to see us we were told nothing had progressed, not because they had not tried but because the project was still in the initial planning phase and was still being investigated. What Labor had created was a Warnervale town centre *Truman Show*—everything was staged, faked and hidden behind a facade of Labor spin.

This motion should be accorded priority because for 16 long years those opposite failed to deliver for the Central Coast. We are aware of the many reasons Labor failed to deliver. We know about the spin and the trickery. But Labor's attitude to the Central Coast is perhaps best represented by the constant factional wars between local Labor members or Parliament, or former members of Parliament, which is proof positive that they cared more about themselves than their constituents. The factional backstabbing, branch stacking and ballot stuffing was so rife on the Central Coast that the former right-wing faction of Joe Tripodi, Eddie Obeid and John Della Bosca was referred to as the Terrigals—a dubious honour that the constituents and the member for Terrigal must now carry on their shoulders. Who can forget Belinda Neal and her alleged penchant for mistreating hospitality workers?

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. The role of the member for Wyong should be to establish priority and he is not doing that. He has learned too much about grubby politics from the member for Terrigal.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member that the aim of his contribution is to establish priority for his motion.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Who can forget the former member for Swansea, Milton Orkopoulos? And now the Central Coast can claim the unfortunate honour of hosting another Labor luminary, Craig Thomson, who is single-handedly leading consumer credit reform in the union movement.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I ask you to draw the speaker back to why this motion deserves priority.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the member to establish why his motion should be accorded priority.

Ms Linda Burney: And he should listen to the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure he is about to do that.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: This motion should be accorded priority because after 16 years of inaction, spin, staged press events, announcements that went nowhere, promises that never materialised and Labor members of Parliament who cared more about the factions than the people of the Central Coast, this budget is finally delivering for locals. On 26 March the people of the Central Coast and New South Wales delivered the blow that arrogant Labor members thought would never come. Labor members of Parliament and candidates were punished by an electorate that recognised that they had been ripped off, swindled and rorted. After 16 years they realised that Labor had promised a lot but delivered little. This motion should be accorded priority because the people of the Central Coast deserve details of the first budget in a long time that actually delivers for the Central Coast.

Electricity Assets Sale

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.14 p.m.]: This motion deserves priority because we have a Premier with a terrible addiction to privatisation and this House needs to save him before he hurts himself and hurts the people. The truth is that the Premier finds himself trapped in a fiscal hole. Last week he fumbled the budget ball at his first opportunity: hacking and slashing across New South Wales, hurting the most vulnerable citizens and raising taxes on first home buyers.

Mr Chris Hartcher: Point of order: We heard the Leader of the Opposition's Treasury speech last week. He is now making it again. His aim and his principal responsibility is to establish why his motion should be accorded priority, not to canvass the budget that was delivered last week.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to establish priority for his motion.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: The alarm went off at Standard and Poor's, which announced that the Government's vague \$8 billion savings target would be difficult to achieve. We have a Premier under siege. He is nagged on the evening news over Orica, nagged by Standard and Poor's over the triple-A credit rating and nagged by the Minister for Transport to pose for photos at Rouse Hill for the North West Rail Link—an irresponsible promise with a blank page where its costings should have been. This motion deserves priority because we have a Premier in a panic, hunting for quick fixes. That is why he has started privatising Port Botany, Sydney Ferries and the desalination plant, and he is already softening up New South Wales for more.

No Premier who appointed Tony Owen to set up an inquiry could claim with a straight face that he is not preparing to go the full Monty on electricity privatisation. Tony Owen is the go-to man when you want to sell the lot. Pressed repeatedly in the House this week, the Premier refused to rule out full privatisation of electricity generators, poles and wires, and the people of New South Wales are starting to smell a rat. This motion deserves priority because integrity should still count for something in politics. On 28 January Barry O'Farrell made what will forever be known as the Lithgow declaration: a simple sentence forever seared into the heart of his political persona. He told the *Lithgow Mercury*:

We have absolutely no plans to privatise either the generators or the poles and wires.

On 1 February the Premier was again quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

We have ruled out the sale of poles and wires because that is where the jobs are and we are determined to protect jobs.

Why has a policy that was ruled out before the election suddenly turned into a "no brainer" in the *Sunday Telegraph*? What changed between January and September other than that the election is out of the way? The power may be about to flicker out across all of New South Wales, but it has clearly gone straight to this Premier's head. I draw the attention of the House to a perceptive observation made on 22 August:

It is an absolute principle of democracy that governments should not and must not say one thing before an election and do the opposite afterwards. Nothing could be more calculated to bring our democracy into disrepute, nothing could be more calculated to alienate the citizenry of Australia from their government.

The author of those profound words was the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott. Again on 29 July in a speech on the Sunshine Coast Mr Abbott admitted the Howard Government's WorkChoices law—

Mr Chris Hartcher: Point of order: As entertaining as it is to hear the Leader of the Opposition quote the next Prime Minister of Australia, I ask the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales, who will stay Leader of the Opposition for at least one more year, to actually come back to the priority debate. He should not quote Tony Abbott but should address the privatisation of electricity poles and wires.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will return to outlining why his motion should be accorded priority.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: It is a dark day when the Premier must slither at the footstool of Tony Abbott for a lesson in political integrity. The Premier has no mandate to sell off generators, poles and wires just because he has got himself in a hole. This matter deserves priority because the Lithgow declaration was where the Premier ruled this out as a terrible idea. If he goes back on his word we will make that declaration famous and ensure it haunts him until the day he ceases to be Premier and the Treasurer takes over.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 63

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

Noes, 21

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

Pair

Mr Bromhead

Mr Furolo

Question resolved in the affirmative.*[Business interrupted.]***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Routine of Business**

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.29 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to:

- (1) postpone the commencement of Government Business to permit the conclusion of the motion of condolence for the Honourable Alan Robert Lindsay Gordon; and
- (2) permit the introduction, the agreement in principle speech and one Opposition speaker on the Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011, notice of which was given this day for tomorrow.

After the motion accorded priority is dealt with, it is the intention of the Government to deal with the condolence motion for the former member for Murrumbidgee, and immediately thereafter to deal with the Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011, notice of motion of which was given today. I have had

discussion with the Opposition. I believe the Opposition understands the position, but I am in the hands of the leader of Opposition business in determining that. It is the intention of the Government this afternoon to have the Minister's agreement in principle speech on the Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011, one speech from the Opposition, and then the matter will be adjourned until tomorrow to enable members to have a closer look at the bill and the import of it.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATE BUDGET AND CENTRAL COAST

Motion Accorded Priority

[Business resumed.]

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyang) [3.30 p.m.]: I move:

That this House supports a budget that provides improved services and infrastructure for the Central Coast.

I am pleased to stand in the House today and support a budget that addresses 16 years of neglect of the people of the Central Coast, a budget that addresses a backlog in infrastructure left to us by those who sit opposite, a Labor backlog that failed to address the needs of our hospitals, our roads and our schools. Within my electorate of Wyong—represented for the first time in history by a Liberal member of Parliament—this Government has delivered. Let me start by noting the investments made in health in the electorate of Wyong: \$2 million for the upgrade of the emergency department at Wyong Hospital, with the delivery of an emergency care ward for low-triage patients.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Members leaving the Chamber will do so quietly and in an orderly manner.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: The budget allocates \$3.1 million for 10 additional acute care beds, again at Wyong Hospital. These investments will deliver long-overdue improvements and greatly aid the ability of residents in the north of the Central Coast to receive much-needed emergency care.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Members wishing to have private conversations should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: These initiatives are part of \$4.7 billion worth of spending on hospital and health capital works—spending that is 50 per cent more than over the past four years under those opposite. This Government has listened to the concerns of people not only on the Central Coast but across the whole of New South Wales, and is committed to restoring the best quality health care possible. Improving health care on the Central Coast was an issue on which I campaigned throughout the State election. Seniors, parents and young individuals all agree that we had been neglected by the former Labor government, despite constant concern that our region was missing out. That is why this Coalition Government has re-established a stand-alone health board on the Central Coast.

We understand that the Central Coast does not sit within the north shore of Sydney and will ensure that from here on funding and resources are identified for the Central Coast. This is a big achievement, and it is long overdue. It is an achievement that reflects the arrogance of the former Government in declaring it knew best for the people of the Central Coast, while ignoring basic logic. What this Government is doing is delivering what the previous Government took away. Another area where this budget provides much-needed improved infrastructure for the Central Coast is in roads. Only a couple of weeks ago I stood in this House, alongside my colleague the member for The Entrance, and highlighted the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition.

After nearly 6,000 days of doing nothing about Wyong Road, the Leader of the Opposition thought it clever to visit the Central Coast—which he did not manage to do as Minister for the Central Coast—and criticise the O'Farrell Government for failing to complete road upgrades that Labor objected to prior to the election. This was just 150 days into the term of this Coalition Government. First, Labor rejected them outright and told Central Coast media that the upgrades should not be considered because Labor did not like where the cost analysis came from—Wyang Shire Council.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I cannot hear the member for Wyong.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Then Labor invented its own figure, \$50 million, and said it expected every dollar to be in the budget. Not surprisingly, when the Leader of the Opposition delivered his speech on the budget only two weeks later, there was no \$50 million commitment for Wyong Road. This budget will come as a pleasant surprise to the Leader of the Opposition, as it confirms the Government's commitment on Wyong Road and provides the money to deliver the upgrades. I am pleased to highlight the investment in Wyong, with \$2 million allocated for the planning and design of Wyong Road intersections, to ensure residents no longer will have to sit in gridlock when driving to work, school, sport or shops.

Our investment in roads does not stop there. An allocation of \$500,000 is made for the planning and design of the Pacific Highway through Wyong town centre—another project that Labor mismanaged for 16 years. This year alone, \$1 million is allocated for the completion of the upgrade of the F3-Wyong Road interchange. Probably most importantly, \$200,000 is allocated for a study for the Warnervale town centre access road intersection with Sparks Road. This is the catalyst to deliver the Warnervale town centre. In moving this motion I also speak about Labor's spin over substance approach to the town centre project. The \$200,000 I mentioned is real, allocated funding to do the planning work—something that the former Labor member for Wyong, and the former member before him, could not achieve over decades and decades. This project has been promised since before I was born. These are vital investments that will provide much-needed upgrades for our fast-growing region.

The investment in roads does not stop in my electorate of Wyong. Across the Central Coast, this budget includes \$64 million for major road infrastructure projects; \$20 million to maintain existing road infrastructure; \$6 million for traffic management and a further \$3 million for regional road safety initiatives. Let me highlight again the \$200 million that has been allocated over four years to address key routes through the Central Coast that suffer from congestion and safety issues: \$1 million this year as part of a four-year \$30 million project for Woy Woy Road in the electorate of Gosford; and \$500,000 as part of a four-year \$5 million commitment to improve safety along Wisemans Ferry Road. The Liberal-Nationals Government has listened to the people of the Central Coast. All five members representing electorates in the Central Coast live there—which was not the position with the previous Labor Minister responsible for the Central Coast.

The budget sees essential funding for our local health services and funding for road planning and construction across all Central Coast electorates. Many of those were projects which Labor avoided, rejected, delayed or cancelled. They were projects that Labor put in the too-hard basket while long-suffering Central Coast residents continued to go without. As I talk with locals in the electorate about the budget, I am commonly told that the job of fixing Labor's mess is definitely a difficult task. There is understanding that something like \$500 million was wasted on a project that never saw the light of day under those opposite, and that therefore the need for fiscal responsibility is paramount. If average families have to responsibly balance their budgets, why should not government? If only we all had access to Health Service Union credit cards, imagine the possibilities.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [3.37 p.m.]: I would love to be able to support a budget that helped the Central Coast and regional New South Wales in general. But we simply do not have a budget that does that. So I move this Opposition amendment:

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

This House notes that the budget:

- (1) provides neither improved services nor infrastructure for the Central Coast, nor for anywhere else in New South Wales;
- (2) attacks the most vulnerable in our community;
- (3) provides for sacking of government workers and cuts to services; and
- (4) foreshadows that the Government will fund its forward capital program by selling government assets, including the electricity poles and wires.

Mr Chris Hartcher: Point of order: With the greatest of deference to the member for Keira, an amendment must amend the motion. It cannot directly negative the motion. The first part of the amendment moved by the member for Keira is a direct contradiction of the motion and, accordingly, is out of order. The subsequent parts are contingent on the first amendment and, therefore, fall, as one would normally expect.

Accordingly, while I respect the intentions of the member for Keira to oppose the motion, he cannot move an amendment that is directly contrary to the motion. He can only amend the motion, as set out in the standing orders.

Mr Michael Daley: To the point of order: I draw to the attention of the House that the amendment is in identical terms to the amendment you allowed yesterday, Mr Deputy-Speaker.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! In view of what occurred yesterday, I will accept the amendment.

Mr RYAN PARK: Thank you, Mr Deputy-Speaker, for a fantastic decision. This is not a good budget for the Central Coast. This budget will never be good for regional communities like the Central Coast or the Illawarra, where I reside, when 5,000 jobs across the State will go. The Central Coast economy is not too dissimilar to that of the Illawarra. Like the Illawarra, the Central Coast is close to our capital city, a global city, and has a large commuter corridor along which people travel back and forth each day from Sydney. The Central Coast needs investment in jobs, infrastructure and services.

The member for Wyong has got to be kidding when he says he has done so well for the people of the Central Coast. Regional communities across New South Wales have been stung by this Government's first budget. Regional communities have been hurt because front-line jobs have gone, services have been cut and infrastructure has been slowed or removed. This is not a good budget for the Central Coast. This budget is good for the inner city. The member for Wyong should argue his case for the people of the Central Coast as I will continue to argue the case for the people of the Illawarra. In the past four years the Labor Government spent hundreds of millions of dollars on roads and infrastructure.

Mr Chris Spence: Point of order: The motion refers strictly to the Central Coast. If the member for Keira wants to talk about the Illawarra, perhaps he should move the appropriate motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira has been debating the motion to which he has moved an amendment about which I have heard nothing.

Mr RYAN PARK: It is absolutely crucial that the amendment to the motion be agreed to because we have to fight for those thousands of workers who will lose their jobs under this Government's proposal. We have to fight also for the thousands of people on the Central Coast and in other New South Wales regions who will suffer major cuts to infrastructure and services from this budget. This budget hurts the most disadvantaged in our community, particularly our seniors. The member for Wyong, who has a large portion of public housing stock within his electorate, should know better than to try to defend a budget that attacks the most vulnerable and most needy in our community. This is not a good budget and he should be ashamed of himself for trying to defend it.

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [3.44 p.m.]: The first thing I need to do is give Opposition members a street directory to the Central Coast. I have never seen any of those sitting opposite on the Central Coast. I support the motion of the member for Wyong and acknowledge the budget's support for the Central Coast. It is important to reflect that at times during the past 16 years when the State's finances were in good shape due to revenue windfalls, infrastructure and services that were needed on the Central Coast were largely ignored by those opposite. Of course, one exception was relocating the WorkCover office to Gosford. The Central Coast had some powerful Labor figures as Ministers for the Central Coast, such as John Della Bosca, the king maker; former Premier and member for Toongabbie; and just prior to the fateful March election the then Leader of the Opposition-in-waiting and now member for Blacktown.

They tore down services such as the Woy Woy rehabilitation unit, spent only a pittance of what was needed on our local roads, ignored our schools and delivered a rail service that our ever-suffering and frustrated commuter population had to put up with. The then Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, defended the closure of the Woy Woy rehabilitation unit by saying that it was on the advice of clinicians. He did not realise that the rehabilitation unit is mainly used by the elderly as the Central Coast has 30 per cent more than the State's average of people aged over 65 years. I believe the Minister was out of touch with the area. Health services were focussed more on the North Shore than on the Central Coast. Only the frequent visits of the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, and a commitment of \$5 million to reopen the unit kept up the spirits of the hospital alliance group. Despite having to deal with a massive black hole in the State's finances left by those opposite, this budget

has allocated half a million dollars to commence the planning phase of that project. Thank you, Minister Skinner, not only for that commitment to Woy Woy but also for giving our health district back to the local community.

I should like to refer to other funding allocations the Central Coast has received in the budget. Almost \$2 million is provided for capital works for Ageing, Disability and Home Care on the Central Coast, including \$600,000 for a four-bed drop-in facility for people with a disability with low support needs in Wyong; \$22,500 for co-located accommodation for people with a disability in Wyong; just under \$750,000 for the post-completion works of the Casuarina Grove development comprising 100 beds for people with a disability; and \$600,000 for new villas in Gosford, comprising a total of 12 beds for people with a disability. The 2011-12 budget also delivers significant investment in health services with \$17.4 million for works in progress for the Gosford regional cancer centre, so soon our people will not have to travel to the Hunter and Sydney for treatment for their cancers.

A further \$3.1 million has been allocated for 10 additional acute care beds at Wyong Hospital; \$800,000 for two special care nursery cots at Gosford Hospital; \$500,000 for the commencement of planning for an upgrade of the emergency department at Wyong; and part of the State's \$56 million investment will also maintain 16 acute care beds at Gosford Hospital. To increase the number of front-line workers, \$3.4 million has been allocated for 51 more nurses. This will include two senior clinical nurses, midwifery educators and specialists to support nurses caring for their patients.

Let us now move to roads. Members opposite should pay attention—they were not listening before and they are not listening now. Some \$93 million has been invested in Central Coast roads. In the 2011-12 budget \$64 million has been allocated for major road infrastructure projects; \$20 million to maintain existing road infrastructure; \$6 million for traffic management; and \$3 million for regional road safety initiatives. Key initiatives include \$20 million for major works on the four-lane widening of the Central Coast highway between Matcham Road, Erina Heights and Ocean Beach Road, Wamberal. Fourteen years ago the Labor Government—*[Time expired.]*

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [3.49 p.m.]: How disappointing that the member for Gosford does not recall meeting me at the Gosford races a few years ago. He stood in this place and said, "I have never seen you on the Central Coast". I grew up surfing the beaches from Avoca, up through Terrigal and all the way to North Shelly, Lakes Beach, and I was chased out of the water by a shark at North Entrance. How rude—I kid you not. I will rehash what I said a couple of weeks ago because I do not think I was heard on that occasion—Government members seem to have forgotten. When I mentioned the fact that Labor had spent \$195 million on hospitals in the Gosford electorate, the member asked, "Where?" I was able to elicit exactly where that money was spent.

The former Government spent \$195 million on hospitals in Gosford, and the member today proclaims funding of just \$2 million. If the Government is in power for the next 90 or 95 years it should match the former Government's funding. Let us turn to Wyong. The former Government spent \$113 million on Wyong Hospital and the local member today proclaimed that this Government will spend \$2 million. If the Coalition is in government for 50 years it might catch up to the former Government. There is government funding of \$660 million for roads and I think \$500,000 for planning, \$1 million for Woy Woy Road and \$3.1 million for Wyong.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wyong will have an opportunity to reply to the debate.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: This Government will need to be in power for 30 years to match the funding of the former Labor Government. Let us get on to the amendment because clearly the motion is irrelevant. The budget does not provide improved services or infrastructure for the Central Coast, nor anywhere else in New South Wales. Exhibit A: The electorate of Cessnock. The former Government spent in excess of \$20 million over the past decade on road infrastructure in my electorate.

Mr Chris Spence: Point of order: There is nothing in the motion that speaks about Cessnock or the Illawarra. This motion is about the Central Coast, and I ask the member to return to it.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: To the point of order: The amendment says, "nor for anywhere else in New South Wales."

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): There is no point of order. The amendment says, "nor for anywhere else in New South Wales."

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The \$2 million or \$3 million allocated to Cessnock is certainly not a windfall, it is a step backwards by \$17 million—and we have this Government and this Treasurer to thank for that. Let us talk about the attack on the most vulnerable in our community, the \$7,000 that we are paying people to move out of metropolitan areas, and the stamp duty tax that we are asking people to pay. Let members consider this for a moment: On the Central Coast is an existing home or a newly constructed home cheaper? If it is anything like Cessnock, I would suggest that it is an existing home. In this State new home buyers will be forced to borrow an extra \$100,000, \$150,000 or \$200,000 in order to get any relief from this Government. First home buyers can no longer come to Cessnock and buy an existing home for \$200,000 and receive government support. The vulnerable in our community have been attacked by the budget handed down by the Government, and it should be ashamed, not proud.

The budget provides for the sacking of government workers and cuts. I know those opposite were not at the rally last week, so I will tell them about the signs that teachers were holding as they marched past Parliament House. Wyong, Gosford and The Entrance schools were all represented; teachers from those schools are concerned about their jobs. Where were their parliamentary representatives? Were they out supporting them? Is the Government fighting for them? No, Government members are sitting in the House proclaiming this budget to the communities that they say they so proudly represent. Clearly, Government members proudly represent the community when they are sitting in the House, not out there with the workers. The Treasurer's imaginary budget black hole will be met by selling electricity assets, which will bring to an end Coalition members' time in this place.

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyong) [3.54 p.m.], in reply: I make a couple of important observations this afternoon. The first is that the shadow Minister for the Central Coast is not in the Chamber. That is a little unfortunate, but given she resides nowhere near the Central Coast and has no interest in the Central Coast it is not surprising. [*Quorum called for.*]

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

The Central Coast did not have a voice during 16 years of Labor government, and this is another example of Labor trying to take away their voice again. The second observation is about the member for Keira. In his previous life he worked as chief of staff to a former member for Keira, David Campbell, who was then Minister for Transport and Roads. An interesting question for the current member for Keira is: What did he do for the people of the Central Coast in his capacity as chief of staff to the former Minister? The member for Cessnock listed expenditure of the former Government—as he did on a previous occasion—but where are the big infrastructure items? No big infrastructure items were planned and none were built. If Labor's record on the Central Coast is so great, why were Labor members booted out of office in record numbers and with such enthusiasm on 26 March?

The House heard about the most vulnerable on Central Coast, but there was no mention of the planned \$500,000 in government funding to reopen the Woy Woy rehabilitation centre that the former Labor Government closed. Talk about looking after the most vulnerable in our community—that is what we do. I draw the attention of members to the fast train project that was promised in 1999. I have a *Daily Telegraph* headline here. It was supposed to be delivered in 2010—last year. For all their huff and puff, the Labor Party has no ground to stand on.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wyong should realise that no props are allowed.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: Record numbers on the Central Coast stormed the polling booths on 26 March 2011 first thing in the morning to vote Liberal. Many of them came up to me and said, "Darren, I have never voted Liberal in my entire life but I am going to vote Liberal today."

Mr Ryan Park: And they will never vote Liberal again.

Mr DARREN WEBBER: They also said, "I will never vote Labor again". For the first time in history, the electorates of Swansea and Wyong are represented by Liberal members of Parliament. All five Central Coast

seats have Liberal representation, and what good representation it is. Those opposite have 3½ long years to learn that we will deliver on our election commitments. Unlike those opposite, we will deliver. That is why they will be in opposition for years to come.

Question—That the words stand—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

GRAFFITI LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council, having considered the Legislative Assembly's message of 26 August 2011, relating to the Graffiti Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, requests a free conference with the Legislative Assembly with respect to the disagreement between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly on the bill and the Legislative Council has appointed the following ten members as managers for the Legislative Council: Mr Borsak, Mr Donnelly, Ms Fazio, Mr Foley, Mr Primrose, Mr Searle, Mr Secord, Mr Shoebridge, Ms Voltz and Ms Westwood.

Legislative Council
13 September 2011

DON HARWIN
President

Consideration of message set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! It being before 4.30 p.m. the House will now proceed with Government Business.

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial Year 2011-2012

Debate resumed from 8 September 2011.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [4.03 p.m.]: Today I ask the House to take note of the following matters in relation to my electorate of Swansea. The O'Farrell Government's first budget has delivered for the electorate of Swansea, primarily in health. The communities in the southern end of the electorate of Swansea will see direct benefits from the upgrade of Wyong Hospital. Whilst I acknowledge that Wyong Hospital is clearly within the electorate of my colleague and friend Darren Webber, the member for Wyong, it is the local hospital for the communities of Budgewoi, Halekulani, Doyalson, Mannering Park, Lake Munmorah, Gwandalan, Summerland Point and Chain Valley Bay. Accordingly, those communities will benefit from the \$2 million in upgrades to Wyong Hospital. The budget delivered \$500,000 to Life Education. I was privileged the Saturday before last to launch the Swansea Spring Festival. One of the themes of Swansea Spring Festival was "Healthy and Active Lifestyles". At the launch I was privileged to meet Healthy Harold, who is very popular with the kids.

Mr Clayton Barr: My kids love him.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: Kids do love him. The Government has delivered \$500,000 in its budget to the people of Swansea for healthy and active lifestyles. In addition, my own neighbourhood hospital, Belmont District Hospital, has been given a multimillion-dollar boost. The injection of millions of dollars into Belmont hospital will take pressure off John Hunter Hospital and Calvary Mater Hospital in Newcastle. Belmont hospital will receive \$4.4 million for the purchase of 14 sub-acute rehabilitation beds. In addition, it will receive \$3.1 million to purchase 10 acute care beds. I recently undertook a three-hour tour of Belmont District Hospital. Several years ago when Belmont hospital was lucky enough to have extension work, level three of the hospital was closed and the hospital lost 14 acute care beds. They were simply shut down—that was it, no more. In this latest budget, in addition to replacing the 14 beds that were lost, the hospital is getting another 10. As I said, the hospital will get 14 sub-acute rehabilitation beds as well as 10 acute care beds.

Ms Linda Burney: Say thank you.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: I will take your thanks. As I said, the extra beds at Belmont hospital will take pressure off the Hunter Valley's main hospitals, John Hunter Hospital and Calvary Mater. In relation to public hospitals in the Hunter Valley, in line with an election promise we have removed an insidious system that was put in place by the previous Government, known as balanced rostering. As a result of this system of balanced rostering the local nursing community throughout the Hunter Valley saw somewhat of an exodus of members of the nursing profession. Balanced rostering effectively removed from the nursing unit managers, the NUMs, and nursing staff the ability to set their own rosters. Many nurses have families, young and old. My partner is a registered nurse of many years' experience. She has an older family member to take care of. I like my meals cooked and she cuts my hair and gives me a shave, so this system played havoc with our lifestyle.

The member for Port Macquarie is in the Chamber, and as a member of the nurses profession she knows exactly what we are talking about. We have lived up to our election promise and dismantled balanced rostering so that the nursing unit managers are again able to deal directly with nurses on the floor and set more appropriate rosters that suit nurses' lifestyles. I return to the issue of the acute and sub-acute rehabilitation beds. In addition to taking pressure off hospitals such as the Calvary Mater and John Hunter hospitals, it also takes pressure off patients if people can access care closer to home. I do not believe anyone in this House would argue that if pressure is taken off the patient it will assist in his or her healing process. Wyong Hospital and Belmont hospital have done very well in the O'Farrell Government's first budget.

Another area where the electorate of Swansea did quite well in the O'Farrell Government's first budget—and I anticipate an objection from those opposite about this—is the dredging of Swansea Channel. Only 11 days out from the 26 March election, it was plastered all over the *Newcastle Herald* and other local press and on the radio throughout Swansea and Lake Macquarie that the then Government had decided to purchase a dredge to keep Swansea Channel navigable. But we discovered later that that was a furphy. There was no dredge—indeed, there was no money to buy the dredge. But from day one of this Government my staff and I have been engaged in constant dialogue with the office of the Minister for Primary Industries about this issue. Some two weeks ago tenders were called for dredging work in Swansea Channel and Black Ned's Bay.

People familiar with the area—I know the member for Cabramatta is very familiar with the Swansea region—will know that Black Ned's Bay is a small, sheltered area that accommodates several large charter fishing vessels. Currently those vessels find it extremely difficult to enter and leave Black Ned's Bay. It would be an absolute travesty if Black Ned's Bay were to close. As I said when I opened the Swansea Spring Festival a couple of weekends ago, one of the wonderful things about Swansea is that a great number of descendants of its traditional inhabitants, the Awabakal people, still live in the village of Swansea—not necessarily throughout the electorate but in the beautiful little village of Swansea between the lake and the ocean. Black Ned's Bay was named after one of the original Aboriginal inhabitants, Black Ned. Black Ned's descendants live in Swansea and at Black Ned's Bay, and they are extremely proud of their heritage. It is wonderful to have them living in the area.

I believe tenders for the dredging work close tomorrow. Although at one time I was a little concerned that there may be few tenders, up to two weeks ago 10 different corporations expressed interest in tendering for the work. That has come about as a result of pressure not only from my office and that of the Minister but from local businessmen, such as Les Binkin, the owner of Marmong Point Marina—a great little spot—and the owner of Marks Point Marina, where there is a great little restaurant; and from the Lake Macquarie Yacht Club. I would like to say that there was also pressure from the Belmont 16 Foot Sailing Club but, sadly, we do not need deep water to launch our boats—they are only small racing skiffs. The O'Farrell Government has also introduced amendments to the Residential Parks Act. The electorate of Swansea has several residential parks.

Mr Ryan Park: How many do you know?

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: There are 14. I have met with several groups of residents from these parks and they are very keen to have more certainty of tenure and of the conditions under which they live. This legislation will give them that certainty, and they will understand more about their rights and responsibilities as well as those of the park owners. The electorate of Swansea has 20 registered clubs that employ 2,500 residents and contribute several million dollars per year to local sporting groups and charities. One such charity, of which I am patron and of which I have been a member for quite a number of years, is Sailability. Sailability provides vessels and teaches sailing to people with any form of disability. My club, the Belmont 16 Foot Sailing Club, contributes \$75,000 per annum. I could say a great deal more—and I know those opposite would like me to do so—but I suspect there is an urgent need to proceed to the next item of business.

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

DEATH OF THE HON. ALAN ROBERT LINDSAY GORDON, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND MEMBER FOR MURRUMBIDGEE

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Education) [4.20 p.m.]: I move:

That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death, on 16 June 2011, of the Honourable Alan Robert Lindsay Gordon, a former Minister of the Crown.

Any member of Parliament is prone to being a controversial figure in the electorate. Lin was the member for Murrumbidgee a couple of members before me, but in my 12 years as the member for Murrumbidgee I have never heard a bad word spoken about Lin Gordon. That is probably not something most of us could say about ourselves or about former members of Parliament. Lin was a hardworking Australian Labor Party member for Murrumbidgee from February 1970 to March 1984; he replaced the former member, Al Grassby, in a by-election. Lin was born and raised in Cessnock and later studied pharmacy at the University of Sydney, graduating in 1945. He later moved to Leeton. Whilst in Leeton he was a long-term councillor and president of the Leeton Shire for some time.

I note the frequent references to his keen interest in sport, which remains almost essential to all people in the Riverina and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. From golf to tennis to the trots, Lin was involved in his local community—as all members of Parliament should be. As a lasting testament to his lifelong passion for the trots, Leeton is incredibly proud of its adopted son and named the local trotting track the Lin Gordon Paceway. Lin was heavily invested in Leeton: He was a small business owner, a family man and an avid sportsman with a budding interest in politics. Speaking as a member of a conservative government what I am about to say may be misinterpreted, but I am delighted that that Australian Labor Party of 1970 chose to preselect such a community-orientated man of Leeton as their candidate—as all political parties should continue to do.

Although we are from different sides of the political divide, Lin Gordon and I have a number of things in common: namely, our passionate support for the irrigation industry in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and all its people. Lin, like me, regarded the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area as the food bowl of our nation. Our notable agricultural exports are wheat, cotton, corn, rockmelon, oranges, almonds, cattle, grapes, wine and the list goes on. Irrigation is the backbone of the Murrumbidgee electorate's economy. Employment, industry and the community are driven by the successes of our agricultural exploits. In his inaugural speech Lin spoke of rice, wheat, oranges, carrots and the wool industry—things that are still grown in and exported from the area today. The Ricegrowers Co-operative Limited that was established in 1989 right before Lin was elected is still going strong today and is an industry force to be reckoned with. I find it interesting that in his inaugural speech Lin said:

The prospects of the rice industry are uncertain and the rice farmers do not know what the future holds for them.

Nothing has changed for those of Leeton and Griffith and other rice growing areas in that long period. The Murrumbidgee rice industry has just emerged from another prolonged period of uncertainty and a decade of drought, and is now looking to the future. I hold considerable hope for a strong future for rice in my local area, especially with the support of rice growers. Indeed with the debate about the future of the Murray-Darling basin being conducted, I would have thoroughly enjoyed a robust conversation with Lin about the importance of farmers, agriculture and the value of water to the community in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. I am in no doubt as to what Lin's view on the topic would have been.

A number of members in the new O'Farrell Government are from regional areas. The Deputy Premier, my fellow Nationals member Andrew Stoner and I are unashamedly passionate advocates for our regions—as all members are. I am pleased to say that Lin was definitely one of the many members for Murrumbidgee who was determined to put the electorate first, and that includes Al Grassby, Adrian Cruickshank and me. As I mentioned, while Lin may not have been born in Leeton he was Leeton through and through and the community embraced him with open arms. I am sure everyone in this place knows that I am the son of Italian migrants and the Murrumbidgee is a place where migrants have worked hard and achieved a lot. Lin has always been an advocate for the ethnic diversity of the Murrumbidgee electorate for which that electorate is eternally grateful.

In 1976 Lin was elevated to the ministry in the Wran Government as the Minister for Conservation and Water Resources. I am not sure whether it is an easier portfolio to have now than it was in the 1970s. That was a period when irrigation licences were being given out; now they are being taken away. That suggests it was probably a little bit easier. While the Wran Government held only a one-seat majority at the time, it embarked

on a period of reform and change. In this way we all can acknowledge that the first Wran Ministry of 1976 is similar to the O'Farrell Ministry of 2011—both had a Cabinet committed to change. Lin also served as the Minister for Lands, the Minister for Forests and the Minister for Local Government—all important portfolios for members representing regional electorates.

As a new Minister in the new Government, I can only begin to imagine the changes that Lin saw during his time as Minister and subsequently. If we were able to compare our experiences as Ministers in two different governments, I would expect that the concern of constituents for basic public services in our part of the world would remain constant. But the way that each individual Minister solves these problems is indicative of their commitment to doing the right thing by those constituents. Surely that is one of the reasons why we are all members of Parliament and precisely the reason that Lin was a member of Parliament. We all want to help out those who require that vital assistance. As I said at the outset, that is why Lin is so universally well regarded and held in such high esteem in the Murrumbidgee electorate.

I am proud to be a successor to Lin in the seat of Murrumbidgee. As a family man with a beautiful wife and two energetic young boys I know how incredibly difficult it is to find balance in striving to be a good politician and ensure your family receives the love and attention that it deserves. I am certain that travel to and from this place was not as easy in the 1970s as it is today. They are the different challenges that Lin faced as the member for Murrumbidgee. When my staffer was liaising with Kim and Chris regarding today's condolence motion, my staffer indicated that this motion would take place after question time and the estimated time would be 4.15 p.m., but that the motion would also be dependent on a number of other matters taking place in the House.

To their credit both Kim and Chris were extremely gracious about this and both reminisced that they knew exactly what Parliament was like when their dad was a member of Parliament and a Minister. Parliament is a flexible and fluid place where nothing is ever really on time. It is troubling that perhaps nothing has changed in this place since Lin was the member for Murrumbidgee. I pay tribute to Lin's late wife, Merle. The wives and husbands of politicians are the unsung heroes of this place and always have been. While Merle and one of his children, Lynne, have since passed away, it is appropriate that I mention them at this time since all of us in this place have loving families that deserve every accolade. Lin is survived by four of his five children, Anne, Sue, Christopher and Kim, as well as 14 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

On Lin's retirement in 1984 he was succeeded by Adrian Cruickshank who passed away last year—another tireless promoter of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and the Murrumbidgee electorate. I never got to see either of them but I am sure they had many a ding-dong battle in their time. As I said, Lin was highly regarded and well respected by the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party in the Murrumbidgee electorate and in this House. He is real testament to a true representative member of Parliament. He was greatly supported both locally in the Riverina and in this Parliament. My thoughts and prayers are with him and his family at this difficult time.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [4.29 p.m.]: It is with great sadness and yet pride that I mark the passing in June of one of Labor's greats and a true servant of this State, the Hon. Alan Robert Lindsay Gordon, known affectionately as Lin, at the age of 94. Lin Gordon served for 14 years as the State Labor member for Murrumbidgee and while Murrumbidgee is today a safe Nationals seat it used to be quite marginal. It is a tribute to Mr Gordon's intelligence, discipline and work ethic as a local member that he was elected to this place no fewer than six times. He was the victor at a by-election in 1970 and subsequently was re-elected in 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978 and 1981, before retiring undefeated at the 1984 election, from which point the seat reverted to the National Party.

Politics is first and foremost about serving the community. In this sprawling 36,000 square kilometre electorate in central southern New South Wales, taking in population centres such as Griffith and Leeton, the people of Murrumbidgee knew they had a champion, a man born with the spirit of regional New South Wales coursing through his veins. As the Minister has said, he was born in Cessnock in 1917 and educated at St Joseph's Primary School and Cessnock High School. Lin Gordon moved with his wife, Merle, to Leeton in the late 1950s where he commenced work in a pharmacy. He subsequently went on to own his own pharmacy and served as a proud member of the Leeton community for a further decade before asking for the honour of being their representative in State Parliament.

In many ways, Lin Gordon was the type of member we have lost in this place: a man who honed a skill, raised a family, worked hard all his life and then got his chance to apply all that accumulated life wisdom in

Parliament at the ripe age of 53. It was because of those many years in his local community that he was able to remain in touch even as his career scaled great heights of ministerial responsibility and took him to Sydney for long stretches. Our parliamentarians are getting younger and younger, and whilst I would argue that youthful energy and idealism are important, there is a place for knockabout folk with life wisdom too. Our Parliament would be richer today if it had a few more Lin Gordons sitting on these benches. Mr Gordon was a key figure in the Government of Neville Wran, holding portfolios including Conservation, which was later split into Lands and Forests.

He also served briefly in an acting capacity as Minister for Health, Minister for Corrective Services and Minister for Local Government. It was in the portfolio of Water Resources that Lin Gordon left his biggest legacy. His achievement as Minister from 1976 to 1981 was to construct dams and devise far-sighted water management plans across the length and breadth of New South Wales. These include the \$47 million Glennies Creek Dam in the Hunter Valley near Singleton and the \$56 million Windamere Dam in the Macquarie Valley near Mudgee, to name just two of the 16 rural water storage facilities initiated by the Wran Government. Lin Gordon was the Minister who introduced volumetric allocation as part of water licences in 1977.

For the first time, each water licence holder was given a restricted base allocation, a pioneering concept in New South Wales to promote efficient water use. Lin Gordon was also a visionary when it came to causes such as softwood tree planting, soil conservation and salinity reduction. In later life, Lin remained a vigorous member of the Leeton community and, as the Minister said, maintained his keen interest in golf, tennis and harness racing. It says a great deal about Lin Gordon that both sides of the House speak so proudly and passionately about the man. One of the great challenges in this place is to build close friendships and be held in high regard by both sides of this House. That he did so, more than any of his achievements, speaks great volumes about the character of the man, his commitment and his passion for his community.

As the Minister and member for Murrumbidgee has said, you cannot find anyone who has a bad word to say about him. More importantly, irrespective of the differences in politics, he is held in great regard for the contribution he made to this great State and to the community of Murrumbidgee. On behalf of the Labor Party I pass on my condolences to the family and thank them for Lin Gordon's remarkable life of service to the Labor Party and, most importantly, his community and the people of New South Wales.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [4.34 p.m.]: I speak to the condolence motion for Alan Robert Lindsay Gordon, known as Lin. I express my sympathies to his family who are in the gallery today. Obviously Mr Gordon was a very fine looking man judging by the appearance of his family. Needless to say, he was a fine man in this place as well as in his electorate and further afield. Lin Gordon was born on 19 January 1917 in Cessnock and, sadly, passed away on 16 June this year in Wagga Wagga.

As the member for Murrumbidgee has outlined, he was the Minister for Water Resources for a number of years, from 1976 to 1981. He was also Minister for Forests and Minister for Lands, portfolios that now fall under my portfolio of Primary Industries. I am also the member for Burrinjuck, which is the neighbouring electorate to Murrumbidgee, and we share the rural essence of the Southern Tablelands, the Riverina and the South West. Mr Gordon was a member of the Australian Labor Party at a time when the Labor Party tried to represent the regions, something which has sadly fallen away in recent times. Obviously he was a terrific man and I know that former representatives of the electorate of Burrinjuck around that time would have been of the same calibre.

Mr Gordon was the Secretary of Leeton District Tennis Club, President of Leeton Golf Club and President of Leeton Trotting Club. In fact he was prominent in the construction of a new paceway that was later named the Lin Gordon Paceway. As the Leader of the Opposition has just outlined, he was inspirational in his view of water resources in this State, having introduced volumetric allocations for water licensing in 1977. In his inaugural speech to this Parliament he mentioned a number of issues that were significant in his electorate at the time. It is interesting sometimes to look back and see that what was important years ago, even decades ago, is as relevant today as it was then. One of the matters he mentioned in his speech was a mice plague. This year we again have a mice plague in New South Wales.

Mr Gordon was obviously very passionate about agriculture and represented his electorate very well because in his speech he explained that he talked the Minister for Agriculture through the mice problem that was facing New South Wales and the dreadful impact it would have on the wheat crop. He convinced the Minister for Agriculture to get the Premier on board and get \$2 million from the Rural Bank to help deal with the mice

plague. Once again this spring we will have a similar problem with mice in New South Wales. It is important to recognise members of this place who have been inspirational and who have served this place and their electorates very well. Clearly Lin Gordon was such a man. I again express my sympathy to his dear family. I know they must be grieving at this difficult time. I say to them that Lin Gordon certainly has the respect of members in this place.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I call the Opposition Whip and member for Mount Druitt, who is the only member in the House today who had the honour of serving with the Hon. Lin Gordon.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [4.38 p.m.]: I join with the Minister for Education, and member for Murrumbidgee, the Minister for Primary Industries and the New South Wales Labor Leader, John Robertson, in paying tribute to Lin Gordon. Members of the family might have heard the Minister's interjection when he said I was in the place 30 years before Mr Lin Gordon came here. Being the Father of the House I have sometimes been asked whether I served with Charles Wentworth or Sir Henry Parkes. Today I can say that I had the privilege of serving with Lin Gordon for a very short time, of knowing him quite well in the short time we shared the benches here, and later on as a Minister.

I pass on my condolences to the large group of family members in the gallery, in memory also of those who have since departed from the family. When I look at the ages of those in the gallery, I realise that many of them would not know Lin Gordon as a member of Parliament; they would have known him as pop or grandfather or in whatever family role he played. Lin Gordon left this place in 1984. Some of the children, particularly grandchildren, will hear us talking about Lin's life well before their memories of him. Because Lin lived a long life, family members are lucky that they can share so many aspects of his life before, during and after politics.

As Lin retired in 1984, I should point out that some rules of this Parliament would preclude a condolence motion for a member unless the member held a ministerial position. Consequently, many members who served in this place back in the eighties and nineties but were not Ministers are not afforded a condolence motion. I suppose one of the privileges accorded the late Lin Gordon as a former Minister is that members, like me, who served with him and some members who did not know him now have the opportunity to reflect on his contribution to this Parliament and the State. I think it is generous of a successor member for Murrumbidgee, the Minister for Education, taking not only the very active role in moving this motion but also looking after the family's interests in doing so. I thank him for that.

As has been said, I am the only member of the House who served alongside and shared time with Lin Gordon as a member of this Parliament. I was elected in a by-election in October 1983 and was sworn in on 1 November 1983. The State election at which Lin Gordon retired was in March 1984. So there were only so many days that I had the opportunity to share with him in this place—all of November, a bit of December and, of course with the upcoming election, not many more sitting days. However, I have very fond memories of Lin Gordon. As I arrived here, Lin was coming to the end of a long career in local government—I will not hold that against him—as well as in State Parliament as a member of this place and as a Minister in the Wran Government.

Lin Gordon was a Cabinet Minister for all of the time after Labor won the election, by one seat, in 1976. Lin had been elected in a by-election in 1971. Much has been said about the lead-up to that by-election. The Labor Party had held the electorate of Murrumbidgee since 1941, when Labor won the seat in William McKell's big election win, starting a 24-year term for the Labor Party between 1941 and 1965. The electorate of Murrumbidgee, as with a number of others, such as Burrinjuck, was held by the Labor Party for all that time. When Al Grassby indicated that he would run for a Federal seat in about 1969, the Labor Party went through the process of preselection, as do all political parties. Lin Gordon was preselected, I understand by one vote. How the history of that electorate may have changed had he not won preselection.

The Country Party, as it was then called, now The Nationals, put up a very strong fight to try to win back the electorates that the Labor Party had held for generations. They used arguments, for instance, that Lin Gordon was not a farmer but a pharmacist, and the like. That did not seem to wash with voters, and Lin won the seat quite comfortably in the by-election and was re-elected in 1973. As has been indicated, as a result of the one-seat win in 1976, he became a Minister in the Wran Government. This Chamber is a bit different. It has been said that some things around here do not change, but some do. When Lin Gordon came into this place the walls of this Chamber were all white.

Look at some of the old black and white pictures that show that the walls were not decorated in the beautiful heritage greens and patterns as they now are. The black and white pictures in the Jubilee Room I think will show them to be what I call hospital white. I assume that a very good Minister for Public Works, probably in the Askin Government, tried to save money at budget time and had all the government buildings of Macquarie Street painted the same colour. It was very bland. It was not until the late 1970s that we got new buildings and the new technology that we have at the moment. So some changes were made to this Chamber. By the time I got here, it was very much like it now is.

I would like members and others to draw a mental picture of what this building was like back then. As we walked to the Members' Dining Room we did not turn left, as we do now; we turned to the right, where there was a function or dining room and tables were set up, generally as they are now, for Labor Party, Country Party and Liberal Party members. I want to say one thing about Lin Gordon: he, Don Day, Pat Flaherty and others, even as Ministers, came down to the dining room and shared lunches and dinners with members of Parliament. Backbenchers were thus able to see Ministers sitting around their tables and talk to them about the issues of the day. Lin Gordon was one of those very approachable Ministers. I was always happy to talk with him.

When I walked in the door of this Chamber in 1984, the place was in uproar. The Opposition was making all sorts of outrageous claims against the Labor Government of the time. Some things do not change. I sat at the back of the Chamber and listened to Jack Ferguson's speeches. At some point in question time Bill Beckroge, the member for Broken Hill, got up and asked a question of Lin Gordon. When Mr Gordon rose immediately and spoke fluently at the lectern opposite me in answering the question, I recall thinking, as a brand new member of Parliament of 10 minutes, "Gee, that Minister knows everything. He's so well prepared; he anticipated that question beautifully." Later in the day I learnt about the trick of the Dorothy Dix question. Later that day I remained in the Chamber, as a lot of members do in their early days, to hear a debate in the evening.

Again Lin Gordon was involved. Check the *Hansard* record and you will see that Lin Gordon was a regular and major contributor to parliamentary debates. That evening as the debate was going on in the Chamber—I think it was to do with local government and valuations—a fairly new member, I think it was Peter Collins, was giving Lin a bit of stick. He was talking about what might be termed these days a shotgun wedding between The Greens and the Shooters and Fishers, or something like that—although the groups were different in those days. When Peter Collins made the point about some sort of shotgun wedding, Lin Gordon yelled out, "You would need a shotgun to get anyone to marry you." The inexperienced Peter Collins was quite shattered by that sort of retort.

Mr Adrian Piccoli: You still use the same interjection 30 years later.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: It is a good one. Joe Schipp, a country Liberal Party member and predecessor of the member for Wagga Wagga, was also involved in that debate. I remember at the time noting that *Hansard* recorded 10 of the many more interjections by Lin Gordon on Joe Schipp. As they were neighbouring local members, I guessed such challenges were to be expected of two neighbouring local members from different political parties. I had never met Lin Gordon before that time. However, in the 1970s, as a new branch member at Rooty Hill, I got to read a lot of the publications that came in the mail. Branches got their information by mail in those days. I remember a magazine put out by the Labor Party called the *Rural Review*. In it, Terry Sheahan, Don Day and Jack Renshaw were always referred to by Neville Wran and others when spruiking Labor's rural credentials, which were certainly very strong at the time.

On that particular occasion Lin was put up in rural New South Wales as very much a leading figure of the Labor Government. The Leader of the Opposition has highlighted some of Lin's projects. I too like doing that. Lin's record of provision of facilities for country New South Wales is probably unmatched. Lin Gordon, along with Don Day and Jack Ferguson, retired at the 1984 elections. The National Party preselected a fellow called Adrian Cruickshank. It is sad that I have been here so long that I have also spoken on the condolence motion for Adrian. He won the seat, and the National Party has held it ever since. Lin Gordon was the last Labor Party member to represent the electorate of Murrumbidgee.

To reflect on Lin Gordon is also to reflect on what he represented: not just his electorate, but a golden time for Labor in rural New South Wales. Any extensive list of Labor members of that time would include people such as Terry Sheahan and his father Bill; Jack Renshaw who held not only the Castlereagh electorate but also was a Premier of New South Wales; Mick Clough, who won the seat of Blue Mountains, moving to Bathurst, losing it in 1988 and winning it back in 1991; Bill McCarthy, who held the seat of Armidale; John Akister, who lost his seat in 1988; Don Day, who I have mentioned already; Harold Mair, about whom the

Leader of the Opposition paid tribute last week; and more recently people such as Bill Beckroge, who held Broken Hill; Peter Black; Gerard Martin; and Harry Woods, of course, who won a seat for Labor in the late 1990s.

Lin Gordon stands with that list of Labor representatives in rural New South Wales of whom we are always so very proud. Lin always said that winning seats like Murrumbidgee was not easy. Often he would say that we had to win the seat by getting the vote from people who would not count themselves as Labor voters but, rather, as non-Labor voters—Liberal, National or Country Party. When I visited the region as Minister back in the late 1990s Lin told me, "The Nats are pretty tough to break down." I asked, "What do you mean?" Lin said, "Well, I made some representations as a Minister for a young fellow." I cannot recall whether it was about getting a job, saving him from getting the sack or saving him from being charged. Lin said, "I went to bat for this young fellow and we got a good result." His farmer father was walking up the street one day and said:

Mr Gordon, I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and from the family for the work that you did and saved the reputation of my son. He just went out of his way for a short while and I must say that he is now on the straight and narrow, and the family is absolutely proud of him. We know that he wouldn't be in the position he is in if it wasn't for your great representation. If there's anything, Mr Gordon, I could do for you, at all, just don't hesitate to ring.

Lin, who sometimes might have been regarded as a modest man, waved him away and said:

Don't worry about it. It's just part of the job. Maybe one day you might just vote for me at the next election.

The fellow was startled and said, "Oh, I'm sorry Mr Gordon, I couldn't do that." Lin always said that it was pretty tough to win those seats. However, he did win many elections and was never defeated. I had a few opportunities to meet with him during my time as Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation. Certainly, Lin always was gentlemanly, as I am sure everyone would agree. If I may be old fashioned I would say that he gave the image of being a country gentleman although his origins were in the Hunter region. He certainly was encouraging: everyone felt his advice was genuine.

I shall not name all his family members, but may I say that in that five months it was a great privilege to work with someone who was so highly regarded. I acknowledge the comments of the Minister and others that no-one could say a nasty word about Lin Gordon. If we all were to be regarded in that way, it would not be a bad record to have. I join with the Labor Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party in offering my condolences and expressing our sorrow at Lin Gordon's passing. I know his family will be extremely proud of him, as we all are.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [4.53 p.m.]: I shall make a brief contribution to the debate on the condolence motion for Alan Robert Lindsay "Lin" Gordon. It is an honour and privilege to add to the words of other members who have spoken about Lin. Not everyone who serves in this place has the privilege of having Ministers and members speak on a condolence motion; traditionally those motions are moved for people just like Lin Gordon. I also acknowledge his family, particularly Kim and Adrian Vanderwright, who are constituents of mine in the Wagga Wagga electorate where Lin spent his final years. It is important that I make that acknowledgement because the Wagga Wagga electorate shares a boundary with the Murrumbidgee electorate and the member for Mount Druitt commented particularly about the occasional rivalry between members of adjoining electorates. It is always a healthy rivalry because after debates and friendly interjection, many lifelong friendships are formed across the floor of this place. I want family members to know that and to know that Lin Gordon shared many of those friendships with members of other political parties. Lin was well regarded.

I met him when I was a young man. I remember the farm where he and his wife, Merle, resided for many years had a fancy set of wrought iron gates and was a landmark on the drive out of Leeton, as was Lin. He traversed his electorate and did a lot of good. I do not believe that he ever sought fame, recognition or accolades. He just did his job, as do many members of Parliament. We all come to this place from different pathways. Perhaps for some of us it was our life's goal and ambition to be a member of Parliament and others are accidental members of Parliament. But we are all here with one purpose in mind, that is to do what is good for the electorate and to deliver for our community.

The member for Mount Druitt had the great privilege of serving with Lin Gordon, albeit for such a short time. We all appreciate those experiences because we learn from those who have served for many years. They pass on great wisdom to other members. Perhaps many of us too will have such an opportunity in the years to come when we reflect on some members with whom we have served. I am sure those members also will be

remembered warmly as Lin Gordon is remembered warmly. We extend to his family our sincere condolences. We acknowledge also Lin's wife, Merle, who passed on earlier and the support and love families give to members of Parliament.

It is a difficult job being away from home for many months of the year, but they are always supported by partners, spouses and families, who give up a lot so that their father, mother or whomever can serve the electorate in which they reside and represent but, more importantly, which they love. I join with other members in this condolence motion and extend to Lin's family my sincere condolences from my family but, importantly, from the people of the Wagga Wagga electorate, who knew Lin Gordon well through all his pursuits and his ministerial work. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

BUSINESS NAMES (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL 2011

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts.

Agreement in Principle

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [5.00 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011. This bill will help to cut red tape for businesses in New South Wales, especially for small businesses that operate across State boundaries. It is the culmination of an important national reform initiative that will have significant positive outcomes for the entire Australian economy. The purpose of registration is to ensure that consumers and traders are easily able to identify who is operating a business. This ensures transparency, and helps to prevent dodgy operators from hiding behind a trading name.

At present, each State and Territory has in place its own legislation for registering business names, including New South Wales. This means that a trader who wants to trade under a business name in multiple jurisdictions must register the name in each State, which is both costly and time consuming. As I am sure members will acknowledge, maintaining these multiple State and Territory registration systems imposes undue costs and administrative burdens on the business community, and does not reflect the demands and realities of today's Australian economy. The situation is particularly frustrating for those people who operate their businesses along State borders. It also does not take into account the growth of electronic commerce under which a business with a physical presence in only one jurisdiction may now operate online and provide goods and services throughout Australia.

That is why the Council of Australian Governments, as part of the national seamless economy partnership agreement, established the national business names project in July 2008. An intergovernmental agreement for business names was signed in July 2009. The agreement provides that the States will refer their business names registration powers to the Commonwealth. In turn, the Commonwealth will establish a single national business names register, under which a person may register a national business name. Establishment of the national register is only the first stage of longer-term national reforms that will ultimately make it easier for businesses to interact with all levels of government on many routine matters.

This part of the project is known as the business online service. The business online service will enable a business to establish an online account that will provide a single portal for interaction with governments. A business will be able to use this account to carry out many routine transactions, such as searching for business licensing information, notification to government agencies of a change in particulars such as a new business address, or renewals of different licences and authorities. All jurisdictions have been working towards creating a single national business names registration scheme. This has required extensive consultation on the necessary legislation, the functional requirements of the new system, and the processes for transferring State and Territory

information and operations to the Commonwealth. Establishment of a national scheme is a major step in the reduction of government red tape and will provide enormous benefits for the economy as a whole. It will reduce the regulatory burden and costs, and the seamless online facility will streamline the whole process.

I will now outline some of the key features of the new national business names scheme. It will be administered by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and will provide an integrated system for the registration, renewal and searching of business names. Applicants will have the choice of registering a name for one or three years. Traders will be able to register and renew their names online, meaning they can carry out the transaction at a time that suits them. Of course, if they still want to fill in a paper form the Australian Securities and Investments Commission will also allow for that.

It will be essential to have an Australian business number to register a new name under the national scheme. The system will streamline this process by enabling a business to apply simultaneously for an Australian business number and a business name using the online facility. All existing business names on State and Territory registers will be migrated to the new system at changeover and will be deemed validly registered. When a person has registered the same name in several jurisdictions, it will only be necessary for them to maintain one registration to operate nationally under the new scheme. Where a business owner holds several different business names, all of which will be able to be used throughout the country, there will be a facility to enable a common renewal date for all of those names. Fees are likely to be lower than under most current State systems, producing an additional saving for business.

The Commonwealth legislation also provides that detailed information on the national register will continue to be available to State and Territory licensing and law enforcement authorities. When information about a person has been suppressed on a State or Territory register—such as for personal health or safety reasons—that information will be protected on the national register and will not be released to the general public without the person's consent.

The Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011 provides the necessary New South Wales legislative framework for these important reforms. Firstly, it provides a text-based referral of the State Government's business names powers to the Commonwealth based on legislation introduced into the Tasmanian Parliament. Secondly, it deals with a number of transitional arrangements. These preserve the rights of existing New South Wales business name holders and, together with the Commonwealth's transitional provisions, they allow for smooth transfer of administration so as to minimise disruptions to business. Thirdly, it makes a number of necessary consequential amendments to other New South Wales legislation.

I turn now to the detailed provisions of the bill before the House. The bill refers certain business names matters to the Commonwealth, by reference to the text of the Commonwealth's Business Names Registration Bill 2011 and the Business Names Registration (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill 2011 as tabled in the House of Assembly of Tasmania on 5 July 2011. The text of the two Commonwealth bills is defined in the New South Wales referral provisions as the tabled text. For ease of reference I shall refer to these respectively as the "main Commonwealth bill" and the "Commonwealth transitional bill".

The terms of the referral provisions in the New South Wales bill are as agreed by all States and are largely self-explanatory. However, I will mention several key provisions. In clause 3, the definition of "business name" is the same as that in the main Commonwealth bill. An Australian business number will be essential for registration of a new business name under the national scheme, and the definition clarifies that a "business" will not include any activity for which an entity is not entitled to an Australian business number. The term "exemption provision" refers to clauses 19 (5) and 20 (3) of the main Commonwealth bill. Clauses 19 and 20 are offence provisions concerning requirements to include a business name in written communications and to display a business name at places of business open to the public.

However, subclauses 19 (5) and 20 (3) provide exemptions, for example, if the display of a business name would be contrary to a Commonwealth, State or Territory law. Clause 5 (2) of the New South Wales bill preserves these exemptions by providing that the Commonwealth will not be able to omit an exemption provision in its legislation without enacting an equivalent provision, or otherwise limiting the operation of an exemption provision. When allocating a new business name under the national scheme the Australian Securities and Investments Commission will not be able to issue a name that is the same as a name already allocated to an entity on a notified State register as defined. This will avoid confusion with entities registered under State laws, such as incorporated associations and cooperatives.

Clauses 4, 5 and 6 of the New South Wales bill contain the substance of this State's referral to the Commonwealth. Clause 5 is a critical provision. Clause 5 (1) specifies exactly what "continuing business names matters" within the power of the State are referred to the Commonwealth. Just as importantly, clause 5 (2) sets out those matters not being referred to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth will not be able to restrict the ability of a New South Wales government body to carry on business under a name, or to impose restrictions on a government body to include a name in communications or to display a name. There are equivalent protections for legislation relating to notified State registers. The Commonwealth will not be able to restrict this State's ability to provide for an entity's name by way of New South Wales legislation, nor affect the imposition or payment of any taxes under our laws.

Clauses 6 and 7 of the bill provide for the formal referral of powers, with reference to the tabled text of the Commonwealth bills, and also limit the Commonwealth's powers to make amendments. Clauses 8 and 9 are formal provisions concerning the manner in which New South Wales may terminate its referral of powers. Clause 10 provides for evidence as to the tabled text in the Parliament of Tasmania. I have outlined already the many benefits that the new national scheme will provide for businesses in New South Wales. However, it is particularly important to ensure a smooth operational transition to the new scheme and to protect the rights of existing business name holders under the current New South Wales Business Names Act 2002.

I refer now to schedule 1 of the New South Wales bill, which provides the necessary savings and transitional provisions. These complement those in the Commonwealth transitional bill. Part 1 contains various definitions. "Existing business names legislation" is defined as the New South Wales Business Names Act 2002 and any regulations made under that Act, as well as the relevant provisions of the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002. Part 2 covers the operational transfer of functions to the Commonwealth. Clause 2 enables New South Wales to migrate data and provide information to the Commonwealth for the purposes of establishing the national register. Clause 3 provides that the existing business names legislation ceases upon the changeover date, except where some provisions continue in operation to finalise certain matters that are pending as at that date.

Clause 4 preserves the operation of offence provisions where the conduct occurred before the changeover date. Clause 5 preserves the right to recover fees and charges payable under the existing legislation as at the changeover date and also enables fees to be charged under any provisions that continue in operation. Clause 6 enables the Commissioner for Fair Trading to refuse to exercise certain functions during the transitional period before changeover date. The practicalities of final data migration to the Commonwealth's system may require New South Wales to close its business names register some days prior to the changeover date, with no new matters accepted. I can assure members that plenty of advance notice will be given about any closure of the New South Wales register, if that is required.

Clause 7 covers the renewal of business names and reflects the Commonwealth transitional bill and operational arrangement made with Australian Securities and Investments Commission. The States will issue renewal notices for business names where the due date for renewal occurs before the changeover date, while the Australian Securities and Investments Commission will issue the renewal notices for business names with due dates on or after the changeover date. Clause 8 is an evidentiary provision relating to certificates of business names and extracts from the New South Wales register issued before the changeover date. Clauses 9 to 14 cover the resolution of matters that are outstanding as at the changeover date. Clauses 9 and 10 enable completion of pending applications for registration, renewal or restoration of a name, or for variation of particulars.

Clauses 11 and 12 preserve existing rights of review and appeal and pending proceedings in the Administrative Decisions Tribunal or a court. However, there is no appeal against a decision to refuse to carry out certain functions prior to changeover in accordance with clause 6. Clause 13 provides that all matters on hand but not yet completed will be notified to the Commonwealth as "held" matters, and will be completed under the existing legislation. This will include those matters where the review or appeal periods have not yet expired. Once a held matter has been finalised, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission will be notified as to whether the relevant business name is to be confirmed as registered on the national register or is to be removed. Clause 14 preserves existing offence provisions to held business names.

Part 3, schedule 1, clauses 15 to 18 contain miscellaneous provisions relating to compensation, delegations, references to previous business names legislation and the making of regulations. Schedule 2 provides for repeal of existing business names legislation. Schedule 3 contains consequential amendments to other New South Wales legislation. The transfer of State-based business names powers to the Commonwealth is an important national reform that will benefit businesses across the country while still ensuring that consumers

remain protected. It is an important measure that will cut red tape and regulation for local businesses and make it much easier for them to expand interstate. This is exactly the type of measure New South Wales needs to get this State back up and running.

The Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011 is the culmination of a significant national reform initiative that will provide real and tangible benefits to the people of New South Wales. I take this opportunity to thank the dedicated staff in the Office of Fair Trading, who have worked tirelessly to bring this reform to the House, and other members of the New South Wales public service who through their professionalism and devotion to their duties have enabled us to take this task forward to the Commonwealth. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CHERIE BURTON (Kogarah) [5.14 p.m.]: The Opposition does not oppose the Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011. The background of the legislation is that the previous Labor Government commenced this process in July 2008 when the Council of Australian Governments agreed that all States would refer their business names and registration powers to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth would establish a single national register for business names which would enable businesses to register a business name and obtain an Australian business number [ABN] in one transaction. In 2009 the Commonwealth determined that an Australian business number would be a prerequisite for obtaining a business name under the national scheme.

The implementation of a national business names register is an important project designed to simplify business processes and reduce business costs. It will remove the need for a person to register a business name in multiple jurisdictions. The system will be administered by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and will be available online. As the Minister outlined, there are protections for existing business name holders. All names currently registered in States and Territories will be migrated to the new system and protected under grandfather provisions, which enable them to be continued and renewed. When a person has the same name registered in several jurisdictions, he or she needs to maintain only one of those registrations. In the case of identical migrated names being registered to different persons, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission may include a distinguishing term on the register, such as location.

The referral of powers is a text-based referral, based on the text of the Commonwealth Business Names Registration Bill 2011, the main Commonwealth bill, and the Business Names Registration (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill 2011 tabled in the Parliament of Tasmania, the lead State. The State's referral provisions contain appropriate exclusions and protections for State laws, as the Minister outlined in his agreement in principle speech, and the main Commonwealth bill contains concurrent operation provisions in relation to State and Territory laws. Commonwealth and State transitional legislation provides for a smooth operational changeover under which States will issue renewal notices for due dates before the changeover date and will complete all matters on hand as at that date. Existing appeal rights are preserved and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission will continue renewal notices for all business names with renewal dates after the changeover date.

The Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011 will provide these powers to the Commonwealth and contains the necessary provisions and consequential amendments to other New South Wales legislation. Passage of this legislation in 2011 is necessary to ensure commencement of the scheme in May 2012. The Opposition supports the legislation. I commend the Government for bringing it on in a timely manner. Businesses will be able to look forward to a more streamlined process when registering business names, particularly across the States. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Donald Page and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial Year 2011-2012

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.18 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in the Chamber this evening on the budget handed down by our Government last week. I will go through it in some detail and highlight the funding that will be made to my wonderful electorate of Hawkesbury.

The Liberal-Nationals Government's first budget, delivered last week, is about rebuilding New South Wales and improving roads and transport in electorates around New South Wales, including my area of Hawkesbury. Rebuilding New South Wales means that this Government has to repair what was left behind—and it was certainly a sad tale prior to 26 March—improve services and build infrastructure on behalf of the people of New South Wales, and we have a significant funding shortfall of some \$5 billion. The Government is very conscious that if we do not get expenses under control there will be no funds to fix the services that people rely on every day.

This budget delivers, with 900 more teachers, 2,475 more nurses, 550 police officers and a record infrastructure investment to address the building backlog left by the former Government. Spending on hospitals and health capital works over the next four years amounts to \$4.7 billion—a 50 per cent increase on the past four years. Locally, we are delivering on our promises to fast-track the North West Rail Link, with \$314 million invested in 2011-12 to develop and build the 23-kilometre link between Epping and Rouse Hill. There is no-one prouder than I am to say in this House that our Government has delivered on that piece of infrastructure that was promised as far back as 1998, with not a shred of action undertaken before now. I acknowledge the fact that just last week geotechnical works were started in Castle Hill.

We are also investing a million dollars this year to replace the Windsor Bridge, which will address an ongoing problem for the people of the north west. Windsor Bridge is old and is deteriorating rapidly. In 2008 a new bridge was promised by the former member for Riverstone and the previous Government. The announcement was made with great fanfare, and there were front-page stories in all the local papers. However, it is now 2011 and nothing has happened. Actually I retract that statement because a lot has happened since 26 March, but nothing happened between 2008 when the project was announced until 26 March this year. Many stories were circulated as to the reason for the hold-up, but the truth is the previous Government failed to get on with the job. I am very proud to say that our Government has taken decisive action.

The Government has decided on a specific option for Windsor Bridge, and when the project is completed it will afford safe access across a significant span of the Hawkesbury River. The height of the bridge, being almost level with Putty Road at Wilberforce, will be above the level reached by every significant flood in the area for the past two centuries, except for a flood in 1867. So when the bridge is built we will have flood-free access for the first time between Windsor and outer rural areas towards Wilberforce, Freemans Reach, Glossodia and onwards up the Putty Road to the Hunter Valley. Once again, as the very proud member for Hawkesbury, I am absolutely thrilled that the Premier and the Minister for Roads and Ports have committed to that project, with millions of dollars announced in the budget to begin the upgrade.

The budget also includes an additional \$200 million to tackle road blackspots and reduce traffic congestion, including an upgrade to Bells Line of Road—which is certainly not before time. There have been some horrific accidents on Bells Line of Road, especially in the past four or five years, with many lives lost. Funding for the upgrade is good news for people in the area and for those travelling on Bells Line of Road from the Central West to the beautiful areas of the Hawkesbury and down further into the north west and on to Sydney. Additional expenditure of \$2 million will be provided for resurfacing Bells Line of Road west of Warks Hill Road, Kurrajong Heights, and \$250,000 is allocated for the development of a long-term strategic corridor plan in 2011-12. Also, \$2 million will be provided to replace the Macdonald River Bridge in the beautiful area of St Albans and there will be a boost in funding for community transport.

The budget includes \$2 billion for disability services—an area that I know interests you greatly, Madam Acting-Speaker. It is a huge injection of funding. I point out that the Minister for Disability Services recently and very kindly granted \$50,000 to an organisation in the Kellyville area in my electorate, Hear the Children. I congratulate one of the convenors of that organisation, Yvonne Keane, who helped to create that facility and who has a hearing-impaired child. Hear the Children is a private organisation that relies very much on fundraising and grants to keep going. It does phenomenal work ensuring that children of preschool age with hearing disabilities, prior to having cochlear implants or using other hearing aids, do not miss out on the vital educational skills that children acquire before they start school. I thank the Minister for Disability Services for making funding of \$50,000 available to the organisation prior to the delivery of this budget.

In the Hawkesbury \$524.7 million is allocated to disability services in the Cumberland/Prospect, Nepean and northern Sydney local planning areas, including \$21.5 million in new funds. Community infrastructure will be boosted overall, with an additional \$35 million allocated over two years through an extension of the Community Building Partnership program. The Premier and I both commend former Premier Nathan Rees for introducing the Community Building Partnership. It is an extraordinarily good program that

provides vital funding for sporting groups and a range of other service groups across New South Wales, particularly in regional areas. I commend the Premier for continuing that program, which has provided funding for the upgrade of irrigation services and lighting, and which will keep playing fields in great order for many thousands of kiddies well into the future.

Some of the highlights of the budget for the Hawkesbury include, as I have said, the fast-tracking of the North West Rail Link, with \$264 million invested in 2011-12 to develop the 23-kilometre line; \$1 million for the Windsor Bridge replacement; pavement resurfacing of Bells Line of Road and \$250,000 towards the long-term strategic corridor; and the upgrade of the Macdonald River Bridge. An additional \$500,000 will be provided for pavement on Old Northern Road, which is an extremely busy road extending all the way from Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry and beyond. That \$500,000 will be eagerly anticipated and welcomed by the local community. There will be a boost in funding for community transport to local services, including to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai by Peppercorn Services. Peppercorn Services is an organisation that works in conjunction with Hawkesbury council, and it will welcome that increase in funding.

I have mentioned the five-year, \$2 billion program for disability services. Community infrastructure will also be boosted overall, with an additional \$35 million allocated over two years through an extension of the Community Building Partnership program. Another \$10 million has been committed to the Priority Sewerage Program for Freemans Reach, Glossodia and Wilberforce. That program provides sewerage services for people in rural areas of the lovely Hawkesbury. After 30 years of struggling with pump-out sewerage systems and paying excessive council rates to satisfy the pump-out requirements for their homes, those people are certainly welcoming that sewerage program. Congratulations go to this Government on continuing that commitment to fast-tracking sewerage programs throughout our rural areas.

The Hills Shire Council will also benefit from \$600,000 for community transport to assist the frail, the aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers. That is a significant amount of money that will no doubt be welcomed. Peppercorn Services will receive some \$400,000, as I mentioned before. The Disabled Alternative Road Travel Service, or DARTS as it is known, will receive another \$322,000 to provide similar services for the frail, the aged and younger people with disabilities and their carers. The Accessible Bridge Community Transport, which also provides community transport services, will receive \$211,000. Peppercorn Services will receive another \$75,000 for people with physical disabilities or those who experience social or geographical factors that affect their lives. Another \$27,000 will go to The Hills Shire Council for a similar purpose.

The continued development of the long-term strategic corridor will be welcomed by the people of Kurrajong, through to Lithgow and the Central West. The budget also delivers up to \$1.5 million for grants to councils, especially councils with regional roads. Some \$13 million has been allocated for routine minor maintenance work on State roads. The list goes on. All in all, it is a good message for people across the Hawkesbury, with grants to local councils to maintain traffic facilities totalling \$406,000. Some \$325,000 has been committed for realignment of curvature and markers and to remove some of the hazards from the clear zone on Annangrove Road. That road is not far from where I live, and it is struggling to cope with traffic movements. There was a lot of wet weather during the winter and the road surface needs some attention. That will be welcomed by residents of the lovely area of Annangrove.

Some \$113,000 has been committed for school crossing supervisors who facilitate the safe and efficient movement of primary school children at recognised pedestrian crossings. An amount of \$100,000 has been committed to joint funding with councils to employ road safety officers to deliver projects aiming to increase awareness and understanding of road safety issues within local government areas. Other routine minor road safety works will receive \$175,000. Our area has been blessed by this budget, as I believe has the whole of New South Wales. The budget will sustain and improve our economy. It will certainly start to fill up the massive shortfall that we inherited, which unfortunately we were not aware of. We were shocked to see a shortfall of some \$5 billion in the State's finances. That is a massive black hole that this Government will work towards fixing. It has made some significant announcements and savings. Everyone across New South Wales—certainly the people I bump into in the street—appreciate the responsible approach that this Government is taking.

There were a couple of public service workers out the back of my office last week having a bit of a singsong and a picnic in the park. When people get upset about wage increases we have to ask what is wrong. A lot of people from the private sector have contacted me to say that it would have been lovely to get a 2.5 per cent fixed wage increase because they do not enjoy those pleasures. But union members have a right to stand up and shout on their behalf. They have families to raise and look after; we recognise that. I do not think

this budget is irresponsible—in fact, it is anything but. This is a responsible budget that will improve the lives of people across New South Wales. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I commend the budget to the House.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [5.33 p.m.]: I welcome the first State budget of the new Liberal-Nationals Government which will significantly stimulate the economy and help to make New South Wales number one again. I will not comment other than to say I find it interesting that the Opposition appears not to have any shadow Ministers ready to deliver a speech in the budget debate. Perhaps they are on notice for tomorrow. I could highlight many elements of the budget, but I will comment initially about public sector reform and the response from Labor and the unions. Given Labor's apparent lack of attention to the efficient expenditure of taxpayer funds, it is not surprising to see Labor's lack of interest in ensuring that there is also appropriate accountability and transparency in union spending. This was amply illustrated recently at the Federal level at a time when the union movement is desperate to maintain its membership. It does not inspire confidence among prospective new members to see some of the antics and the performance of the unions and the Labor Party, including their response to this budget.

As reported in the *Australian* on 9 September, barely 20 per cent of full-time employees and now only 14 per cent of part-time employees are union members. That is down from a peak of approximately 60 per cent of all employees in the 1950s. I understand from the same article that in 1975, when the unions had nearly three million members, they employed barely 2,000 officials. Now they have only 1.8 million members and employ more than 4,000 officials. That ratio of officials to members is five times greater than the rate in Britain. Perhaps it is little wonder that unions resisted the improved public sector productivity inherent in the difficult but necessary budget-related reforms. I refer to the wage increase controls and the 5,000 voluntary redundancies announced recently, which were strangely almost identical to pronouncements by the previous Labor regime.

As a parent of children who attend local public primary schools in my electorate, I join other parents in condemning the New South Wales Teachers Federation for its illegal strike action last week, which was ostensibly largely in response to the budget announcement. It disrupted the lives of tens of thousands of families across New South Wales. Encouraging illegal strike action also does little to engender broader community sympathy for an already weak union cause, such as the fight against the voluntary redundancies that were announced and that are equivalent to less than 2 per cent of the public sector workforce. I also remind the House of the irrational and irresponsible scaremongering by the Leader of the Opposition prior to the budget when he suggested that up to 80,000 public sector service jobs would be axed.

That generated a level of self-serving hysteria that was clearly unwarranted based on the facts. Democratic societies must be protected from the greed, corruption and self-interest of those in power. Political leaders have a responsibility to act according to fundamental social values and to respect the rule of law. It is disheartening to witness unions and elected political leaders encouraging and endorsing illegal strike actions that damage not only innocent members of the public but also the fabric and framework of our society. I have previously detailed five big categories of waste and mismanagement under the previous regime, led by four Labor Premiers. I will not go into great detail about that today, suffice to say that they include projects promised but never commenced, such as The Spit Bridge expansion and numerous rail links including the north-west line.

They include projects announced, commenced and then scrapped, such as Tcard and the CBD Metro. They include projects delivered late or over budget, such as the Chatswood to Epping rail link, the Pacific Highway upgrade, the northern beaches hospital and the Solar Bonus Scheme. They cover matters largely ignored, including the need for less backroom bureaucracy, substandard government procurement processes and a failure to accurately record vital health-related statistics such as hospital waiting lists and hospital bed numbers. They also cover things that were delivered only for Labor's benefit, such as government advertising, travel—including overseas ministerial trips—and grants to the union movement.

I want to draw a comparison between that past track record of waste and mismanagement and what we are now seeing in a budget that is responsible and puts the public interest at the heart of decision-making in this State. Unlike Labor, with its tendency not to implement decisions except in its own interest, the new Government has had to make some difficult decisions in the broader public interest. We had to address the huge financial chasm that Labor dug for many years. Not only were we left with a budget black hole of \$5.2 billion, as outlined by the Treasurer, but Labor regularly and recklessly overspent budget allocations—amounting to more than a massive \$12 billion over its last eight full financial years in government—despite delivering little. This trend of financial irresponsibility was unsustainable and has now ceased.

In light of Labor's track record and Federal Labor's last three huge annual deficits of \$29.7 billion, \$52.9 billion and \$45.7 billion, I find it amazing that the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition criticised the budget's sensible and responsible deficit, particularly given current global conditions. Incredibly, at the same time as he dared to criticise a responsible and sensible budget deficit that will move back into surplus in the following years, he failed to identify any other revenue or savings measures. In addition to Labor's legacy of financial management shortfalls, we are faced with a shortfall of trust in political institutions that stems from the previous Labor Government. We need to restore confidence not only in our economy but also in our Government as a whole in order to protect a healthy democratic society. In my role as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee—

Dr Geoff Lee: And a good Chair too.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: I thank the member for his interjection. I will endeavour to assist in identifying the potential for improved efficiency and value while upholding the values of integrity that the O'Farrell Government stands for. To help restore confidence we also need to make the political decision-making process more engaging, responsible and accountable. In this regard, I was delighted to see released also on budget day the related document NSW 2021—a 10-year strategic plan to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, strengthen our local environment and communities, and restore accountability to government. In my inaugural speech I commended the Iemma Government for the 2006 State Plan as a step in the right direction. I likewise commend Premier O'Farrell and all involved in formulating the strategic plan NSW 2021, with its five strategies, 32 goals and 180 targets.

I expect the Opposition and the public will hold us accountable for delivering on those stated commitments, and I hope optimistically that there will be appropriate acknowledgement of our achievements. NSW 2021 will drive this new Government's agenda for change in New South Wales to restore economic growth; return quality health, transport, education, police, justice and community services, putting customer service at the heart of service design; build infrastructure that drives our economy and improves people's lives; strengthen our local environments; devolve decision-making and return planning powers to the community; restore accountability and transparency to government; and give the community a say in decisions affecting people's lives. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Before identifying a number of locally relevant budget initiatives, I want to highlight a few of the specific areas where there has been a budget boost. I note that the Minister for Local Government, who is doing an admirable job, is at the table. I also note that the \$70 million Infrastructure Renewal Scheme will pay half the interest on significant loans that councils take out to pay for infrastructure projects. This should unlock about \$1 billion in extra infrastructure development across New South Wales council areas for building and upgrading essential infrastructure such as local roads, bridges, community halls, libraries, paths, parks, playing fields and water facilities. In the area of integrity of government and relevant watchdog bodies, I note that the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission have all received record funding in this budget—almost \$4 million extra in recurrent funding for this financial year alone.

Together with a range of other measures already introduced by the new O'Farrell Government, this 7 per cent increase in funding should help restore the community's trust after 16 years of Labor scandals, cover-ups and corruption. I am also particularly pleased that the budget makes a record investment of \$2.8 billion in disability services. This follows a strong history of bipartisan support for the New South Wales Disability portfolio, which will hopefully be followed at the Federal level including through an appropriate national disability insurance scheme. I note that I will speak about this matter and its local relevance in a private member's statement later today. As part of a record health capital works program of \$4.7 billion over four years, Davidson constituents will benefit particularly from the allocation of funds to a new state-of-the-art northern beaches hospital.

What Labor could not do in 16 years the Liberal-Nationals Government is now delivering, less than six months after being elected. These funds will go towards preliminary works prior to on-site construction, which the Government is committed to undertaking in its first term. I am also pleased to see the commencement of a \$170 million e-health project to improve medication safety and the decision to recruit an additional 940 new nurses over the next year. Capital expenditure in Davidson includes \$164,000 towards completion of upgrading works at Roseville Public School, and \$350,000 has been allocated for traffic efficiency improvements, including extension of the right-turn bay on Mona Vale Road at the intersection of Telegraph Road at Pymble.

A further \$200,000 will be spent on upgrading traffic signals at the intersection of Archbold and Tryon Roads at Lindfield. Almost \$6.9 million has been allocated for RailCorp maintenance in Davidson, including

bridge renewal, track reconstruction and platform resurfacing, and \$3 million has been allocated to investigate the feasibility of potential rapid bus transit systems for the northern beaches. This could provide significant transport improvements for those in the northern peninsula part of my electorate. I also welcome the budget announcement that the Community Building Partnership program is to be extended over the next year, with an allocation of \$35 million.

Mr Ryan Park: You slashed it.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: I note the member's comment that the program should be slashed, but we disagree with that. The program admirably supports the work of local community groups and local councils, including in Davidson, delivering community infrastructure as previously highlighted by me in this place.

I commend my northern beaches colleague Treasurer Mike Baird, Premier Barry O'Farrell and the New South Wales Government for this year's State budget and believe it will do much to return confidence, stimulate the economy and provide improved quality of life for the residents of Davidson and across New South Wales. The program acknowledges legacy problems from Labor's term of office, including unsustainable indulgence, waste and mismanagement. It delivers on Liberal-Nationals promises from this year's election campaign, including those related to front-line services. It announces record infrastructure spending of \$62.6 billion over four years, particularly in the areas of transport and health, and it increases contestability, competitive processes and service delivery of important public outcomes. Most importantly, it returns an atmosphere of certainty and confidence for private enterprise, general economic activity and governance generally in New South Wales.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

BLUE SEPTEMBER

Matter of Public Importance

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [5.56 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak about Blue September, which is all about raising awareness of cancer in men. The blue paint on the face is about facing up to cancer. Blue September was a concept developed in New Zealand in 2008. In its second year the campaign was expanded into Australia. In 2011, Blue September is a well-recognised international awareness and fundraising initiative. In Australia, the campaign proudly supports the Australian Cancer Research Foundation and Bowel Cancer Australia, to help get the message out about cancer in men. On each Friday in September men are encouraged to wear blue, or occasionally put blue paint on their face. Men need awareness about cancer because one of the many reasons for their shorter lifespans is that men present late with symptoms that should raise concern. The Blue September organisation receives no government support. Its sponsorships from the corporate sector include Hyundai, Officeworks, Rebel Sport, Fletcher Jones, Quilton and Symbion as well as national health bodies such as the Pharmacy Guild and the pharmaceutical society.

Blue September aims to raise awareness among all Australians about cancers affecting men and urges men to take necessary preventative action by improving their lifestyle choices. In many cases, male cancer deaths can be prevented through healthy lifestyle decisions and early detection. Each year, more than 22,000 Australian men die of cancer. Common types of cancers causing death in men are lung, prostate, bowel, melanoma and testicular cancers. Over the next 10 years, from 2011 to 2021, cancer cases and cancer deaths in New South Wales will soar, with more than one in three of us developing cancer. Projections show that more than 425,000 people in New South Wales will be diagnosed with cancer, and more than 140,000 will die of the disease. Yet it is not widely known that nearly 50 per cent of these cancers are potentially preventable.

Last year in this Parliament I listened to Professor Colditz from the Washington University School of Medicine, St Louis. Professor Colditz, an Australian and a world expert in cancer epidemiology, was invited here as a guest of the Cancer Council. Some 50 per cent of the cancers are preventable. Smoking is responsible

for 20 per cent of that 50 per cent. Obesity, combined with poor diet and lack of physical activity, contributes to another 20 per cent of those preventable cancers. This significant knowledge of the role of obesity as a risk factor in cancer is only relatively new.

Mechanisms causing cancer due to obesity include the pro-inflammatory effect of fat cells—known medically as adipose tissue—and raised insulin levels. Lack of physical activity is also a risk factor independent of obesity, and achieving higher levels of exercise is particularly beneficial in preventing bowel cancer in men and breast cancer in women. Of the remaining 10 per cent of preventable cancers, 3 to 4 per cent of all preventable cancers, often of the head and neck, are due to alcohol. Given the projections for the high numbers of cancers over the next few years in New South Wales, we cannot continue to show wilful blindness to the importance of cancer prevention, which is why campaigns such as Blue September are so vital. Blue September encourages people to make a donation for cancer research and to help find a cure for cancer. Every Friday in September is Blue Friday. The campaign calls on all Australians to Get Blue! As I stated earlier, the blue paint is about facing up to cancer. Those who wish to see the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, with paint on his face can log on to the Blue September website.

Mr Clayton Barr: He never looked better.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Cessnock that the Premier never looked better than with blue paint on his face; other members can look for themselves. Politicians are not the only supporters. Sports stars such as members of Penrith Panthers and Chris Judd also are very supportive of the Blue September campaign. Blue September teaches men the important ways to reduce the risk of cancer. The first is to quit smoking or help a mate to quit. Next is taking care in the sun, followed by aiming for a healthy body weight, being physically active, reducing alcohol intake, and getting age-appropriate check-ups. For example, bowel cancer screening for those over 50 has a proven beneficial: it saves lives and reduces the need for aggressive treatment if cancer is detected.

The Australian Cancer Research Foundation is dedicated to helping find a cure for cancer through the continued support of world-class research in Australia and receives enormous support from the Blue September movement. Each year grants between \$1.5 million and \$10 million are awarded by the Australian Cancer Research Foundation to leading researchers in their aim to prevent, diagnose and treat all types of cancer. The Australian Cancer Research Foundation has provided 38 grants totalling \$62 million to Australian cancer research since 1987, \$46 million of which was awarded in the past five years. Bowel Cancer Australia also is supported by Blue September.

Bowel cancer affects one in 10 men, young and old, and claims the lives of almost 2,500 men each year. However, if caught in time, especially if through screening, 90 per cent of bowel cancer cases can be treated successfully. Bowel Cancer Australia is a national charity that has worked for 10 years to reduce the impact of bowel cancer through awareness, education, support and research. There are many innovative ways to get the message out about bowel cancer. For example, Quilton, which is one of Blue September's sponsors, makes toilet paper with printed health messages. The wonderful Blue September movement is a fantastic initiative that I support. I urge all members of Parliament to raise awareness of cancer in men and the Blue September campaign.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [6.03 p.m.]: I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for bringing to the attention of the House this matter of public importance, which highlights the important issue of cancer in men. Cancer is the largest cause of disease in Australia. In New South Wales alone, the Cancer Institute predicts that more than 38,000 people will be diagnosed with cancer by the end of this year. This number is expected to increase to more than 50,000 by 2021. For men, cancer rates have increased by 11 per cent over the past decade. Clearly, this is a concerning figure when the rate has remained steady among women. The message of cancer prevention and the importance of screening are difficult for men across New South Wales to heed, yet it is vital with one in two men diagnosed with a form of cancer in their lifetime.

It has never been more important to recognise the work done by organisations in promoting awareness of cancer among men. The Blue September campaign was created to do just that and I congratulate it on its work. The Blue September campaign was developed in New Zealand in 2008. In its second year the campaign expanded into Australia primarily as an awareness initiative. Now in 2011, Blue September is a well-recognised national awareness and fundraising initiative. In many cases, cancer deaths in men are preventable through healthy living and early detection. Blue September is a conversation starter for men, their families and communities to talk about cancer, its impact and how to prevent the disease.

Money raised from fundraising activities and donations this year will go towards vital cancer research through campaign beneficiaries Australian Cancer Research Foundation and Bowel Cancer Australia. The latest projections from the Cancer Institute indicate, as the member for Macquarie Fields stated, that more than 22,000 men across New South Wales will be diagnosed with cancer this year—and more than 7,500 men will die from this devastating disease. As the member for Macquarie Fields also said, lung, bowel, prostate and pancreatic cancer are the most common causes of death. These are harrowing figures and highlight the importance of encouraging our fathers, brothers and mates to lead a healthy lifestyle—as the member for Cessnock does. Advice on healthy living and men's health awareness is at the core of Blue September. Australian celebrities, businesses and charities have come together to paint their faces blue, host blue-themed fundraising events and donate in the name of men's health.

Each and every person who has taken part should be commended for their contribution to the prevention, promotion and awareness of cancer in men. Talking about health can be difficult for men, yet these conversations can be lifesaving. So in the spirit of Blue September, let us talk about it. Prostate cancer is responsible for one-third of all new cancer cases in men. The chance of curing prostate cancer is high if it is detected early and has not spread. Because men with prostate cancer often do not experience symptoms, research into this disease for improved detection, prevention and treatment has never been more important. In August this year, the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research officially opened the Prostate Cancer Institute, which offers world-class treatment options, assessment and continuing care programs for men and their families.

The St George Hospital Cancer Care Centre is one of the busiest cancer centres in the State with the number of men referred for treatment nearly doubling in the past decade. Recognising the importance of the facility, the New South Wales Government contributed \$860,000 for equipment to fit out the new treatment areas. Blue September also reminds men of the importance of talking about cancer prevention with their sons and the value of leading by example. This is especially vital when it comes to sun safety. We are blessed in New South Wales to live a rich life outdoors. But living this lifestyle without adequate ultraviolet protection comes at a cost. According to the Cancer Institute, men are 1.6 times more likely than women to be diagnosed with melanoma and 2.9 times more likely to die from it.

Due to the difference in incidence and mortality rates between men and women, males should be considered a priority group in skin cancer prevention strategies. Campaigns such as Blue September are an important vehicle for delivering this message. Australian men are a stoic bunch—strong and resilient in character and outlook. Blue September gives us the opportunity to consider that with this trait in mind, men are less likely to actively seek a tan, but also are less likely to protect themselves from being overexposed. The New South Wales Government has dedicated resources to raising awareness about skin damage caused by overexposure to the sun, even before signs of burning.

The Dark Side of Tanning campaign was first launched in November 2007 as part of the Government's ongoing commitment to skin cancer awareness. The latest campaign highlighted situations depicting activities in which men may be exposed to the sun to help them connect their behaviours to the possible health consequence—melanoma. With Father's Day fresh in mind, I take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with Blue September for their untiring efforts in promoting awareness of cancer in men. I encourage everyone in New South Wales to use what is left of Blue September to start a conversation about cancer with the men they hold dear. The O'Farrell Government is delivering and is committed to improving the treatment of cancer in the Hunter region. In the 2011-12 State budget, the Government has committed to a long-term solution, with \$1 million in the coming year to go towards an \$8 million commitment to purchase land for a new cancer research and treatment centre next to the Mater hospital.

On 29 August this year, following representations by my colleague the member for Newcastle, the Minister for Health restored funding to the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance. This is a local charity that offers free counselling services with counsellors specialising in prostate cancer. The funding grant was extended for the years 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14. This will enable the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance to continue its vital work for men and their families in improving access to information and counselling on prostate cancer. The funding had been withdrawn in a letter dated 25 March 2011, but I am very pleased the funding has now been restored. Every day Australian men face the prospect of contracting cancer. It is something that leads to great pain and suffering not only for those with cancer but also for their families and friends. Blue September is a fantastic initiative which will benefit the broader community.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [6.10 p.m.]: I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. Blue September is most important because as males we are a bunch of

boofheads. The statistics shows that a woman will seek medical attention in excess of four times each year as compared to a man who will seek it 1.8 times each year. This in no small way leads to complications and to fatality rates in men who, when diagnosed with cancer, are told that they sought medical advice too late. Something that needs to be understood about cancer is that there will not be a magic pill. Cancer comes in so many forms that there is no single solution to the problem. We might bemoan the fact that currently there are 27 different cancer charity days throughout the year and we seem to be asked regularly to put our hands in our pockets for a donation, whether it be \$2 or \$100. But in reality cancer is a complicated disease and there is no single solution.

I am happy to say that in Australia almost half a billion dollars each year is spent on cancer research. A large proportion of that funding comes from the charity dollar—people who donate to the cause in many different ways. As a bunch of boofheads, men are about 15 years late in seeking a proportion of that charity dollar. A little more than 15 years ago the Cancer Council launched Pink Ribbon Day to raise money for breast cancer research. Pink Ribbon Day has expanded to include such diverse products as water bottles, pens, paper and extensive corporate sponsorship. The McGrath Foundation provides funding for breast care nurses in hospitals across New South Wales and Australia.

Blue September is now in its third year in New South Wales and its fourth year in New Zealand. As noted by the member for Charlestown, Blue September is timely in that it occurs in the month in which we celebrate Father's Day. Facing up to cancer is difficult for men; facing up to the fact that we are prone to disease or illness and not as strong we might pretend to be is culturally difficult, but we have to do it. I said earlier that there will be no single cure for cancer. The reality is that the best possible treatment is early detection. Men must attend for regular health checks and seek the necessary advice and treatment. That may be through diet, exercise, lifestyle changes, giving up smoking, reducing alcohol intake, or being sun smart. It is important that we take the lifestyle steps to improve our health but also to increase the chance of early detection of cancer by seeking regular medical attention.

The statistics show that if bowel cancer is detected at stage one the survival rate is 90 per cent compared with detection at stage three, which lowers the survival rate to 50 per cent. Men are dying unnecessarily because we are a bunch of boofheads and we are not taking advantage of the options available to us. If we were female we would be better at it. There are 22,000 male deaths each year from lung, prostate, bowel, melanoma and testicular cancer. Male death rates have fallen by 16 per cent, and more than 60 per cent of cancer patients will now survive that magic five-year mark.

When I worked for CanTeen I observed far too many families that had lost a loved one due to cancer. It is not a pretty or pleasant disease and it strikes regardless of a person's age, sex or cultural beliefs. Cancer can strike anyone at any time, so we need to be as proactive as we can to increase the chances of survival of each person. Blue September is a chance for men to be on top of their cancer issues. We will undoubtedly come across other cancer fundraising events throughout the course of the year, but Blue September is especially significant for men. Cancer costs \$3.8 billion in direct health care in New South Wales. That is 7.2 per cent of our total budget for health care. For every \$100 spent on health care in New South Wales \$7.20 goes towards the costs associated with caring for people with cancer. Those who are more for numbers than the human race now have a reason to support Blue September.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I note the member for Macquarie Fields is duly attired in blue paint for Blue September.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [6.15 p.m.], in reply: There are those who think I look better this way. Some issues are above politics. Males are a bunch of boofheads because far too often they suffer from a condition called wilful blindness. Members of Parliament in London raised wilful blindness in relation to the Murdoch press, but in the context of Blue September it is information we could have had and should have had, but because we did not seek out that information we may die. It means we are irresponsible for not looking for or responding to health cues. The problem with wilful blindness is that males think it is protective to ignore symptoms when in fact the opposite is the case. The ignorance of symptoms means that when males do present with cancer they present late, and treatment, if it is able to be given, is much more aggressive than it would have been with early detection.

Blue September is vital for health care in Australia. This is a wonderful campaign that has no Government support. I thank all the corporate sponsors in Australia that have the vision to drive this campaign. Blue September is vital for the future of health care because 18 per cent of the population still smokes and

50 per cent of those smokers will die as a result of their smoking, often from cancer; 60 per cent of adults in New South Wales are overweight or obese, with increased cancer risk; and alcohol-related disease is increasing rather than decreasing. The improvement in mortality due to treatments for heart disease has been offset by an increased diagnosis rate for cancer. As I said, over the next 10 years a tsunami of cancer will affect the health system as the baby boomers go into retirement. There is a lot yet to be done and that is why Blue September is so vital.

There was a time when it was felt that the war against cancer could be won by a single discovery, but that will never be the case. The war against cancer will be won by a long slog on many fronts with discoveries in prevention and improvements in the treatment of cancer such as surgery or radiotherapy. I have extra blue paint in my office and extra educational material for anybody who is interested in the Blue September organisation. I urge all members of Parliament to educate their electorates about the need for cancer prevention and to show support for Blue September by wearing something blue in the House every Friday in September. I thank all members who have contributed to this debate and wish the Blue September organisation and the clinicians who work in cancer research and treatment all the very best for the future.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CIRCUS ANIMALS

Ms CHERIE BURTON (Kogarah) [6.20 p.m.]: Tonight in the House I lend my support to an issue that many of my constituents have not only contacted me about but also asked me to support. Performing circus animals are kept for prolonged periods in close confinement in artificial social groups. They are continually transported between circus venues for the duration of their performing lives and often are subjected to cruel training techniques, all for the purpose of the entertainment of audiences and moneymaking by their owners. Scientific studies have shown that the life of a circus animal leads to stress and boredom and often results in abnormal behaviours, such as repetitive pacing or swaying.

A growing number of enlightened councils in New South Wales have placed bans on these types of circuses due to concern for animal welfare, and they have the overwhelming support of the public. Such councils include Parramatta, Lismore, Wingecarribee, Newcastle, Blue Mountains, Warringah, Woollahra, Hornsby, Pittwater, Manly, Randwick, Ku-ring-gai, Lake Macquarie, Liverpool and Camden. The Australian Capital Territory banned performing animal circuses years ago and about 30 other local authorities around Australia also have banned them. Around the world numerous countries have banned them and just last month all United Kingdom members of Parliament voted for a nationwide ban on exotic animal circuses. The United Kingdom Parliament had not one abstention or negative vote. This reflects modern attitudes to the performing animal circus.

In 2009 a review of the suitability of wild animals to live in a travelling circus was published in a journal called *Animal Welfare*. The review found that for non-domesticated exotic animals to be suitable for circus life they would need to exhibit low space requirements, simple social structures, low cognitive function, non-specialist ecological requirements and an ability to be transported without adverse welfare effects. None of the most common species exhibited by circuses, such as elephants and lions, currently meet these essential animal welfare criteria. According to the review, circus animals spent the majority of the day confined, about 1 per cent to 9 per cent of the day performing and training and the remaining time in exercise pens. Exercise pens were significantly smaller than minimum zoo standards for outdoor enclosures. Behavioural budgets were restricted, with circus animals spending a great amount of time displaying stereotypical behaviour, especially when shackled or confined in beast wagons.

A higher degree of stereotyping in circuses may be indicative of poorer welfare. Inadequate diet, housing conditions and the effects of repeated performances can lead to significant health problems. Circus animals travelled frequently and the associated forced movement, handling by humans, noise, trailer movement and confinement are important stressors. Circuses have a limited ability to make improvements, such as increased space, environmental enrichment and appropriate housing. A study entitled "Are wild animals suited to a travelling circus life?" concluded that the species of non-domesticated animals commonly kept in circuses appear the least suited to a circus life. In addition to welfare concerns, public safety is impossible to guarantee when exotic animals are included in travelling circuses. A 2003 Zoocheck Canada report stated:

The use of wild animals in circuses and travelling shows is inherently dangerous, particularly to circus staff who work with the animals, and to children who come into contact with them through rides and photo opportunities. The risks that many animals used in circus performances pose to public health and safety through direct attack, escape or temporary loss of handler control increases considerably because of poor animal welfare conditions, inadequate safety measures, and excessive handling and transport.

Further, performing animal circuses target the family audience, especially children. Professor Barry Spurr, a fellow of the Australian College of Educators, has made the professional judgement that such circuses are detrimental to the development of children's respect for and knowledge about animals. Indeed, they are anti-educational, he argued, sending wrong messages to children about how animals behave naturally and how they should be respected ethically. Circuses encourage children to believe that animals exist to perform unnatural acts for the amusement of audiences and to spend their lives in captivity and travelling cages for this purpose. Nothing could be more damaging to nurturing children's education about animals and their respect for animals and their welfare. All animal welfare organisations are opposed to performing animal circuses. I ask the New South Wales Government to lead Australia in enlightened and humane reform and say no to this outdated and barbaric so-called entertainment continuing.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [6.25 p.m.]: Weekends are family time or a time to catch up with friends, take in a movie, go for a bushwalk or head to the beach. Imagine waking up on a Saturday or Sunday morning knowing one's day will be spent in solitude, going to the shops is a logistical nightmare unless one's elderly mother can help out and meeting friends for coffee is no longer an option—they stopped phoning a while ago. The beach, a movie, a bushwalk—forget it. Like many of us, Katrina Young's weekend revolves around her children. However, it is not spent in the usual way by Katrina Young, whose six-year-old twin daughters, Amelia and Hannah, have Rett syndrome. They cannot speak or walk, they cannot feed themselves. They are prone to multiple seizures during which Amelia often stops breathing, forcing Katrina to carry around a portable oxygen bottle. Amelia has scoliosis, a condition contributing to 19 bouts of pneumonia in just three years.

Katrina can no longer continue her career as a nurse. In fact, she cannot pursue any job at all in case she is called in to spend the next week in hospital caring for one of her daughters. Her weekend routine is relieved during the week when her girls go to Arranounbai School for Specific Needs. However, what happens when her girls leave school? What relief can she look forward to then? What happens when Katrina's mother can no longer help and Katrina herself is elderly? Who will look after Hannah and Amelia then? Katrina is one of hundreds in my Davidson electorate and one of 150,000 primary carers across the State who are trapped in isolation and loneliness as they commit their lives to caring for their disabled children, parents, brothers, sisters or friends.

The national disability insurance scheme recommended by the Productivity Commission would ensure that disabled Australians receive the long-term care and support needed for a significant disability beyond their school years and beyond the deaths of their carers. This scheme would not only increase the ability for people with disabilities to be contributing citizens; it would increase the chances for their carers to find and remain in work. As a national social insurance scheme funded by all taxpayers, it would provide money on the basis of each individual's needs. With a national disability insurance scheme, parents and carers might be able to access help immediately from the time of diagnosis in relation to respite, relevant equipment, transport and home modifications. Support funded outside the scheme, such as income support, housing and employment services, could be integrated to provide services and opportunities for people with disability as part of a holistic approach. Emphasis would be placed on early intervention and access to education and training to maximise long-term independence and potential.

However, for this scheme to be practical and doable, I believe it should start earlier than 2018. While I appreciate some trials are proposed before 2018, the overall program might become a reality sooner if it initially catered only to Australians disabled from birth. After all, one in five Australians has some form of disability and victims of tragic accidents usually can be covered by insurance. Children born disabled are covered by nothing more than the love of the family surrounding them. While insurance safety nets are already available to those disabled through accidents later in life, there is nothing appropriately available for all those incapacitated from birth. I merely place on record my fear that if governments only entertain a scheme that is all-encompassing and targets every disabled person in the country, those who are totally vulnerable from birth may never receive the lifelong help they need and deserve.

Recognising the battle Australian carers face, Andrew Constance introduced the Carers (Recognition) Bill last year when in opposition. Now as the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services he has called on us to take a further step and back a national disability insurance scheme. This is consistent with the New South Wales Government's person-centred approach involving individualised support, which is currently

the subject of extensive consultations across New South Wales. We need all levels of government to embrace a national disability insurance scheme so that people with a disability, their families and carers get the long-term care and certainty they deserve.

In recent times I was pleased to attend a number of events in support of a national disability insurance scheme as part of the Every Australian Counts campaign, including one locally in Gordon at the invitation of Katrina Clarke and Heike Fabig from the Association of Children with a Disability New South Wales. I am pleased that the current New South Wales Government allocated a record investment of \$2.8 billion in disability services in the recent budget. I note that this follows a strong history of bipartisan support in the New South Wales disability portfolio, which will hopefully be followed at the Federal level.

MURRAY VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [6.30 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about a decision that was made by the previous Government to lock up the Murray Valley National Park and about the discontent that remains within the southern Riverina in regard to that decision. A report has been compiled by Chris Crump, who has decided to stay in the logging industry, and David Joss, an ex-rural journalist, on aspects of a report by the Natural Resources Commission, which was commissioned to look at the industry. Unfortunately, we all know the circumstances of the scientific details that were provided—the matter was well debated in this House. The fact remains that a decision was made that certainly was not based on pure science. Recent debate in this House on the moratorium on marine parks gives a clear indication that when it made decisions the former Government did not engage in good science.

The inquiry of the Natural Resources Commission was clearly to present a case for the Government to make a decision about the locking up of the forests. At the time the Natural Resources Commission carried out its inquiry and spoke to the forestry industry it was fairly convinced that there would be a very strong case for the industry to continue. Unfortunately, what the Natural Resources Commission failed to tell the people in the forestry industry was that it was dealing with a set of numbers that were generally biased towards a decision that would create a predictable outcome—the closing of national parks.

Some extensive work has been carried out and we are looking at another way of modelling for yields. I cite a paper put together by Ron Wilson of the Institute of Foresters of Australia. Ron talks about the FRAMES system that is used in New Zealand. Professor Chris Brack from the Waiariki Institute of Technology, New Zealand, looked at the FRAMES model and found that it contradicted what the Natural Resources Commission had predicted in relation to yields. The Natural Resources Commission had excluded some of the forestry areas that were later locked up. That has created many issues for those people who are now looking at a national park that was once a working forest and had been for 130 years. It is not the Black Forest of Germany; it is a red gum forest, predominantly woody weeds, which can be managed with a silvicultural program. Professor Brack found that there was a clear demonstration that this industry was very much sustainable.

While members of the House may have accepted that this is a done deal, people in the southern Riverina are not going to take this lying down and they are demanding that the upper House conduct an inquiry into exactly how the Natural Resources Commission managed its report. Those people feel that the Natural Resources Commission report was biased and made a decision that favoured what was, at the time, Green preferences for the Labor Government—and we found out how The Greens do business: Once The Greens thought they could go out on their own they cut with the Labor Party: they virtually caught it in a wedge and cut them out of the deal. It was a very poor situation. The outcome has been that 1,300 jobs have been lost in the southern Riverina and the bleeding still goes on. As the member representing that area I encourage the upper House to consider holding an inquiry into the Natural Resources Commission report and findings.

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [6.35 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to note an important festival in the Chinese calendar that is currently being celebrated across New South Wales. The Mid-autumn Festival is one of the most important traditional Chinese festivals and is first recorded in historical records from some 3,000 years ago. The festival symbolises the arrival of luck, joy and harvest and is a time when Chinese families gather together to share in the important festival. It is also a great opportunity to enjoy one of the delicacies of Chinese cuisine—the much-loved moon cake. The moon cake is a round pastry made from lotus seed or bean paste and often contains the yolk from a duck egg.

So far I have had the opportunity to attend a number of functions organised to celebrate the Mid-autumn Festival. On Saturday 10 September I attended an event held by the Oviedo Media and Chinese Students Association, which was a great opportunity to share a special occasion with young people across the community. On Sunday 11 September I had the pleasure of attending another Mid-autumn Festival event—a banquet in Bankstown—and celebrated with the community members there, who are from south-east China. They have interesting traditions: I had a great day playing a moon cake game called Bo Bing. The 300-year old custom of the moon cake game dates back to the Ming Dynasty from 1368 to 1644. The inventor of the game led an army to fight a long battle to recover Taiwan, which was occupied by Dutch invaders in 1624. Both of these functions were very enjoyable and well attended by members of the Chinese community.

New South Wales boasts the largest Chinese community in Australia. Some 300,000 people of Chinese heritage live in New South Wales, of which almost 11,000 live in my electorate, and it is great to be able to share in these important cultural events. There are some interesting trends to note in statistics released by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The Migration Program Report for 2010-11 revealed that for the first time China was Australia's largest source of migrants. Migrants from China made up 17.5 per cent of the total migration program in 2010-11, which demonstrates the attraction of Australia and New South Wales as a place to live and work. China has been among the largest international trading partners of New South Wales for a number of years and in 2010 became the number one international trading partner. China-New South Wales two-way trade was worth in excess of \$22 billion in 2009-10. This figure grew by 138 per cent in the five years to 2009.

Another integral aspect of the trade relationship between China and New South Wales is education and training. Since 2007 Chinese students have become the largest group of overseas students in New South Wales. More than 64,000 Chinese students are enrolled in New South Wales universities and colleges each year, which is around 42 per cent of total enrolments. Closely linked to this market is, of course, tourism. New South Wales continues to receive the largest share of Chinese visitors to Australia, which is great for our local economy. In 2009 China was the State's fourth-largest inbound market with 236,000 visitors. Of course, that will grow with Destination NSW that this Government has implemented. We have a strong multicultural community in New South Wales and that is best evidenced by those statistics and the level of Chinese migration. We live in a multicultural community, which I strongly support and believe in.

One of the great features of Hurstville in my electorate is its very own Chinatown—Little China as it is called—full of dynamic and vibrant businesses and restaurants. The Chinese community in the St George region is special and dynamic. With around 10,000 residents in the local area, I am a big supporter of the Chinese community and regularly attend functions such as Chinese New Year. The Premier visited Hurstville and the Chinese community five times during the election and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities recently visited. This is a sign of strong commitment to the Chinese community, which is pro-business, pro-family and pro-community. The Chinese community has a well-deserved reputation of family values and enterprise which is widely admired. I am deeply honoured and privileged to represent such a diverse, vibrant community.

UNDER-13 BOYS AND GIRLS SOFTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [6.40 p.m.]: On Sunday 11 September, together with Campbelltown Mayor Paul Lake, I was honoured to present the winners with their trophies and patches at the Under-13 Boys and Girls Softball State Championships. The championships were held on 10 and 11 September at the Lee Ruddy Softball Complex, Milton Park, Ingleburn. The event was well hosted by the Campbelltown and Districts Softball Association. Mrs Sharyn Carter, the president, was well supported by a team of wonderful and hardworking volunteers, who attended to the multitude of tasks required to successfully run a State championship event. Softball NSW was on hand as well to assist, including vice-president Phillip Weightman, general manager Cathy Kerr and projects coordinator Jody Neilson, who were all there to share in the excitement of the championships.

Special mention must also be made of the local sponsors who so generously supported this State event, including our own Campbelltown City Council—in the opal of the south-west—West's Campbelltown and McDonald's. About 50 association umpires also donated their time to officiate at these championships. Let me tell the House of the great displays of skill including pitching, ground fielding, catching and throwing, athleticism, sprinting, tactics and, most importantly, good sportsmanship. I witnessed all these on display as each team threw all they had into winning the State championship. The action on the smaller softball diamonds

was fast and furious, with swift underarm pitching, clean hitting, fast sprinting and superb ground fielding on display. All the teams were wonderfully presented and their skill levels were a credit to their coaching. The teams were also wonderfully supported by family, friends, management and coaching staff.

The 14 girls teams and 11 boys teams gathered from the four corners of New South Wales to compete at Ingleburn. They included Cumberland Nepean, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Macarthur, Manly Warringah, Mudgee, North Shore, Penrith City, Southern Districts, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga, Orange, Campbelltown—that opal of the south-west—Central Coast, Newcastle and Sutherland. The ultimate winners of the under-13 girls State championship were Manly Warringah who narrowly defeated North Shore. The under-13 girls State Cup winners was Orange, which defeated Macarthur 12-2. The under-13 boys State championship winners was Central Coast, which defeated Macarthur 6-5 in a nail biter. Sport and good sporting facilities are important to the health, welfare and wellbeing of our communities. Softball provides a wonderful example of the benefits of competition, character development, teamwork and friendships that sport can provide.

The Milton Park Softball Complex at Ingleburn is named the Lee Ruddy Softball Complex in honour of the late Leonie Ruddy, more fondly known as Lee, who was a founding member of the Campbelltown and Districts Softball Association and who sadly passed away in late 2006. Lee Ruddy dedicated 32 years of service to the local softball movement. I am sure that she would have been pleased with the conduct of the under-13 State championships. Australia can justifiably lay claim to being the number one softball nation in the world, based on the performance of our national teams in the international arena. Judging by the skills of our under-13 stars of the future that were on display at Campbelltown—that opal of the south-west—that reputation will be maintained for many years to come.

COROWA WHISKY AND CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [6.45 p.m.]: Tourism in Australia has seen better times and local success stories are few and far between. That is why it is refreshing to see a new tourism venture really take off in regional New South Wales to the level of acclaim that has greeted the Corowa Whisky and Chocolate Factory. Opened in September 2009, the Corowa Whisky and Chocolate Factory was recognised in the 2011 CountryLink Inland Tourism Awards as winner of the Best Tourism Development award. The CountryLink Inland Tourism Awards annually acknowledge excellence in tourism in the four regional tourism areas of Riverina, New England North West, Central New South Wales and Outback New South Wales. Since 2004 the judges have been looking carefully at the best that New South Wales has to offer. This year they were drawn to Corowa.

Tourism facilities must offer a strong incentive if they are to be successful outside the capital cities and away from the beaches where Australians love to holiday. At historic Corowa, the birthplace of Federation on the Murray River downstream from Albury, this factory mixes several strands to its business, cleverly maximising its potential audience. The result is good for the business owners and good for Corowa: the two are entwined. What is so special about this particular venture? First there are the two main products. On the one hand there is Belgian chocolate: recognised the world over as the greatest expression of eating chocolate. Belgian chocolate uses the whole of the cocoa bean rather than substituting other lesser ingredients. This makes the chocolate smooth beyond comparison, with a full, rich flavour. Here too the chocolate is organic.

On the other hand there will be whisky. Work is underway at the factory to build a distillery to make its own whiskies and establish a whisky bar for tastings. This will take a number of years to reach completion but the current plan is to commence with a pilot distillery and a bar selling local and imported whiskies. Barley, yeast and water are the only ingredients which will be used in the production of an organic single malt whisky made from locally grown organic grain and fresh mountain spring water from the high country. As members may know, single malt whisky is made from only one type of malted grain and distilled at one distillery. The whisky will sit for between five and 10 years in the barrel before bottling, at which point it will be ready to drink.

Whisky, unlike some wine, does not mature further in the bottle. The vision is for a factory making and selling two products at the pinnacle of excellence. The third strand to this business is the building that houses it. After closing in 1970 the Corowa Flour Mill lay abandoned for almost 40 years. During this time it was vandalised and allowed to run down. Eventually the mill fell into the hands of Corowa Shire Council, which sold the land and building for \$1 to private owners on the basis that the premises would be restored and then developed into a tourist attraction for Corowa. Dean Druce, one of the owners, said:

It was a great story about a heritage listed flour mill and created huge media attention for Corowa and the region for many weeks afterwards.

This attraction was off to a great start. Restoration has been steadily underway at the site, working on the brick portion of the flour mill and office built in the 1920s. This initial stage has now been completed. As one enters the building one sees the striking 28-metre high solid brick wall above the sales area surrounded by 500 millimetre walls of solid brick construction. The two original engine rooms and the ground floor of the main mill building have been reinstated and put to good use as part of the transformed mill. There is now a cafe specialising in organic foods and beverages, including homemade lunches and cakes. The shop section sells organic chocolates and licorice. Off to one side is a giant freckle-making station which children love. The owners tell me that visitor numbers continue to grow off the back of the many promotions, including giveaways of free coffee. One has to be highly entrepreneurial to get a tourism business off the ground in regional New South Wales.

Dean Druce and Max Reid, like all good entrepreneurs, have great plans to develop the site further. Over time they hope to include a cooperage where visitors can see demonstrations of the ancient art of barrel making. If demand continues to grow a restaurant may one day be established at the old mill. For the moment one of their great challenges is designing and constructing the fire safety systems necessary for the distillery phase. The owners are working closely with council to ascertain how best to guarantee safety within the constraints of an historic building. They are clear in their determination to develop a leading tourism attraction for Corowa. The owners are aware that this is very much a partnership with the local community and that the success of their enterprise will contribute to Corowa's own economic success. The Corowa Whisky and Chocolate Factory can be found at Steel Street, Corowa, and I encourage members to drop in when they are next touring through the south of the State.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [6.50 p.m.]: I wish to speak about some of the wonderful schools in the Port Macquarie electorate that I have had the privilege of visiting since being elected in March. I have given a commitment to visit each and every school in my electorate within my first 12 months as the local member and am really looking forward to the opportunity to see first-hand the great work they do. Each of the schools in the electorate is unique and all are doing fantastic work in educating our children. As a former teacher, I know how important it is to attend a well-organised school, which every student and staff member is proud to call theirs.

One such example is the Hastings Public School. Principal Grant Heaton heads a talented and dedicated team of teachers and support staff and a vibrant cohort of students. I have visited the school on a number of occasions and recently joined in the celebrations for the official opening of the four new classrooms funded through the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution program. In early June the Minister for Education, the Hon. Adrian Piccoli, joined me on a visit to meet the teachers and students and inspect the school grounds, including the beautiful area at the rear of the school where students can enjoy some time in the rainforest that forms part of the koala corridor. Hastings Public School has embraced its own parliamentary system, with Ministers instead of prefects as well as a shared Prime Minister role, and we were honoured to have both Rachael Sharp and Sam Harris accompany us on the tour.

The Minister and I also joined Port Macquarie School Education Director Mark Youngblutt on a tour of Westport High School, where we had the opportunity to meet the student leadership team. We were also given a smartboard presentation led by the president of the Westport environment team, student Zac Roberts, finishing with a walk along the nature trail that the team has developed for student use and a taste of some delicious bush tucker ice cream. I am told that no other high school can match the natural environment found at Westport High School, with sightings of spotted tail quolls, gliders, banded rail, wallabies, kangaroos, gliders, bower birds, sea eagles and, not surprisingly, a resident population of koalas. During our visit concerns were expressed about security within the school as the main office is located at the rear of the property, meaning that visitors have to walk through the school and student areas before signing in.

Conversely, regional education offices are located at the front of the school property, so ideally the two offices should swap. I will continue to work with the department and the school community to ensure a positive outcome in this regard. Herons Creek Public School is one of those great small schools just south of Port Macquarie. Recently, along with the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, I had the pleasure of presenting a cheque for \$200 to the school following the donation of mulch from the nearby Pacific Highway upgrade site. The Roads and Traffic Authority's Pacific Highway project team recently helped the community by providing free garden mulch created by the work to clear land for the upgrade. The team also invited

residents to bring their trailers to the project site office, where they loaded them with free mulch, with donations being taken at the mulch site for the Herons Creek Public School. What a great way to help their school community and at the same time foster a sense of pride and appreciation by the students.

St Columba Anglican School offers a great transition pathway from school to employment through the establishment of the Mid Coast Independent Trade Training Centre. The centre provides the skills needed for a successful career and the best chance for entry into an apprenticeship. In year 11 students do six units of their chosen trade subject and 100 days work placement, which is equivalent to completing a first-year apprenticeship while working towards the Higher School Certificate. This is a fantastic opportunity for those who are seeking a career in hospitality, construction or electro-technology. My congratulations to the school on this excellent initiative, which I am sure will assist in restoring our skills base locally.

Next on my agenda is a visit to the Crowdy Head Public School, in the southernmost part of the electorate, which is also to be commended for its environmental program. The school has one of the smallest enrolments in my electorate, which brings with it many unique challenges, issues and opportunities. One such opportunity is the development of environment programs and activities that will encourage other schools to visit the area and use its facilities. The school has forged some strong partnerships with local sporting, environmental, Aboriginal and educational groups that are all keen to see Crowdy Head Public School progress as an environmental centre. The school has even produced a DVD called *A Magic Place* showing the great work it is doing environmentally. I am looking forward to meeting principal Chris Tsembis, his staff and students to learn more about this and other great projects at Crowdy Head Public School.

CANCER VOICES NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [6.54 p.m.]: I congratulate Cancer Voices New South Wales on the recent success of its palliative care campaign and for the incredible work that this organisation has been able to accomplish. Cancer Voices New South Wales, which recently marked its tenth anniversary, provides an independent voice for people affected by cancer. It serves as a valuable umbrella for support and advocacy groups and its ambition is to represent and support the needs of the 40,000 people who are diagnosed with cancer in this State each year. It does so through its three key programs: a consumer representatives program through which it regularly consults with experts in the field and involves them in the decision-making processes, a consumer involvement in research program that specialises in providing the thoughts of its members and consumers to researchers and their funders, and the area cancer services program, which sees regular engagement take place across New South Wales on local and regional issues that shape the direction of its future advocacy.

Some of the achievements of Cancer Voices New South Wales in its first 10 years include assistance in designing a number of the State's hospital cancer centres such as Royal North Shore, and the completion of the radiotherapy for public cancer patients on the Central Coast campaign, as well as successfully advocating to the Cancer Council New South Wales for financial assistance packages and pro bono and financial advice for cancer patients. But perhaps the biggest achievement of all was the success of the organisation's palliative care campaign, in which the cancer advocate worked with one of its members to restore more than \$1 million of funding that had been cut by the previous Labor Government. The inspirational Dr Yvonne McMaster spearheaded a campaign throughout northern Sydney, collecting more than 23,000 signatures for a petition that was tabled in Parliament in June by Premier Barry O'Farrell.

The campaign called for the immediate and direct provision of a level of funding to Hammond Care that would be sufficient to restore the delivery of palliative care in northern Sydney, and that funding of palliative care throughout the State reflected the true requirements of communities across New South Wales. I commend the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, and the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, for being as passionate on the issue of palliative care as I am. I congratulate the Government on restoring greatly needed funds so that such programs can continue in northern Sydney. These programs had been shamefully taken away by the previous Government, which was intent on penalising my community because of the way residents vote.

One case that illustrates why funds are needed for palliative care was broadcast last night on the ABC network's *Australian Story* program, in which I, along with a quarter of a million others across the State, learned the story of Gavin Larkin, the founder of R U OK? Day. This courageous man, who has made a difference to the lives of so many, is currently receiving palliative care. Stories such as his highlight why funding for palliative care is incredibly important not only in northern Sydney but also across New South Wales. I send my best wishes to Gavin and his family—my thoughts are with you. I congratulate Cancer Voices New South Wales on its decade of success and I look forward to sharing its accomplishments over the next 10 years.

But any talk of the success of Cancer Voices New South Wales would not be complete without mentioning its outstanding chair and indefatigable campaigner Sally Crossing. Sally has used her own adversity to make a positive difference to the lives of people affected by cancer. After being diagnosed with breast cancer in 1995 Sally identified a lack of support for people who had been in her position. Sally had the vision, compassion and determination to address this situation and this is how the Breast Cancer Action Group was formed and how she became a leading light in Cancer Voices New South Wales. I commend Sally Crossing, Dr Yvonne McMaster and all those dedicated volunteers involved in the terrific work done by Cancer Voices New South Wales. As a community we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude, and I am delighted to lend my support to this wonderful organisation now and in the future.

VIETNAM VETERANS AND ASSOCIATED FORCES MEMORIAL DAY

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [6.59 p.m.]: I inform the House about the Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces Memorial Day 2011 held at Springwood in the Blue Mountains. This year was a special commemoration as it was the forty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966. Vietnam Veterans Day in Springwood is always a large event, bringing people together from all over the Blue Mountains and other areas of western Sydney. But this year it was an even larger event than previously with the attendance of the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, to give the address and take the vice-regal salute. As alluded to before, this was not only a Springwood community event; members of the Vietnamese community from other areas of Sydney, in particular the South Vietnamese war veterans, also participated, as they usually do each year. They are always a welcome contingent at the commemoration.

This year we had in attendance, apart from the Governor, Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans Patron Major General Sandy Pearson, AO, DSO, OBE MC, JSSC (US); the Hon, Charlie Lynne, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans Affairs; the Federal Member for Macquarie, Louise Markus, MP; Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Colin Aiken, OAM; the Australian Defence Force Federation Guard; representatives from headquarters Air Command RAAF Glenbrook; New South Wales mounted police and the VIP motorcycles, which were impressive; the 21st Army Cadet Unit; and all our local agencies, including the NSW Ambulance Service, the Blue Mountains Police Local Area Command, Fire and Rescue NSW, and St John Ambulance Australia.

It would not be a parade without a band. We had the New South Wales Police Band, the Lithgow Highland Band and the Springwood Salvation Army Band, all adding music and colour to the day. The service was ably led by Master of Ceremonies Major (retired) Richard Adams, APM, RFD, with the welcome by the President of the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans Association, Jack Lake. The singing was led by Hilton Wickham from the Wentworth Falls National Servicemen's Association, and the lament was played by John Cambridge from Lithgow Highland Pipe Band. The last post and rouse were played by Michael Aynsley from the Springwood Salvation Army band. As always with these events, the service was very moving. The Governor recounted the Battle of Long Tan all those years ago in a far away rubber plantation, where the Australian troops again showed the valour and courage that was displayed by the first Anzacs at Gallipoli. Heavily outnumbered, they fought and won the day. But this was a day of remembrance of those mates who left their souls behind in that place.

As a former member of the RAAF, I can understand the importance of the association with fellow defence force members. There is a shared common bond of a life different from normal civilian life. After the ceremony the Governor, invited guests and the local community adjourned to the Royal Hotel in Springwood to reminisce, develop new friendships and enjoy each other's fellowship. The Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans Association was formed on Anzac Day 1985 as an autonomous apolitical organisation to foster social contact with all who have had any service, in any service arm or civil capacity, during the period of Australian involvement in the war in Vietnam.

In 1997 its successor, the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces Incorporated, was formed, and now accepts veterans who have served in all post World War II theatres of war, special operations and peacekeeping operations. In 1998 the membership of the RAAF Vietnam Association joined the organisation, and in 2003 the Skippy Squadron—the former Qantas staff members who flew Department of Defence charter flights in and out of Vietnam during the Vietnam War—also joined the organisation. The Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans Association is well regarded in the community, as is evidenced by the support it receives from people for its commemoration in Springwood each year. I congratulate the association on the success of its day.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE MEN'S SHEDS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [7.04 p.m.]: Mensheds Australia is an organisation that prides itself on addressing the issues of men's health, physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing in the community. It assists men in the local area to live a productive and inclusive lifestyle that they may no longer have access to due to retirement, sickness, unemployment and social or geographical isolation. It brings together members of our communities who share the same abilities and skills, with an ethos of camaraderie and mateship. Members are given the opportunity and the facilities to take up a hobby or work with others on community-based projects, such as landscaping, gardening, do-it-yourself fix-it jobs, carpentry and wood turning. There are currently a number of men's sheds operating in my electorate of Wollondilly that I recognise today. They include the Oakdale Men's Shed, the Tahmoor Uniting Men's Shed, the Warradale Men's Shed and the Airds-Bradbury Men's Shed.

There is also Wollondilly Community Men's Sheds Incorporated, which is an independent incorporated community organisation that aims to establish and support a network of men's sheds across the Wollondilly shire. Wollondilly Community Men's Sheds is managed by a committee whose members come from the community and each established shed. This organisation promotes the shed movement within the shire. I am told by Wollondilly Community Men's Sheds that nearly every week another person makes contact with it to see how they can be involved with a men's shed in Wollondilly. It is clear that men are seeing the value of being involved and being part of the local shed movement. The sheds are a fantastic way to give individuals the opportunity to connect with other men in their local area, providing them with a sense of companionship and peer support that is so important in some of the more isolated areas in the region.

I had the privilege of attending a meeting with the men of the Oakdale, Tahmoor and Warradale men's sheds and Wollondilly Community Men's Sheds to discuss ways that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government can assist with the advancement of men's sheds in Wollondilly. Only recently the Tahmoor Uniting Men's Shed completed an outdoor seat for a local lady whose husband was unable to finish the job due to illness. Members are also making crosses for a local funeral parlour to put on graves until headstones can be erected and working on a community garden for a church. They also regularly show their wares at the local Thirlmere markets and are building community gardens at the local church. Heading north, we have the Oakdale Men's Shed, which has had generous support from the Rotary Club of Wollondilly North, in particular Warrick Richardson, the incoming President, whom I had the pleasure of catching up with recently.

Warrick has assisted in getting the development application approved by council and is planning and working on getting the shed built next to the existing shed at Oakdale Workers Club. I was pleased to inspect the new concrete slab that has just been laid, and it is exciting to see how big the shed will be. Indeed, the new shed will consist of a seven by seven metre double garage size space with an awning across the back for outside activities and gatherings. Formal storage areas will ensure that the shed is kept clear and will allow work benches and small woodworking machinery to be set up. I know the men are excited by the New South Wales Government's contribution towards the funding of the shed.

At Warragamba a \$40,000 Community Building Partnership Program grant from the New South Wales Government will assist the hardworking men in their efforts. I know the men at Warradale are champing at the bit to get their shed erected at Eighteenth Street, Warragamba, and have been instrumental in helping other local men's sheds in the area. These are just some examples of the great work that the sheds are doing across the community. Also, in the past I have purchased wooden toys for my two boys. I was impressed with the craftsmanship—that the toys still exist after my boys have played with them for a couple of years is fantastic. Wollondilly Shire Council has played an integral part in supporting the men's shed program in the electorate of Wollondilly, and I sincerely look forward to working with council, and in particular Bob Lester, to provide any assistance we can to these sheds and their wonderful members.

These sheds contribute to improved mental health in the region and provide council and local health and wellbeing organisations with a way to engage with men in the area through providing information on men's health. One example of this is that during National Men's Health Week the men's shed members were given health check-ups. I honour those hardworking members and Wollondilly Shire Council for getting behind such an innovative and important community program. In particular I commend Clive Hales, Jacqy Chevis, Bob Lester, Terry Atkins, Ron Grills, Bev Garrick, Phil Hughes, Warwick Richardson, Ken Quarmby, Tony O'Toole and John Bartle, together with members of the Oakdale Men's Shed, including Ralph, Jack, Frank and Dennis. To all these people: I praise your hard work and dedication to our Wollondilly community. I place on record my appreciation of the work you do for the community and for the fantastic initiative that is

men's sheds. I look forward to working with you in the future and I am more than happy to continue visiting the sheds on a regular basis. Please know that my door is always open to you, and I am more than happy to assist in any way I can.

QUEANBEYAN HEALTH SERVICE YEARS OF SERVICE DINNER

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [7.09 p.m.]: Last Saturday, 10 September 2011, my wife and I attended the Queanbeyan Health Service Years of Service recognition dinner. This was a first in many years for this type of event within the Queanbeyan Health Service. An event such as this has not been hosted for approximately 15 years or more, so members will understand its significance. This event came about as a result of an initiative from a previous Change Manager, Phil Major, at the Queanbeyan District Hospital. A registered nurse in the emergency department had mentioned recognition of service to Phil upon commencing in his role as the Change Manager. This then became an initiative to recognise the efforts of individual staff in improving workplace culture. A committee was formed to start developing and planning the event, and that led us to the dinner on Saturday night. I must congratulate Anita Grzeszkiewicz and her committee because they did a great job of putting together such a good night of food, fun, dancing and, of course, recognition.

The Queanbeyan Health Service Years of Service recognition dinner acknowledged the ongoing commitment to delivering health care locally by the staff in Queanbeyan. The event reflects the strong commitment that staff have to serving the local community because health care and support provided to local families can leave a lasting impression during what can be a difficult experience in dealing with health issues. The years of service event allowed all staff to reflect on the valuable role each of them plays in delivering healthcare services to members of our community. The evening recognised 47 staff with more than 10 years of service, 17 staff with more than 20 years service, and two staff members for each achieving over 30 years of service. The Southern New South Wales Local Health District Chief Executive Officer, Max Alexander, was the master of ceremonies for the night and performed that role fantastically.

The Southern New South Wales Local Health District Governing Board Chair, Ms Eve Bosak, was on hand and presented the certificates to each of the years of service recipients, acknowledging at the dinner their contribution to local health services. Award recipients received lovely certificates, lapel badges, pens and wine glasses for various years of service. I was honoured to announce and present the Service of Excellence award winners, who have shown outstanding commitment to local hospital, community health and administration functions. The event was made possible by staff fundraising and was held at the Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club. It was attended by health staff, relatives, community representatives and other special guests.

I will now read out the names of the award recipients, because I believe they are deserving of being recorded in *Hansard*. They are, for more than 10 years of service, Julie Hogan, Christine Laughner, Jacqueline Daniels, Trudy Wynne, Colleen O'Neill, Tamara Bishop, Mellissa Ellis, Diana Grandjean, Josine Snoek, Janine Turnbull, Helen Zacharewicz, Anna Brown, Carylann Jackson, Lauren Ross, Ross Ferguson, Karen Cameron, Julie Heanes, Judy Knight, Phyllis Riley, Lisa Mill, Leonie Keen, Pauline Campbell, Sharon Nihill, Kim Duggan, Sue McCauley, Ann Stewart, Jodie Ceely, Vanessa Howden, Barbara Phillips, Joanne Taylor, Lorraine Clarke, Margaret Hickey, Mary Townsend, Lucinda Ashton, Jane Horne, Margaret Taylor, Robyn Corbin, Gail Jones, Paula Nickle, Jenny Taylor, Virginia Cater, Sylvia Gibbs, Sami Lachmamma, Beatrice Vann, Peter Johnston, Danielle Hansen, Tammy Hudson, Amanda Gear and Tanyia John.

Recipients of awards for more than 20 years of service were Adriana Doyle, Denise Smillie, Maxine Lloyd, Jenny McCudden, Clare McArthur, Jennifer Jones, Ruth Bower, Pauline Brown, Teresa Kulski, Annette Jones, Lynette Langi, Vasanthini Balasubramaniam, Lyn Francis, Violeta Taseska, Catherine Hayward, Margaret Harrap, Gail Spratling, Ruth Skinns, Gai McGeoch and Josine Snoek. Awards for those with more than 30 years of service went to Judith Saeck and Janette Fallon. The Service of Excellence award winners were Harry Campbell, Nancy Monk, Maxine Lloyd, Alan de Zilva, Ruth Skinns, Dr Peter Davis, Dr John Hutton, Dr Govin Sukumar, Dr Phillip Gray, Dr John Azoury, Dr Ross Hendry and Dr Stuart Haynes, and of course the Queanbeyan Hospital Auxiliary. All were worthy recipients, and I congratulate each and every one of them on their contributions to the health needs of Queanbeyan. This event was a great success and I look forward to future events, where recognition of outstanding and dedicated people in our community can be acknowledged.

SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.13 p.m.]: I rise to inform the House about a visit by my colleague members of Parliament, including Acting-Speaker Mr Lee Evans, to the

Sydney Jewish Museum at Darlinghurst on Monday 6 September 2011. I co-hosted and coordinated the visit with the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, the Hon. Victor Dominello. There were some 20 of my colleague members of Parliament, rural and regional, in attendance along with the Attorney General and the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage. I thank them personally for their interest and for taking the time to come and visit the museum. I had visited the museum a number of times, but this particular visit provided an opportunity for me and my colleagues to learn more about the Holocaust and the history of the Jewish people.

Since 1992 the museum has commemorated the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust, whilst honouring the survivors and paying tribute to the nations that came to their aid. Through education, academic research and displays, the museum ensures that the Holocaust is never forgotten and is recognised as a crime against humanity with ongoing and universal significance. As a group, we were welcomed at the museum by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Norman Seligman, and were guided through the exhibits by three Holocaust survivors. Those survivors, truly inspiring individuals, gave all of us moving, emotional, brave and reflective insights through their stories of survival. Their tenacity and spirit were inspirational to everyone there. The Holocaust was one of the most horrendous atrocities in our history. We cannot truly understand modern conceptions of history, and indeed democracy, without having knowledge of this time and period and the resilience of the Jewish people. The museum teaches us about the very worst, and indeed the very best, of humanity.

One of the most recent exhibits at the museum comprises a number of photographs from the Shoes on the Danube Promenade. Sixty cast iron shoes were created and installed by Gyula Pauer and Can Togay in Budapest as a tribute to the Jews murdered from October 1944 by the Arrow Cross, an anti-Semitic Hungarian Fascist movement. The Arrow Cross took around 20,000 Jewish men, women and children from the ghetto in Budapest in December 1944 and shot them along the Danube Promenade. As shoes were valuable at the time, the victims were forced to take off their shoes before they were executed and thrown into the river. The museum's exhibition shows photographs of the cast iron shoes, taken by Dr Eric Wegman as a meaningful tribute to his father-in-law, Mr George Hamori, who was a survivor of the massacre at the Danube Promenade. It is stories such as Mr Hamori's and those of the museum's tour guides that teach us the tragedies and indeed the atrocities that humanity is capable of. These atrocities and their victims must never be forgotten, and the museum provides a forum for considering why these events occurred and how they can be prevented in the future.

But the museum also teaches us the hope and the resilience that humankind is capable of. A permanent exhibition entitled "Stories of Survival" shows a collection of Holocaust testimonies taken from 35 survivors. The testimonies give visitors an opportunity to see, hear and read about the events of the Holocaust and to learn about the emotional and inspiring tales of survival and resilience in the face of evil. These are the lessons of resilience and hope that we as parliamentarians can take back to our communities. They are the lessons that can help inspire our decisions as community representatives. This is why I and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities were so pleased to host so many of our colleagues from far-flung corners of our State on that visit.

I wish to use this opportunity to thank each member of this House and the upper House for taking the time to visit the museum and learn from the tragic and inspiring stories that the museum provides. As chair of the New South Wales Parliamentary Israeli Friendship Group, I personally welcomed the opportunity to continue gaining an insight into the Holocaust and the strength of the Jewish community in Australia and across the world. We must never forget the families affected by the events during the Holocaust. Museums such as the Sydney Jewish Museum must be supported to continue to bring these stories to us and to explain them in a contemporary context. Once again, I thank my colleague members who were able to attend the museum and share in the inspiration that the museum provides.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.18 p.m. until
Wednesday 14 September 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**
