

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 3 May 2012

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

CORONERS AMENDMENT BILL 2012

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama will come to order. These motions will be heard in silence. I will call the member to order or remove him from the Chamber if he continues.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

The SPEAKER: As all General Business (Notices of Motions) and Orders of the Day (for Bills) have been postponed, General Business (Community Recognition Notices) will now be proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

Question—That the following motions given by the members as indicated pursuant to notice be formally agreed to—proposed.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENT BILL MONAHAN

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House congratulates Mr Bill Monahan, of Mulwala, on being awarded a National Volunteer Award in recognition of his long-term commitment to the community.

HENTY LIONS YOUTH OF THE YEAR DIONE HOWARD

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dione Howard on being named the Lions Youth of the Year for Henty.
- (2) Notes that Dione has proceeded onto the zone youth of the year final.

PREMIER'S ANZAC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT BLYTHE VOGEL

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Blythe Vogel, of Albury High School, on receiving a Premier's ANZAC Memorial Scholarship.
- (2) Notes that Blythe will be participating in visits to Korea and the Western Front and attending an ANZAC Memorial Service in Belgium.

SOUTH WALLSEND SCOUTS

Ms SONIA HORNERY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 1st South Wallsend Scouts for its hard work which has culminated in the opening of new meeting rooms.
- (2) Congratulates the scouts and their leaders for their efforts.

ST KEVIN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL AUTISM AWARENESS EVENT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the staff and students of St Kevin's Primary School on their special blue-ribbon event to raise autism awareness for World Autism Awareness Day, on 2 April 2012.
- (2) Notes the Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) satellite class has encouraged the school to wear blue and organised other playground events to raise community awareness of autism during April.

WALLSEND COMMUNITY CARERS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends Ms Loretta Block, a local volunteer, for her 18 years of service to Wallsend Community Carers.
- (2) Notes Wallsend Community Carers provide assistance to residents in Minmi, Maryland, Wallsend Elernmore Vale, Jesmond, Birmingham Gardens and Shortland with bus and shopping services, home visits and respite care.
- (3) Acknowledges all Wallsend Community Carers who tirelessly help people in the Wallsend electorate.

DANIEL ARNAMNART OLYMPIC GAMES SELECTION

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Daniel Arnamnart, of Mt Colah, on being selected in the 2012 Australian Olympic swimming team.
- (2) Wishes Daniel every success at his first Olympics Games.

JARRAD JORDAN WORLD YOUTH ROCK CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIPS SELECTION

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jarrad Jordan, of Hornsby Heights, on his selection to represent Australia at the World Youth Rock Climbing Championships in Singapore.
- (2) Wishes Jarrad every success at the championships.

ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TOUR

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the players from Asquith Boys High School on their selection to tour Greece and Turkey, including the Gallipoli region, in April.
- (2) Notes the team will play against the Olympiacos Academy, at Piraeus in Greece, one of the elite academies for development of football players in Europe.
- (3) Wishes the Asquith boys success on their football tour.

ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RICHARD AMERY—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Rooty Hill High School recently celebrated its 50th anniversary and congratulates all teachers, staff, students and parents, past and present for the high standard of education this school has provided to the district since it was opened in 1962.
- (2) Notes that the school held an open day on 16 March 2012 bringing together the present and past members of the school community to commemorate the service and achievements of the school over the past five decades.
- (3) Congratulates all concerned for the organisation of the open day event.

HURSTVILLE SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL AND PREMIER'S READING CHALLENGE

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Applauds the efforts of Hurstville South Public School students in partaking in the Premier's Reading Challenge.
- (2) Notes the importance of reading as a fundamental pillar of education and learning.
- (3) Commends the school principal for organising the Hurstville South Public School's participation, launched on 5 March 2012.

LINDFIELD ROTARY FUN RUN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA—That this House:

- (1) Notes that over 2,000 people ran in the Lindfield Fun Run on 1 April 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the Lindfield Rotary Club and all who organised or participated in the event.

PENRITH PANTHERS BMX CLUB COME AND TRY DAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Penrith Panthers BMX Club on another Come and Try Day held on 26 February 2012.
- (2) Thanks club coach Nicole Docherty, president Peter Jaehne and other experienced club riders for their organisation and leadership to deliver this event.
- (3) Commends the local community which supported the event, with 40 youngsters eager to experience BMX racing.

WESTCARE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates WestCare Community Services for winning the latest Penrith Press Project Local Campaign and a \$2,500 grant for its Sewing Seeds of Hope project, which will teach sewing skills to women at the Emu Plains Women's Correctional Centre.
- (2) Thanks general manager Sonia DeMartin for her leadership in seeing WestCare Community Services expand to meet growing community needs and fundraising manager Mrs Alex Briffa on winning the local campaign grant.

ST MARYS AND WALLACIA-MULGOA VALLEY ROTARY POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates St Marys and Wallacia-Mulgoa Valley Rotary clubs for its third annual St Marys Local Area Command Police Officer of the Year Awards ceremony.
- (2) Congratulates Detective Senior Constable Shane Wheeler for receiving the St Marys Police Officer of the Year Award 2012 for professionalism and dedication to duty displayed in his pursuit of justice for a mother and her daughter, both victims of the same paedophile.
- (3) Congratulates Sergeant Anthony Fokes for receiving the Peer Award in the St Marys Police Officer of the Year Award 2012 for his action to respond to an out-of-area emergency call for assistance which led him to enter a home to rescue a female under direct physical assault.
- (4) Notes the commitment to duty, compassion and professionalism that is delivered constantly by the NSW Police Force in protecting our communities and coming to the aid of so many citizens.

GREAT AUSSIE DREAM MORTGAGE BROKING BUSINESS AWARD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Great Aussie Dream, of Glenmore Park, on winning a mortgage broking business award from the Mortgage and Finance Association of Australia.
- (2) Notes the national awards acknowledge practitioners who demonstrate exceptional professionalism, service and innovation in the mortgage and finance industry.
- (3) Encourages the Western Sydney community to support local businesses, such as Great Aussie Dream, which provide excellent, quality products and services in many industries.

LUKE LEWIS 200TH FIRST GRADE RUGBY LEAGUE GAME

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Penrith Panther's Rugby League captain Luke Lewis on his 200th first grade game on the weekend of 31 March 2012.
- (2) Notes that Luke, who played in Penrith Panther's 2003 premiership winning team, first played first grade for the Panthers in 2001.

WESTERN WEEKENDER TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the *Western Weekender* on its 21st anniversary.
- (2) Thanks the owners, editor Troy Dodds, journalists and support staff for their strong commitment to the Western Sydney region and for delivering a newspaper filled with community achievers, news and highlights.

PENRITH POLICE AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Penrith Police-Citizens Youth Club on its successful fundraising event "I Did Time to Reduce Youth Crime".
- (2) Thanks all Police-Citizens Youth Clubs for their commitment to reduce and prevent crime.
- (3) Congratulates the Western Sydney community for its generous support of the local Penrith PCYC at this fundraiser where well known members of the community were locked up until sufficient bail was raised to release them.

NSW PHARMACIST OF THE YEAR MARTIN COMINOTTO

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Martin Cominotto, of Martin's Chemist, St Marys, on being awarded the inaugural NSW Pharmacist of the Year medal.
- (2) Notes that Mr Cominotto strives to provide services that target the health concerns of the community by incorporating collaboration with other health professionals, including diabetic educators and nutritionists.
- (3) Encourages other pharmacies to follow the lead of Martin's Chemist to be wellness hubs for their communities.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR WOMEN CITATION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the University of Western Sydney for being awarded an Employer of Choice for Women citation.
- (2) Notes this is the ninth consecutive year that the University of Western Sydney has been awarded this citation.
- (3) Recognises the university's commitment to reducing the gender pay equity gap and for having one of the highest levels of representation of senior women across the tertiary sector.

PORT OF YAMBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Port of Yamba Historical Society on its success in putting together the Ghosts of WWI-101 Local Heroes Exhibition which opened recently.
- (2) Commends the exhibit's architect and researcher, Peter Edmunds, the Society's President, Maria Buist, other society members, and members of the special interest group for their commitment and dedication in putting on this exhibition.

ALLEN WHEELER MEDAL RECIPIENT DON WALDRON

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Don Waldron, of Casino, on being presented with the Allen Wheeler Medal, one of the NSW Greyhound Racing industry's highest honours.
- (2) Commends him on his commitment and dedication to the greyhound racing industry, in particular the development of the Casino Greyhound Club and his service as Secretary/Manager of the club for more than 40 years.

HARWOOD HILTON CRICKET CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Harwood Hilton Cricket Club on winning the Clarence River Cricket Association's Premier League grand final.
- (2) Recognises the performance of the runner-up, South Services Club.
- (3) Acknowledges the sportsmanship, commitment and dedication given to the Harwood Hilton club over many years by retiring captain, Tim (Ferret) McMahon, and wishes him well in the future.

GRAFTON MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Midnight Basketball on its successful eight-week midnight basketball program at the Grafton Regional Sports and Entertainment Centre.
- (2) Recognises the aim of Midnight Basketball is to give kids something positive to do with their time in a safe environment.

- (3) Acknowledges the commitment and dedication of the chair of Midnight Basketball, Grafton, Craig Howe, and his committee members, Alan Grainger, Jackie Milsom, Dylan Parbery, Emma Hannan, Glen McClymont, Deborah Stafford and Pat Hagan.
- (4) Recognises the support given by numerous organisations in the Clarence Valley, including Clarence Valley Council and individual volunteers, to enable the program to be conducted.

ROTARY YOUTH DRIVER AWARENESS PROGRAM

Mr DARREN WEBBER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the 1,800 year 11 students who successfully completed the Central Coast Rotary Clubs Youth Driver Awareness Program (RYDA) in March 2012.
- (2) Thanks the 145 local volunteers from many organisations including Rotary, Probus, Rotoract SES, ANZ Bank, Brian Hilton Motor Group and Gosford and Wyong councils, who gave up their time to ensure that the Central Coast RYDA program was a success.

ELERMORE VALE MEN'S SHED

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Elmore Vale Men's Shed on building a new shed adjacent to the Elmore Vale Community Centre.
- (2) Commends the members for the projects they have undertaken, including mowing lawns, weeding gardens, general odd jobs and a community harmony garden at the Elmore Vale Community Centre.
- (3) Notes that the group's activities are to the benefit of both its members and the Elmore Vale community.

WALLSEND DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wallsend District Cricket Club, the Tigers, for reaching the Newcastle grade cricket final against Merewether District Cricket Club.
- (2) Commends their effort against the Merewether side, who became the first club to complete the first grade treble of Twenty20, 50-over and two-day titles in the same season.
- (3) Commends Tigers' all-rounder Cameron Roxby, who is considered the next big emerging talent in Newcastle cricket.
- (4) Acknowledges Tigers' skipper David Celep's consistent encouragement to the team.

NSW BARNADOS AUSTRALIA'S MOTHER OF THE YEAR CAROLINE FOWLES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes Caroline Fowles, of Wallsend, was named NSW Barnados Australia's Mother of the Year 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges this reward for Caroline's hard work as a mother of five children.

MAITLAND SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Amy Wills, the Maitland Sportsperson of the Year.
- (2) Congratulates Maddi Elliott, the Maitland Junior Sportsperson of the Year.
- (3) Congratulates the Maitland Pumpkin Pickers rugby league team, the Maitland Senior Sporting Team of the Year.
- (4) Congratulates the Thornton Public School rugby league team, the Maitland Junior Sporting Team of the Year.
- (5) Notes the finalists for the Maitland Sportsperson of the Year were Matt Harris, Matt Jones, Alexis Hellyer, Laura Whaler, Jacob Sinclair, Graeme Mudd, Shane Tritton, Paul Athanasoff, Pam Gentle, Kara Bull and David Parker.
- (6) Notes the Maitland Junior Sportsperson of the Year finalists were Matthew Roberts, Abbey Harkin, Emily Coppins, Jacarna Bain-Fenton, Holly Lawrence, Caitlin Wood, Sally Smith, Haydn Bojkowski, Georgia Little, Jake Robinson and Bayley Ritchie.

LIFELONG LEARNING AWARD RECIPIENT DOUGLAS PYLE

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulate Douglas Pyle, of Bolwarra Heights, on being presented with a Lifelong Learning award at the NSW Seniors Week Achievement Awards 2012.
- (2) Notes Mr Pyle's contribution to the Maitland Repertory Theatre and the Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles.
- (3) Commends Mr Pyle for his involvement in the Living Book program.
- (4) Notes that Irene Cuddigan, Joan New, Janette Hamilton and Ted Minter received Community Service Achievement Awards.

VALLEY INDUSTRIES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that Valley Industries is a not-for-profit organisation that provides support and training services for disabled persons and their carers.
- (2) Congratulates Valley Industries for its ongoing schedule of activities, including social events such as its fancy dress party, Skills for Life program and Transition to Work program which have assisted many to find work in a large variety of trades and administrative roles.
- (3) Notes that Valley Industries has upgraded its timber products division, with an updated mill, new saws, conveyors and dust extractors.

6TH AUSTRALIAN MACHINE GUN BATTALION (AIF) ASSOCIATION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the 6th Australian Machine Gun Battalion (AIF) Association (6 MGB) on its work in maintaining a strong network of members comprising former gunners, their widows and families and supporters.
- (2) Notes that 6MGB holds regular memorial commemorations of important military incidents and achievements in which its members were engaged in when on active duty in the armed services.

MANNING VALLEY NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Manning Valley National Servicemen's Association on its annual Cards to the Troops program where schools and community groups in the Manning Valley write greeting cards to troops on overseas duty.
- (2) Notes that many servicemen from across the Manning Valley attended a special service at St Johns Church, Taree, in February to commemorate National Servicemen's Day.
- (3) Notes that St Johns Taree holds the colours of the 13th Battalion in a special memorial section of the church.

STUART WELLER BOOK LAUNCH

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Stuart Weller, of Nabitac, on the launch of his book *The Watershed: The Soldiers of the Wallamba*.
- (2) Notes that Mr Weller is a Vietnam veteran and local historian who has written the book based on his experiences.

DOROTHY "DOT" MURRAY 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Dorothy (Dot) Murray, of Storm Village, Taree, on the celebration of her 100th birthday on 24 March 2012.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Murray has two sons, Barry and Peter, from her first marriage to Hiliary Ryan, and that Hiliary was killed in a work accident in 1950.
- (3) Notes that Mrs Murray married Alec Murray in 1954 and after he died following a short illness in 1956 moved to the Manning region in 1965 where she and her partner Joe Warby were well known around the Taree area.

BERYL POMPLUM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House congratulates Beryl Pomplum on the celebration of her 90th birthday with her many friends at the Taree Railway Institute Bowling Club.

WINGHAM CRICKET CLUB A GRADE PREMIERSHIP

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Wingham Cricket Club on winning the A Grade premiership of the Manning River District Cricket Association for the second season.
- (2) Notes that Wingham defeated Forster in the grand final by seven wickets, and was led by captain, Brad Staff, who remained not out on 62.
- (3) Notes that Wingham also won the C Grade competition and was runner-up in B Grade.

MONA VALE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that 2012 marks the 90th anniversary of the establishment of Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club.
- (2) Recognises the members of the Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club who have volunteered their time to help protect the Pittwater community, including foundation member and Australia's first swimming gold Olympian, Frederick Lane.
- (3) Congratulates Jon Dibbs, Skye Rose, Brigitte Mason and all those involved in the club's 90th anniversary celebrations.
- (4) Commends the club's life members, patrolling members, other members and supporters for their outstanding professionalism and dedication to the Pittwater and Australian community.

HASTINGS RELAY FOR LIFE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organising committee of the 2012 Hastings Relay for Life.
- (2) Recognises committee members: Mersey Warden, Graham Burgess, Jenny Ward, Patricia Newman, Ian Newman, Amie Ward, Emma Ward, Glenda Hamilton, Greg Watt, Dione Edwards, Kellie Seymour, Christine White, Patricia Knudsen and Dennis Knudsen; and Ruth Gollan of the Cancer Council, who worked extremely hard to create a successful event.
- (3) Notes the Hastings Relay celebrated its 10th anniversary and raised more than \$110,000 for the Cancer Council, with 91 teams registering and 1,015 people participating in the event.

PORT MACQUARIE AND CAMDEN HAVEN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the inspirational achievements of the winners of the 2012 International Women's Day Awards in Port Macquarie and Camden Haven.
- (2) Acknowledges Lorraine Chambers, Janice Downes, Sheila Openshaw, Dominica Roebuck and Lesley Tierney of Port Macquarie, and Christine Fajks, Wendy Hudson and Kim Wiegold of Camden Haven, who were recognised on 8 March 2012 for their exceptional individual contributions to our local community.
- (3) Acknowledges the organisers of each of these events and Donna Carson, the guest speaker at the Port Macquarie event.

JAMES MAGNUSSEN OLYMPIC GAMES SELECTION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House congratulates Port Macquarie's champion swimmer James Magnussen on his achievements at the recent Olympic Games swimming selection trials.

PORT MACQUARIE CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the hard work and dedication of the organisers of the individual Clean Up Australia Day events in the Port Macquarie electorate.
- (2) Notes community members from Camden Haven, Coopernook, Crowdy Head, Hannam Vale, Harrington, Lake Innes, Laurieton, Lord Howe Island and Port Macquarie collected and removed rubbish from their local environment on 4 March 2012.
- (3) Congratulates the organisers and each individual who volunteered their time to this worthy cause.

HENTY PUBLIC SCHOOL HARMONY DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Henty Public School students' support of Harmony Day when almost the entire school of 116 students wore orange to acknowledge the day on 21 March 2012.
- (2) Applauds the teachers and students of Henty Public School in celebrating Harmony Day since its inception in 1999.

FOODCO BARISTA CHAMPIONSHIPS FINALIST BELINDA DUBOJSKI

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House congratulates Albury barista, Belinda Dubojski, on her success at the Foodco Barista Championship semifinals in Sydney and wishes her well, as a representative for the region, at the grand final in Melbourne in April 2012.

WAVERLEY ACTION FOR YOUTH SERVICES FORUM

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Notes Waverley Action for Youth Services (WAYS) held its annual Youth Forum on 29 March 2012 and that over 100 children from 14 local schools attended to discuss mental health issues.
- (2) Commends WAYS and Russell King, its Chief Executive Officer, for their contribution to the youth community in the eastern suburbs.

ST BRIGID'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY FAIR

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Notes that St Brigid's Catholic Primary School Coogee held its annual community fair on 24 March 2012.
- (2) Notes that the fair raised \$19,300 in funds for the school.
- (3) Congratulates St Brigid's Catholic Primary School and the organising committee on a successful fair.

VIOLET ROBBINS 110TH BIRTHDAY

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Violet Robbins, of Coogee, on her 110th birthday on 28 February 2012.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Robbins still volunteers on a regular basis at Prince of Wales Hospital.
- (3) Commends Mrs Robbins on her contribution to the volunteering community in the eastern suburbs.

AUSTRALIAN UNDER 16 ASIAN FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION CHAMPIONSHIPS TRAINING SQUAD

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Reece Papas, Brandon Lundy and Jaiden Walker from the Hunter region on their selection in the Australian under 16 training squad for the Asian Football Confederation Championships 2012.
- (2) Notes the achievement is a tribute to Northern NSW Football and wishes the young players every success in the future.

THE GUPPIES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates Lambton High graduates and musicians, The Guppies, for being selected to perform at Groovin the Moo at Maitland in April 2012.

NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL CLIMATECAM INITIATIVE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates St Patrick's Primary School, Wallsend, New Lambton South Public School, Mayfield West Demonstration School and Hamilton Public School for joining Newcastle City Council's very successful climate cam.
- (2) Acknowledges Newcastle City Council for this positive environmental initiative and for involving schools in the process.

MONA VALE A BOAT CREW

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Mona Vale A Boat Crew (Mona Vale Black) won the Open Men's Surfboat Title at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships for the second year running.
- (2) Congratulates sweep Bryce Munro and crewmen James Davison, James Morison, Wesley Dose and Sam Funch, the same crew who also won in 2011.
- (3) Notes the win in 2011 was the first time that Mona Vale had won this event in 62 years.
- (4) Congratulates the crew and Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club on winning the title and for representing New South Wales with pride and professionalism.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE "LARPA" STEWART

Mrs BARBARA PERRY—That this House:

- (1) Notes the sad passing of Bruce (Larpa) Stewart.
- (2) Notes that Bruce was a gifted rugby league player and one of the first Aboriginal players to play for South Sydney and Eastern Suburbs.
- (3) Notes his importance to the La Perouse community as a key community member, respected Aboriginal Elder and mentor for many in rugby league and in the wider context of Australian society.
- (4) Acknowledges his legacy and mourns the loss of Bruce (Larpa) Stewart.

ST MARYS AND WALLACIA-MULGOA VALLEY ROTARY POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Rotary Clubs of St Marys and Wallacia-Mulgoa Valley on the success of the Police Officer of the Year Award 2012 held at the St Marys Leagues Club.
- (2) Acknowledges the \$2,000 donation from the Rotary Club of St Marys to the Police Legacy Fund.

ST MARYS DISTRICT RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Notes the season launch of the St Marys Rugby League Football Club (Saints) on 31 March 2012 at the St Marys Leagues Club.
- (2) Acknowledges the work of the club chairman Warren Smith and the directors and also the coaches and volunteers who work to promote junior league and active healthy lifestyles for young people.
- (3) Congratulates the club on winning 19 premierships in the local competition during 2011.

AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AFRICA POLO TOURNAMENT

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House acknowledges the recent international polo tournament between Australia and South Africa held at North Richmond.

LUKE PRIDDIS FOUNDATION AND WORLD AUTISM DAY

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges World Autism Day on 2 April 2012.
- (2) Notes that Parliament House was illuminated with blue light on the evening of 2 April 2012 to promote awareness and to support people living with autism and their families.
- (3) Congratulates the Luke Priddis Foundation, established by former first grade rugby league player Luke Priddis and his wife, Holly, after their third child, Cooper, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- (4) Thanks Kim Ford, Dr Brian Richardson, the Nepean Rotary Club and Michael Creed who volunteered their time to provide the sausage sizzle fundraiser at the Fitness for Autism Day on 1 April 2012 at the Penrith International Regatta Centre.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

BALMAIN SHIPYARD

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.08 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the important contribution of the Balmain Shipyard to the maintenance of Sydney's ferry fleet;
- (2) notes the key role of the Balmain Shipyard in developing and maintaining a skilled maritime workforce;
- (3) notes the contribution that the Balmain Shipyard makes to the local area as a significant employer; and
- (4) calls on the Government to ensure that the Balmain Shipyard and the jobs, pay and conditions of Balmain Shipyard workers are not put at risk by any changes to the management of Sydney Ferries.

I am delighted to speak about Balmain Shipyard, with which I have a family connection. The shipyard is an important part of the local history and reflects the excellent efforts of maritime workers, metalworkers and others over many years. The Sydney Ferries maintenance facility, known as the Balmain Shipyard, comprises three wharves, tradesmen's workshops and a dry dock, and it is the workplace of 65 highly skilled blue collar workers. Located in Mort Bay, the shipyard is the site at which ferries are stored when they are not in use and where they are repaired and maintained. Shipbuilding forms a significant part of the history of the Balmain-Rozelle area dating back to the early 1800s when shipyards were first established. From the 1830s to the 1850s as Balmain developed into a suburb, regular ferry services connected Balmain to the city.

Shipyards were established along the harbour foreshores, as reliance on steamers, ferries and coastal vessels increased. The shipyards attracted increasing numbers of workers who wanted to live near their place of work. The activity of the shipyards, in turn, attracted other industries over time and in this way the shipyards were pivotal to the development of the area of Balmain and Rozelle. As the population increased, so did the demand for services, housing, shops, schools, police, churches, a hospital and local government. The lifestyle today of many Balmain residents is a legacy of the Balmain Shipyard and its importance to the local community. The area is known for its thriving pub culture that grew out of the blue collar workers who frequented those establishments and created a lively atmosphere in the pubs and clubs in Balmain.

The Balmain Shipyard is a significant and longstanding employer with an important history in the local area which continues to this day. Workers shop and lunch locally and often live nearby. There are three unions involved in the shipyard: the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, the Australian Services Union and the Maritime Union of Australia, all of which have a very proud history representing their members. The former Labor Government gave the Sydney Ferries Corporation 12 months to demonstrate why the service should not be privatised. Sydney Ferries was placed in a market-testing environment in order to decide on the best organisation to provide Sydney ferry services. As we know, the policy was dumped by the Keneally Government and adopted by the Coalition. Upon taking office in 2011, the Liberal-Nationals Government announced that it would proceed with the privatisation of Sydney Ferries. It is interesting to note that during the three years previous to that announcement the patronage on the ferries had increased to almost 1.5 million trips per year, over \$20 million was saved and 129 services were cancelled—down from almost 1,200.

Sydney Ferries has undergone significant reforms—supported by the workers and the unions representing them—and impressive improvements in performance have been demonstrated. The major recommendation of the 2007 Walker report into the Sydney Ferries Corporation was the need for new infrastructure, with the report identifying the ageing fleet as a major challenge to the service. I state to the Treasurer, who is present in the Chamber, that there is a pressing need to address the issue of ageing infrastructure, considering that most of the vessels are more than 20 years old. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported today that freedom of information requests for these details had been denied. We know that the performance of Sydney Ferries has improved significantly. The performance of Balmain Shipyard also has improved significantly, from an industrial relations perspective but also from an environmental perspective.

The residents of Balmain strongly opposed privatisation and supported public ownership of this facility. In 2009 a public meeting was held, which I convened as mayor. With more than 300 people present, the meeting resolved that the best interest is served by the ongoing public ownership of Sydney Ferries. We know now that the Government has negotiated with the unions and has arrived at an outcome that the unions have voted on and accepted. It is also important that the Government continues to maintain a strong and active interest in the shipyard. My father was a worker in the Balmain Shipyard. My parents immigrated to Australia in 1968 and my father took up his first job there. He was a merchant seaman but he went shore side and worked for the Sydney Ferries Corporation for several years as a fitter. By way of an aside, my mother's father was a dock worker in Liverpool, England, all his life. He thought that Balmain was a wonderful place to work, because it was not freezing cold when one was working on the wharves. He used to clean batteries working on the Liverpool wharves in sub-zero temperatures.

The Balmain Shipyard is a wonderful place with a fantastic history. Its history has been reflected in local government. I have been a mayor at Leichhardt Municipal Council. Nick Origlass and Izzy Wyner were two famous painters and dockers from the local area. Nick Origlass was also mayor of the Leichhardt municipality. He fought against so many of the battles for control of the waterfront. There were big fights, not only between employees and employers but also within unions that were fighting to ensure they could best represent their members. There was a history of systems such as the bull system, where maritime workers would line up in order to get picked by employers to work. Those systems were discarded following united action by workers. Union action made sure that people knew that when they turned up for work they would be employed. They would not have to go home not having any work for that day.

There were a lot of great people in various unions. Eliot V. Elliott is a good example of a person who fought for many years for the rights of workers. We also know that many workers—like Jim Healy, another union leader—did some fantastic work. They made sure that workplaces such as the shipyards at Balmain offered good, solid work where people were respected, got the job done and were paid fairly for their commitments. The Balmain Shipyard has fantastic historical relevance to my local community. It is a great organisation, staffed with great workers. I understand the Government is now moving to a new chapter in the history of the Balmain Shipyards. I look forward to following this move with great interest. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [10.15 a.m.]: I commend the member for Balmain for his hard work in bringing this important motion to the Parliament. The Government's Fixing Sydney Ferries program recognises the importance of both the Balmain Shipyard and, of course, its workforce. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals made an election commitment to fix Sydney Ferries, and that is exactly what it is doing. The reform process started almost immediately upon election where the Government called for registrations of interest for the franchising of Sydney Ferries. Under that franchising model, the Government retains ownership of the Sydney Ferries fleet and the Balmain Shipyard and maintains full control over the level of services provided, at fair levels.

Demonstrating the private sector's support for the reform and a willingness to work with the Government to fix the well-documented problems of the past, a total of 28 companies registered their interest. I compare that response to the 10 responses the Labor Government received during its failed market review process in 2009. The 28 companies included a range of local, national and international transport operators, as well as a number of companies from the maritime industry that specialise in maintaining fleets of passenger ferries and commercial and defence vessels. The next stage of the process commenced in July last year, with the Government calling for formal expressions of interest. I believe the Minister for Transport will make an announcement on this issue today.

A strong field of five firms and consortia lodged submissions, including local and international companies that are highly experienced in operating and maintaining ferry fleets. On 7 October 2011 the Government announced that three of these firms had been short-listed to participate in the process of becoming the new operator of Sydney Ferries. The short-listed parties included the Harbour City Ferries—a joint venture between Veolia Transdev Australasia and Transfield Services Australia—Serco Australia and Transit Systems, together with Forgacs Engineering. All three of these operators have experience in operating and maintaining publically owned transport assets.

The tender document sought the best package of approaches to customer experience, safety, operations, maintenance and management of the Sydney Ferries workforce. This includes improving ferry services, at the same time offering commuters and taxpayers value for money. All three operators lodged their tender responses with Transport for NSW and the Government remains on track to deliver on its commitment to have the new operator in place by the end of this year. As the member for Balmain alluded to, the Balmain Shipyard is vital to the safe and efficient operations of Sydney Ferries and the franchise contract will ensure that the new operator protects and maintains this key asset, along with the fleet, over the seven-year contract term.

The Government also recognises that the vessels and the shipyard cannot run themselves. That is why we have been working hard with Sydney Ferries staff and relevant unions to ensure that the transition of Sydney Ferries staff to the new operator is as smooth as possible. The Government has developed staff transfer arrangements that ensure that the staff on the vessels and trade staff at the Balmain Shipyard will be guaranteed an offer of a position with the new operator. This is vital. These arrangements were developed following lengthy discussions with Unions NSW and the eight relevant unions late last year. In December 2011 the arrangements for shipyard staff were endorsed in a vote on new enterprise agreements, which confirm the terms and conditions of employment to apply under the new operator.

The new agreements were formally endorsed by Fair Work Australia in February this year. The transfer arrangements developed by the Government and accepted by staff and unions will help ensure a seamless transition to the new operator later this year. The Government has shown that it can work with shipyard staff to deliver much-needed reforms to improve customer services. In any discussion about transport one hears that the Government is putting the customer at the centre of everything it does. That is an important part of any government policy. The member for Balmain also should be encouraged by the other elements of the ferry reform program. In addition to franchising Sydney Ferries, the Government has also delivered on its promise to restore and expand ferry services. Since the O'Farrell Government has been in office, an additional five services

per day, or 25 services per week, have been running at Cabarita, and the statistics show a strong case to improve services even more. In comparison, the previous Labor Government stopped ferry services from Birkenhead Point.

The new service is fully commercial. The operator has complete control over fares and ticketing arrangements and the standard of service provided. It is up to the operator to promote its services and to show passengers what it can deliver. The Government has cut through red tape to allow private operators to provide commuter services but operators will have to satisfy all the necessary safety requirements set by Roads and Maritime Services. Other regulatory barriers that have previously constrained such services will be removed. The new route will operate initially on an interim basis until the franchising Sydney Ferries process is finalised and the transport master plan is complete. The Government also has provided an additional \$7.5 million towards the wharf upgrade program. The member for Balmain can be assured that the Government is deeply committed to ensuring that our wonderful harbour has the world-class ferry service it deserves. The Balmain Shipyard is a core part of this service and the Government's reforms will ensure that the contributions of the Balmain Shipyard to the successful operations of Sydney Ferries are reflected in the franchising arrangements.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [10.21 a.m.]: I make a brief contribution in support of the motion of the member for Balmain. The motion notes the important contribution of the Balmain shipyard to the maintenance of Sydney's ferry fleet, the key role of the Balmain shipyard in developing and maintaining a skilled maritime workforce and the contribution made by the Balmain shipyard to the local area as a significant employer, and calls on the Government to ensure that the Balmain Shipyard and the jobs, pay and conditions of Balmain Shipyard workers are not put at risk by any changes to the management of Sydney Ferries. Sydney, as a maritime city, has a rich history and tradition in maritime services. Over the past century and beyond many of our waterway sites have made a great contribution not only to the growth and development of Sydney but also to the nation. Balmain Shipyard is one of those sites.

Mitchell Spooner is a terrific friend of mine—I went to school with him. He is a boat builder and one of Sydney's master craftsmen. Mitchell now lectures on boat building at TAFE. He is probably one of the last craftsmen in Sydney, or indeed Australia, who can work with wood to build boats in the way that was commonplace a century ago. He often speaks to me about sites such as the Balmain Shipyard with great fondness. He has told me about the great Labor history and tradition of such sites, where there was great solidarity and people passed on their skills to young people. Balmain shipyard is one of the vestiges of that tradition of yesteryear, and it should be maintained.

I acknowledge that the former Labor Government did engage in pursuit of privatising Sydney Ferries but it recognised that Sydney Ferries was making great strides in rectifying its performance and there was increased patronage. However, rather than flog Sydney Ferries, the former Labor Government sat down with the unions to discuss how to continue to increase performance levels and patronage and, together with the unions, it went a long way towards reaching those goals. I am concerned when the member for Drummoyne says that the O'Farrell Government is going to "fix" the Balmain Shipyard or the Treasurer, who is seated at the table, says that he will "fix" various things in New South Wales because "fix" to a Liberal Government simply means to flog the asset, to sack people, to cut services and to slash the bottom line.

I note that the member for Drummoyne said that Balmain Shipyard is vital to Sydney and New South Wales—it is vital to the Government's bottom line because that is all the Government sees. I place on record the appreciation of those on this side of the House for the work done by the Australian Services Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Maritime Union of Australia to look after staff. When one looks at the record of the O'Farrell Government in fixing things, it fixed wages at 2.5 per cent at a time when the consumer price index was running at 3.7 per cent. It cut wages.

Mr Mike Baird: What is the consumer price index running at now?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: What is the consumer price index running at now?

Mr Mike Baird: Yes, it is 2.1 per cent.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: It was 3.7 per cent when the O'Farrell Government fixed the wages and it was intended that people would get a wage cut to help its bottom line. It fixed police death and disability protection, just like it will fix Balmain Shipyard. The Government is fixing WorkCover, just like it will fix Balmain Shipyard. The Government also fixed the Industrial Relations Commission by gutting it, just like it will

fix Balmain Shipyard. It fixed The Star casino by smashing it, just like it will fix Balmain Shipyard. I support the motion moved by the member for Balmain. I ask the Government to remain true to its word that when the no forced redundancy policy runs out in two years' time it, for once, will look after the people.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [10.25 a.m.]: Those opposite have made very interesting contributions. I congratulate the member for Balmain on bringing this matter to the attention of the House. The Balmain Shipyard is the home of the Sydney Ferries fleet. As such, it is recognised as a key public asset by the Government, which will be reflected in the new franchise arrangement that is on track to be delivered by the end of the year. That franchising process will result in a private sector operator being selected to run Sydney Ferries under a performance-based service contract with Transport for NSW. The shipyard and the vessels will be leased to the new operator but these existing assets will remain publicly owned. This is a model that has been successfully applied in the delivery of public transport services in other States and around the world. Brisbane Ferries is a prime example.

The service was first franchised by Brisbane City Council in 2003 and since then the people of Brisbane have seen an expansion in their ferry network and an improvement in services. Working in partnership with the private operator, the Brisbane City Council has introduced new services and procured new vessels and new infrastructure, all of which remain publicly owned. The franchise model developed by the New South Wales Government is fully consistent with the recommendations of the 2007 Special Commission of Inquiry into Sydney Ferries, which was conducted by Bret Walker, SC.

The model provides Government with control where it is necessary in areas such as service level, fares and timetables. It also enables private sector expertise to be introduced to improve the customer experience and ensure the efficiency of services. Franchising provides a strong commercial incentive for the operator to maintain and continually improve services for the benefit of passengers and taxpayers. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals responded to Mr Walker's recommendations in February 2008 in support of the recommended franchise model—nine months before the former Government's response and the commencement of its failed market review process.

As to the staff at Balmain Shipyard, the transfer arrangements developed by the Government and accepted by employees, will ensure that a skilled maritime workforce will remain at the site. The workers voted overwhelmingly to accept the staffing arrangements proposed by the Government. Under the transfer arrangements all trades staff at the shipyard will be offered a position with the new operator on substantially the same terms and conditions as their current position with Sydney Ferries. The staff transfer arrangements were developed following lengthy discussions with relevant unions. The final package is fair and reasonable and will help ensure that from the staff and customer's perspective the transfer to the new operator will be as seamless as possible.

The Government has received strong support for its ferry reform program from the public transport and maritime industries. Throughout the franchising process there has been interest from local, national and international companies experienced in transport and maritime services. In contrast to the previous Government, the industry has confidence that this Government will deliver the much-needed reforms recommended by Bret Walker to provide the people of Sydney the world-class ferry service they deserve. Industry also has shown its support for other elements of the Government's ferry reform program, including the invitation for private operators to come up with new commuter services. For example, the Manly-Milsons Point-Darling Harbour service commenced operation on 16 January.

Let me assure the member for Balmain that the future of ferry services on Sydney Harbour is in safe hands under this Government. Once finalised, the new franchise arrangement will ensure that the public receives the best of both worlds. Customers will benefit from the best of private sector experience and management practices, while the ownership of key assets such as the Balmain Shipyard will remain in public hands. I congratulate the Minister for Transport, the unions and the employees who have successfully negotiated a great outcome for the taxpayers of New South Wales and for commuters.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.29 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Drummoyne, the member for Maroubra and the member for Londonderry for their contributions to this debate. In particular, I appreciate the comments that Balmain Shipyard is a key public asset and that work in the shipyard and the great history of the shipyard, which is moving to a new chapter, will continue. Interestingly, legitimate concerns were expressed when the future of the Balmain Shipyard was raised. The community was active in the campaign

to highlight, to the former Government and to this Government, that the introduction of profit motive would have an impact on maintenance, safety standards and so on. That is why the arrangements between the Government and the private operator are so important.

When the Minister for Transport signs off on the performance-based contracts it is critical that maintenance, safety standards and skill levels are protected as they are crucial to the ongoing viability of the shipyard. The contracts must ensure that the levels of service, the nourishment of workers in skill development, and the maintenance and safety standards are protected. The safety of passengers and workers, and protection of the shipyard environment, should be a priority. The next two years will be important for the workers in the Balmain Shipyard because the no forced redundancies clause in the arrangement expires at the end of that period. We hope that the Government will pay close attention and ensure that those jobs, which are important to my local community, are maintained and, indeed, augmented and the shipyard can grow and prosper.

The Government needs to grapple with the significant issue of investment in vessels. The arrangements with the private operator for the leasing of vessels will proceed. However, as highlighted by the Walker inquiry—significant investment in infrastructure and the vessel fleet in particular is urgently required. Most of the vessels are more than 20 years old and maintenance work on them cannot continue indefinitely. Investment in the fleet is needed to ensure the reliability of the fleet and the reliability of service delivery for customers. The Government's commitment to focusing on consumers is important. That is why investment in new vessels is critical. Selecting new vessels must be done in consultation with the shipyard workers as they know how to maintain the vessels.

One great problem in the shipyard is that so many different engines and vessels have been introduced over time that there is no consistency in relation to spare parts and focusing skills. Instead of having six, seven or eight different engines, a concerted effort must be made to ensure that new vessels can be maintained by the shipyard workers and are adequate for consumer use. In conclusion, the workers at the shipyard have done a fantastic job over the years. I acknowledge Chris Moutter, the delegate from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, who has been a great champion for the local community, and Jack Munday, who has been a great fighter for the Balmain Shipyard and for Sydney Ferries. I look forward to visiting the shipyard again soon with the new operator and the site manager. I will do my best to ensure that we not only recognise the achievements and the history of Balmain Shipyard but also protect the future of the shipyard and the skilled workers who have fantastic traditions and a fantastic future. As the local member I will do my best to ensure that the future of the shipyard is secured and maintained, and that it will prosper into the future.

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

Motion agreed to.

JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.34 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that on 25 May 2011 the John Hunter Hospital celebrates its twentieth birthday;
- (2) acknowledges the hardworking staff who have strived to make the hospital the best health facility it can be; and
- (3) notes that fundraising efforts and assistance from tireless volunteers have resulted in state-of-the-art facilities.

On 25 May 2011 one of the Hunter's largest institutions turned the ripe age of 20. John Hunter Hospital is continually expanding. Our excitement grows with the news that on campus the Hunter Medical Research Institute's \$90 million research facility will be completed this June. The state-of-the-art building will see more than 450 medical researchers from the University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health work on the new grounds. With the completion of the institute's new premises, John Hunter Hospital will play an even greater role in the day-to-day lives of Hunter residents than it already does. When first proposed, the Rankin Park teaching hospital was planned as a major tertiary referral hospital with close links to the University of Newcastle.

In 1982 Dr John Olsen was appointed to the position of project manager for the Hunter health region. Dr Olsen recommended that a new teaching and referral hospital be constructed on the Rankin Park site, leading to the development of John Hunter Hospital. The site was developed as a centre of excellence and the hub for

surrounding district hospitals and related health services. Of course, the health facility would not be what it is today without the efforts of the hardworking staff and tireless volunteers who raised the hospital from its childhood to adulthood today. The twentieth anniversary of John Hunter Hospital is an opportunity to celebrate its evolution and success over the past two decades.

When John Hunter Hospital first opened, between 1991 and 2006, it welcomed 756,742 general admissions and assisted in the births of 54,050 babies. The first nine months of 2011 saw the hospital undertake 38,212 overnight admissions and 36,000 same-day admissions of patients, which demonstrates how busy the hospital has been continuously since it opened all those years ago. In 2012 the hospital has 1,800 staff, including nurses and doctors. As the region's largest hospital, John Hunter Hospital has 500 adult beds and another 101 paediatric beds in the children's hospital. The Royal Newcastle Centre, which is attached to the hospital, has an additional 144 beds. With all these beds and services, volunteers are highly valued at John Hunter Hospital. Volunteer Freddy Bird said:

I started with the volunteers at John Hunter Hospital on the very first day in March 1991. I was 1 of the 7 people present on the first day. It's almost incredible that the hospital has been going for 21 years. I absolutely love volunteering and the enjoyment I get out of it.

In the 21 years that Freddy has been with John Hunter Hospital it has evolved dramatically. When Freddy first began she said:

We were simply volunteers. However, when the auxiliary was formed in late 1991 we turned into so much more.

Having volunteered for 21 years, Freddy understands the community, its needs and the importance of social activities for those in the hospital. We sincerely thank Freddy for her long service to John Hunter Hospital. Over the past 21 years fundraising through the hospital's gift shop, sweet and toiletry trolleys, raffles, pie drives and relative accommodation has enabled the auxiliary to donate more than \$3 million to the hospital. They have provided the hospital with specialised beds for the intensive care unit, wheelchairs, patient-controlled analgesics, state-of-the-art lifting equipment and much more. In the past two years alone they have provided a variation of beds across the entire hospital. We acknowledge all the members of the auxiliary for their hard work over the years. The manager of the auxiliary, Vicki Dunn, said:

As the hospital continues to grow, so does our team of volunteers. I am so very proud of our team of volunteers over here at the John Hunter Hospital and the amazing work they have done across the years. From the day we opened we haven't stopped changing things and growing and improving all the time; the care, the service.

Active volunteers include Anne Sargent-Irwin, who has completed 19 years of service to date; Pat Hillard, who has offered 21 years of service to the hospital; Molly Muddle, with 23 years of continuous service; and Lorna Aurisch, who has volunteered at the Royal Newcastle Centre and John Hunter Hospital for a total of 28 years. The work of these tireless volunteers has resulted in the hospital receiving state-of-the-art equipment and support for patients in an industry where hospitals typically are understaffed and overworked. John Hunter Hospital has been enthusiastically embraced by the Hunter community. It is an efficient, effective and extremely hardworking institution that rates more favourably with, and measures alongside, Australia's best capital city hospitals. John Hunter Hospital is a major regional asset that has enhanced the lives of many thousands of people in the Hunter and beyond, and it will continue to do so in years to come.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [10.40 a.m.]: I support this important motion moved by the member for Wallsend. When the John Hunter Hospital opened in 1991 it was heralded as the hospital that would change the face of public health in the Newcastle region. In 2011, as one of the busiest hospitals in New South Wales, John Hunter Hospital remained at the forefront of innovation and excellence in healthcare. A committee was established to oversee the celebrations for its twentieth anniversary. The committee's objectives were to highlight to the community the development and growth of the hospital and provide a pictorial timeline of the development and building of the hospital, including the damage to the building in 1989 during its construction when Newcastle experienced an earthquake.

A staff barbecue was provided to thank staff members for their contribution to the development of the hospital and for their ongoing care and expertise in the services they provide. Staff members were provided with a commemorative pen, supplied by volunteers, to thank them for their valuable contribution to the facility. Over the years John Hunter Hospital has added to the list of services it provides, including at the Royal Newcastle Centre, the Hunter area pathology building and the forensic medicine building. This highlights why the hospital has remained one of the leading health facilities in Australia. The commitment of staff and volunteers means that the hospital is constantly adding new services and being remodelled to ensure that a wide range of health services are available to the surrounding community.

Over the years volunteers have made a significant contribution to the hospital. John Hunter Hospital started with six volunteers and today there are more than 170. Of the six that started with John Hunter Hospital 20 years ago, three still volunteer at the hospital to this day. Over the years volunteers have helped out with all manner of tasks. Years ago volunteers even catered for a wedding reception for a staff member who decided to hold the wedding at the back of the hospital. Over the past 20 years John Hunter Hospital volunteers had donated in excess of \$3 million towards the purchase of specialised equipment for clinical care and treatment of patients. John Hunter Hospital site carers comprise an amalgamation of the Kookaburras group and Newcastle Centre's Pink Ladies group.

The equipment for which they have raised money includes electronic beds for the intensive care unit, patient-controlled analgesia machines, state-of-the-art lifting machines for the comfort of patients and care and safety of staff, bariatric wheelchairs, specialised bedside chairs, refurbishment of birthing suites, recent tinting and etching of windows for the privacy of patients and their families in the intensive care unit, and artwork, including murals, in patient waiting areas. Since 2010 volunteers have provided \$200,000 towards the purchase of new beds for the general wards, including bariatric beds and low to the ground beds to assist with elderly patient mobility. John Hunter Hospital is an integral part of the Newcastle community. In some ways it embodies Newcastle and the Hunter: it is there to help itself.

John Hunter Hospital works in collaboration with the university to provide a fantastic intellectual resource for the region—the reason it is one of the leading teaching hospitals in New South Wales. John Hunter Hospital has one of the busiest accident and emergency departments in New South Wales because it provides those services all the way to the Queensland border. Part of the collaboration between the John Hunter Hospital and the university has been the Hunter Research Medical Institute, to which the member for Wallsend referred. I know that all members in the Hunter region look forward to the opening of the new building in the middle of this year. This new and well-deserved facility will enable staff members to continue their work in one of the leading medical research institutes in New South Wales and Australia.

I will touch briefly on some of the fantastic work that is being undertaken in the John Hunter Hospital. Recently I had the opportunity to have a briefing from Chris Levi who runs the stroke unit at John Hunter Hospital. The Hunter has a higher than State average for stroke but we are fortunate to have someone of Chris Levi's capacity running the stroke unit. As a consequence John Hunter Hospital has perhaps the best stroke unit in the country. Research on early intervention to prevent patients who have had a stroke from suffering lifelong disability is remarkable. The surgical approaches being developed provide people who have had a stroke with the opportunity to be treated in a timely manner to prevent disability that could affect them for the rest of their lives. If they receive surgery quickly they can return to a relatively normal lifestyle.

Another reason why John Hunter Hospital is dear to my heart is that as the father of two young boys aged three and four years I have been a pretty good client over the past few years. Every time I have been at the hospital the staff have been fantastic. Obviously young children tend to get triaged up the queue but I have been always incredibly impressed by the dedication and skill of staff. The accident and emergency department is one of the busiest in the State, yet remarkably, in a confined environment, staff still manage to get through an enormous workload and provide great patient outcomes. I commend the member for Wallsend for bringing this important motion to the attention of the House. All Hunter residents are immensely proud of, and take great ownership in, the John Hunter Hospital. I congratulate the member for Wallsend for moving this worthy motion which I am happy to commend to the House.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [10.47 a.m.]: I join my colleague the member for Wallsend in congratulating John Hunter Hospital and acknowledging its twentieth anniversary. Since the 1990s John Hunter Hospital has served the sick and frail in the Newcastle and Hunter region and it has helped a countless number of people with health problems. It goes without saying that hospitals play an important role in our society. Every hospital I have ever visited—and I have two in my local area, being Fairfield Hospital and Liverpool Hospital—has been packed with hardworking and dedicated staff, from clinicians, surgeons and wonderful nurses to the administrative teams, cleaners and food and beverage staff. There is no better example of teamwork and working for the greater good than the staff who work in our hospitals.

For the past 20 years staff at John Hunter Hospital have been a great example of this spirit of goodwill. As well as the staff, John Hunter has an army of volunteers who work to serve the local community by supporting the hospital. These volunteers give of their free time in the spirit of the community. They roll up their sleeves to lend a helping hand where needed to assist with fundraising efforts so that John Hunter Hospital and the people that it treats have access to state-of-the-art facilities. I cannot understate the importance of having a spirited bunch of volunteers to support a local hospital.

My electorate of Cabramatta is served by two wonderful hospitals—Liverpool and Fairfield. The former Labor Government spent \$530 million doubling the size of Liverpool, making it the largest training hospital in New South Wales, and possibly in Australia. Only a few months ago, on 24 February, the volunteers at Fairfield Hospital were acknowledged with a gathering on NSW Health Volunteers Appreciation Day. This was a fitting acknowledgement of the hard work and sacrifice that so many give to our local community through the hospital.

The Fairfield Hospital volunteers and auxiliary are involved in a range of activities, including welcoming and guiding visitors around the hospital, operating a gift stall, delivering flowers to patients and fundraising activities for the hospital. Their spirit and commitment is and will continue to be inspiring for the staff, patients and our local community. I again congratulate John Hunter Hospital for reaching its twentieth birthday. I also congratulate my colleague the member for Wallsend for bringing this matter to the attention of the House so that we can all acknowledge the dedication and commitment shown by the staff and volunteers of John Hunter. I thank them and wish them every success in the future.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [10.49 a.m.]: I acknowledge my colleague the member for Wallsend for raising the matter of John Hunter Hospital today. John Hunter Hospital, sometimes known as "the John", is the principal referral centre and community hospital for Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens and northern New South Wales. It is the main teaching hospital of the University of Newcastle and contains the only trauma centre in New South Wales outside the Sydney metropolitan area. It is important to note that it also has the busiest emergency department in New South Wales.

John Hunter is the region's largest hospital with 550 adult beds and another 101 paediatric beds in the John Hunter Children's Hospital. The Royal Newcastle Centre, which opened next to John Hunter Hospital in April 2006, provides another 144 beds. Patients from the Hunter region and beyond are referred to John Hunter for treatment in a range of specialities, including anaesthesia, intensive care, orthopaedics, cardiology and cardiac surgery, emergency medicine, endocrinology, gastroenterology, neonatal intensive care, nephrology, neurology, obstetrics and gynaecology, respiratory medicine and trauma.

John Hunter Children's Hospital and the Royal Newcastle Centre are all located within the John Hunter complex. A unique aspect of John Hunter Hospital is the history behind its name. Rather than being named after one person, "the John" is named in honour of three men. They were John Hunter, a former Governor of New South Wales and the namesake of the whole Hunter region; John Hunter, the famed eighteenth century surgeon and pioneer of anatomical pathology; and John Irvine Hunter, an Australian anatomist who died in 1924 at the age of 26, having already been appointed the youngest anatomy professor at the University of Sydney.

When John Hunter Hospital opened in 1991 it was heralded as the hospital that would change the face of public health in the Newcastle region. Not only has this occurred but also a new family has been born—a family of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals along with a committed group of volunteers such as the John Hunter site carers, Kaleidoscope fundraising group, Pink Ladies, Ronald McDonald House charities and the Starlight Foundation. The tireless efforts of volunteers and the generosity of the Hunter community have seen in excess of \$3 million of specialised equipment donated, but more importantly for many they provide a hand to hold, a shoulder to cry on and sometimes, most importantly for those away from family, a friend to whom they can talk.

Ronald McDonald House Newcastle, located in the grounds of John Hunter Hospital, provides a home away from home to families of seriously ill or injured children. Opened in 1991 and one of five in New South Wales, it has grown to accommodate well over 800 families a year. There are 18 comfortably furnished family bedrooms within the house along with a warm, inviting dining room, playground, arcade games room and an outdoor courtyard with barbecue. The house offers a home-like environment full of compassion and understanding in a stressful and often difficult time. I wish to acknowledge the work of Christine and Trevor Coles of Belmont who have for many years served on the board of Ronald McDonald House and all the men and women who man stalls at local shops in my electorate raising funds to keep the facility open.

The Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI] is continuing to develop its plans for a world-class health and medical research facility currently under construction on the John Hunter Campus. The \$90 million Hunter Medical Research Institute building will bring together more than 450 medical researchers from the University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health to improve the health of the Hunter community, boost the local economy and create more jobs. The 16,000 square metre facility will allow co-location of biomedical researchers and clinical researchers to even better facilitate the effective translation of research into improved

health outcomes. It will support the continued growth of HMRI, which is already the third largest medical research institute in New South Wales, and assist Hunter researchers to continue to deliver research of national significance. I would like to say more but I have run out of time. I again thank my colleague the member for Wallsend for bringing forward such a wonderful motion.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [10.54 a.m.]: I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the House and congratulate John Hunter Hospital on its twentieth anniversary. I had the very good fortune to spend about seven years of my life working in and around John Hunter Hospital and I cannot speak highly enough of the facility and the people who work there. Indeed, some of the people that I got to know in their volunteer capacity for our charity organisation went on to become some of my closest and dearest friends.

John Hunter Hospital provides many different facilities and a number of them were listed quite eloquently by the member for Swansea so I will not repeat them. I want to emphasise one role that John Hunter Hospital fulfils through the John Hunter Children's Hospital School. The school is a K-12 special school and provides teaching within the children's hospital. Unfortunately some young people spend many days, weeks and months in the hospital and it is important they do not lag behind in their schooling where possible. The hospital school liaises with the students' regular school to provide individual programs for long-term students. This is incredibly important because it means that when they are healthy and well they can go back to a normal existence with their friends and peers and not have to repeat their schooling and prolong their experience in the education system.

Short-term students are provided with educational activities consistent with their needs. School staff consult with the medical professionals at all times and work together to cater for the students' needs. This is extremely important with some treatments because there are days when children are capable of doing their work and days when they are far less capable. It is important that the school and the medical staff work together to get the pacing and timing of the schoolwork correct and appropriate. John Hunter Hospital also houses one of three designated children's hospitals in New South Wales. The children's hospital provides care for children from birth to 18 years throughout the Hunter New England Health region and other parts of northern New South Wales.

The children's hospital is yet another example of the Hunter punching well above its weight in the excellence and expertise provided to the people of New South Wales. John Hunter Children's Hospital has a wonderful team of volunteers who exist to support the patients, families and staff in the hospital. Roles available to volunteers who want to and are able to donate their time and give back to the community include things such as ward grandparents, children's outpatient clinics, library programs, ward helpers, hospital school, childcare assistants, pets as therapy work, public relations and marketing, fundraising, assisting at special events, and of course John Hunter Children's Hospital Kids Club, Kaleidoscope Kids, and Hunter Children's Research Foundation.

There are strict requirements to become a volunteer so that all patients, family and staff can be confident about the volunteers with whom they are dealing. Of course that is appropriate when people are working with our young people. John Hunter Children's Hospital volunteers are regularly involved in group training opportunities as well as celebrations and recognition of service events. These volunteers help create much of the fabric of the hospital and build what is very much a tight-knit and loving community. John Hunter Hospital is without doubt one of the best medical facilities in the State. I congratulate the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the House. I also congratulate every person who works or volunteers at John Hunter Hospital.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.57 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Charlestown, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Swansea and the member for Cessnock for their contributions. The member for Cessnock made some good points in elaboration and raised a number of matters that I was not aware of relating to the children's hospital, which I found very interesting, and the children's hospital school, which is important. The member for Cessnock referred to the need for the hospital school to liaise regularly with the children's schools to ensure the continuous flow of education for children in hospital, which must be a difficult but important task. I was not aware that John Hunter Hospital is one of the three designated children's hospitals in New South Wales, which to my mind makes it even more important than it already was.

I was wondering whether the member for Swansea had spent any time recently at John Hunter Hospital and I can see that he is nodding his head in agreement. The health and vigour of the member might be a reflection of the good work of the staff at John Hunter Hospital. It might also be because he has given up smoking, which we are all very pleased about. I know I am digressing but after losing a dad from chronic emphysema and a brother who died of cancer at the age of 52 I say to everyone, "Give up smoking."

The member for Swansea made some very good points. He talked about the phenomenal number of beds in the John Hunter Hospital and its range of activities that many people are not familiar with. I was not aware that the hospital was named after a famous anatomist by the name of John Hunter as well as another John Hunter. The member for Swansea said that more than \$3 million was raised by the hospital's wonderful volunteers for specialist equipment. All members look forward to and are excited about being invited to the opening of the Hunter Medical Research Institute. The member for Charlestown talked about the excellent work of committees and the repair of the John Hunter Hospital following the earthquake, which was really important. I agree the John Hunter Hospital is one of the leading health facilities in Australia. He talked about the kookaburras and the Pink Lady volunteers.

We would all testify to the hospital having the busiest accident and emergency service in New South Wales. Together with the member for Charlestown I pay tribute to and thank Dr Chris Levi who oversees the very important stroke unit at the John Hunter Hospital. I thank the member for Cabramatta for his contribution. He referred to the army of volunteers who work in all of our New South Wales hospitals. I note that every member of this House is so thankful for the volunteers who not only contribute their labour but also raise a phenomenal amount of money for our hospitals. We sincerely thank each and every volunteer at all of our hospitals. The member for Cabramatta also mentioned that they are willing to roll up their sleeves and lend a hand, which is a good turn of phrase. Our spirited volunteers are not only at John Hunter Hospital but are at all other hospitals in New South Wales. All speakers happily noted the incredible efforts of our volunteers and the enormous amount of money they raise, for which we sincerely thank them.

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

Motion agreed to.

BROKEN HILL AGED CARE SERVICES

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [11.02 a.m.]: I move:

That this House notes that aged care beds are not meeting the needs of the community of Broken Hill, with a constant demand exceeding the available beds.

Aged care accommodation is a part of the responsibility of the Federal Government, but as a member of State Parliament I am constantly confronted with bed block at the local hospital as a result of aged patients who should be in aged care facilities taking up bed space. With winter approaching, aged people currently living in their own homes who can no longer look after themselves will be moved to the hospital where they will be categorised as needing high care in an aged care facility. Aged patients in hospitals are not treated in the same way as they are in a nursing home. They generally fit in with the nurses' schedule of bathing and meals, but no other service is provided. Consequently, the level of support for aged care patients in hospitals is less than what it would be if they were in an aged care facility.

The problem for Broken Hill is that it is remote. Members would be aware of the Federal Government's formula that identifies the number of beds that will be made available in an area based on the number of people aged more than 70 years in that region. As a consequence the aged care facilities provided by Southern Cross Care in Broken Hill are absolutely brilliant. One brand new state-of-the-art facility provides care for those suffering from dementia and those who need normal high care that matches the best facility in Australia. Unfortunately, from time to time it does not have the capacity to take those who are lying in hospital beds in Broken Hill. As a consequence, in last year's crisis 17 aged care patients who required high care had to be relocated to Wilcannia, Wentworth and Balranald where aged care beds were available in a multipurpose service. Many families had their aged loved ones moved some distance away from them. In many cases the family member is also aged and cannot drive long distances to visit the loved one.

All indications are that the shortage of aged care beds has not been resolved, and with winter approaching I have no doubt that more aged people will be moved into the hospital and provided with minimal care, which is not the type of support they need in the long term. In the southern Riverina, at the other end of my electorate, the modelling set up by the Federal Government works very well. The area has enough aged care facilities in the near vicinity, which means that an aged person can be placed in care with a view to bringing that person back to his or her hometown in due course. That generally works pretty well for the area. In most cases, the Federal Government's modelling is satisfying the needs of most Australian communities. I do not think this is a problem for the city or some of the larger regional towns, but it certainly is a problem for Broken Hill.

When aged care beds in Broken Hill are full, patients who need that level of care have to go to Mildura, which is 300 kilometres away, or Adelaide, which is 500 kilometres away. It is very difficult for people who were born and raised in Broken Hill—who have spent their whole lives there—to accept relocation to a facility that is 300 or 500 kilometres away. It stresses them and causes them angst. Many aged people remain in hospital and receive a lower level of care than they would receive in a nursing home. Nursing home care is absolutely essential to their welfare and longevity. I have no doubt that a lot of aged people who stay in hospital have a shorter life span than those who stay in a nursing home environment. The best place for aged people who need high care is an aged care facility that is totally suitable to their needs.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [11.10 a.m.]: I support this important motion moved by the member for Murray-Darling. What a great local member he is. My electorate of Myall Lakes, which is on the mid North Coast and which is a most beautiful area, is home to a large number of retirees. In fact, statistics indicate that 35 per cent of the population is over the age of 65. Accordingly, the provision of aged care beds is extremely important. The area has numerous nursing homes and retirement villages, including the Great Lakes Nursing Home at Bulahdelah, Golden Ponds Retirement Resort, Barclay Gardens Aged Care Facility and Kularoo Centre at Forster, Storm Retirement Village at Taree, Alma Place and so on. The electorate has a large number of high-quality, well-established aged care facilities, nursing homes and other senior citizens' facilities. But even though we have so many facilities, there is still a shortage of aged care beds in Myall Lakes.

As the member for Murray-Darling said, this is a Federal issue because the Federal Government is responsible for providing aged care and primary care beds in our regional centres. What is it doing? I must say, very little. It found \$50 billion for the National Broadband Network [NBN]. Although there is no doubt that we need faster internet connections, the model that the Federal Government has implemented is not the answer. Experts in Australia and overseas say that what the Federal Government is doing is over the top and that it will be superseded by the time it is completed. Can members imagine what we could do for aged care facilities in New South Wales with that amount of money? So much more could be done. I cannot think of any more deserving people than our parents and our senior citizens. As the member for Murray-Darling said, people who have contributed to our society throughout their lives are being forced to relocate 300 kilometres or 500 kilometres away from their loved ones, their support network and the area in which they have lived all their lives. That is wrong.

The member for Murray-Darling spoke about hospital beds being occupied by people who should be in aged care facilities. We must find somewhere else for them to go. That is also happening in the Manning-Great Lakes area. The Manning Rural Referral Hospital is the major public hospital in Taree and Cape Hawke Community Private Hospital at Forster has 20 public beds, but on average only four or five beds are being used at any one time. Patients at Forster-Great Lakes who have progressed from acute care to sub-acute care could be transferred to those public beds. However, those transfers are being hampered by a bottleneck. Something is preventing aged care patients from being transferred from the Manning Rural Referral Hospital to Cape Hawke Community Private Hospital. Two weeks ago I had the great pleasure of having the Minister for Health come to the Manning Rural Referral Hospital to meet with doctors, nurses, the chief executive officer and other healthcare workers. We raised the bottleneck with the Minister and she was shocked.

There are empty beds at Forster but people at the Manning Rural Referral Hospital who live in Forster and who no longer require acute care are confronted by this hurdle. I am pleased that the Minister is working on clearing the bottleneck so that those patients can be transferred to those 20 public beds at Cape Hawke Community Private Hospital. The member for Murray-Darling has highlighted the issues confronting our senior citizens. He probably should have advised the House of his conflict of interest in this debate. He is rapidly approaching his senior years and is probably considering his own need to utilise one of those beds and that is why he has moved this motion. I commend this important motion because it deals with the problem we are facing in regional areas of transferring people out of the public hospital system and into aged care beds, which are much more appropriate for their ongoing care.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [11.15 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak on this motion because Broken Hill has many things in common with the rest of Australia with regard to the upcoming dementia tsunami. It also has some unique challenges because of its isolation. The aged in Broken Hill cannot go to a nearby suburb or town; they must be cared for in Broken Hill, and the aged care bed shortage being experienced there affects the capacity of the wonderful local facility to care for new patients. A couple of years ago I visited the Broken Hill Base Hospital and to this day one of my most treasured possessions is the T-shirt I was given by the Rural Clinical School. Broken Hill's health education facilities are second to none and they provide everybody who attends them—and many do—a wonderful perspective on how to practise high-quality medical care in a rural area.

More importantly, the town looks after its own. That is one of the things that makes Broken Hill such a great place and it is one of its defining features. It is also why moving aged patients out of the area to other towns is very much a second-best alternative. All members, not only the member for Murray-Darling, must be aware of the dementia tsunami. The ageing of Australia's population is our greatest challenge not only because of its impact on the health system but also because of its potential effect on the functioning of Australian society. It is estimated that in 40 years there will be one retired person for every three taxpayers unless we change the way we live. It is worrying that statistics indicate that at the age of 85 one-third of all patients will have dementia and another one-third will be carers of someone with dementia. Much of that is preventable, but not all of it.

That is why this shortage of aged care beds in Broken Hill will not go away, and until it is addressed it will continue to affect the functioning of the wonderful local hospital. Broken Hill has some wonderful facilities. I visited the renal dialysis unit, which provides very high quality care with modern equipment. Its staff are well trained and committed, and they are very good educators. I am extremely pleased that the member for Murray-Darling has raised this important issue because it will not go away. The challenge facing Broken Hill—its isolation makes it difficult for people to leave the town—is unique. Unless we do something significant about the greying of Australia the capacity of our public health system will be overwhelmed. We have all been warned that care of the aged and its funding are vital issues and that we must address them in cooperation with the Federal Government to enable our public health system to continue to function.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [11.19 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Macquarie Fields for their contributions. There is no doubt that the tsunami of dementia, which was raised by the member for Macquarie Fields, will compound the problems in Broken Hill. I am mindful of the great work that Southern Cross Care does in providing aged care beds. Aged care facilities are run as businesses and to meet demand. An empty bed costs aged care providers serious money because they are paid only when a bed is occupied. Providers put their Federal Government funding at risk if their facility is not fully utilised. The onset of winter is a bad time for Broken Hill—that is when the Broken Hill Base Hospital experiences an increase in bed block, which creates all sorts of problems, such as patients taking up beds in the medical section.

Broken Hill relies on visiting medical officers to perform surgery. If a post-operative care bed is not available, the surgeon cannot go ahead with the surgery. There is an important chain of events to ensure that the Broken Hill hospital has beds, but you can see that chain slowly falling apart. As we approach winter the demand for aged care beds in the Broken Hill hospital will increase. Many of those who will need care have lived on their own for many years and in a lot of cases probably have had little care. They are very independent. They have always lived on their own and have managed to provide for themselves but there comes a time when they need the care provided in an aged care facility.

We must look for other alternatives. I encourage families in Broken Hill to consider the alternatives. Wilcannia has a magnificent facility at the Multipurpose Service Centre—it sits right on the river. I have visited it many times and it is a good standard facility. Families should be reminded that it will probably be a temporary solution and that the opportunity for the aged person to be relocated to Broken Hill is likely to arise when a bed becomes available. It is important that families give consideration to some of the alternatives. The Government is working hard to try to ensure the best level of care for all aged patients and this is certainly one of the alternatives.

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

Motion agreed to.

BARRABA WATER SUPPLY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [11.23 a.m.]: I move:

That this House congratulate the Government on funding a share of the much-needed Split Rock Dam to Barraba pipeline.

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the New South Wales Government on getting on with the job of building the infrastructure that our State needs. In this case it is the Split Rock Dam to Barraba pipeline in the Tamworth electorate. Thanks to a coordinated approach from local government, and State and Federal Governments, a 27-kilometre pipeline will be built from Split Rock Dam to the Barraba Water Treatment Plant

to ensure that local residents have access to clean, fresh, running water. The project will cost \$19.66 million. Barraba is a progressive community, with a population of approximately 1,700 people. It has some of the best grazing country in the land and is part of the famous Fossickers Way. It has many community organisations and hosts a number of excellent events.

For far too long the Barraba supply has been unsatisfactory, with the community relying on bores for its water. At times, the water is undrinkable. It ruins household appliances such as jugs, kettles and washing machines. The water clogs up shower heads, urns in the hospital and other community facilities—the list goes on. I am delighted that, after many years of fighting hard, there is light at the end of the tunnel—or should I say, water in the pipeline. Soon that pipeline will be filled with water. The Government's commitment to this project will total \$6.75 million. I thank the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services for their commitment to this project. I also thank the Tamworth regional council and Mayor Col Murray for their tireless efforts. It is great to see that the strong, spirited community of Barraba is closer to accessing the reliable water supply it deserves.

Tamworth Regional Council took the final steps towards breaking ground on the Split Rock Dam to Barraba pipeline when it formally accepted the funding offers from the State and Federal governments in February this year. Tamworth regional council has approved a project timeline for the construction of the pipeline, which will commence shortly, with a completion date of May 2014. The process is to complete the route survey, commence design, then construct and finally complete the project. This is the news that we have been waiting for. Barraba residents will now be able to turn on their taps and enjoy fresh, clean, running water for the first time in years. It is farcical that in 2012 we are talking about a community that will soon enjoy fresh, clean, running water—it may as well be 100 years ago.

Tamworth Regional Council has short-listed six tenders for the detailed design and documentation of the pipeline. The short-listed firms have received invitations to tender for the pipeline design consultancy services. The design consultancy will include geotechnical analysis, preparation of a review of environmental factors and the preparation of contract documents for the construction of the works. When I was at Split Rock Dam just a week ago to announce the completion of safety upgrades I admired the fact that the dam is nearly 97 per cent full. Most of the water that has been gathered in the recent heavy rainfalls will be heading to Barraba, which is great news. The project is exciting, not only for the people of Barraba but also for those businesses that have been looking to invest in Barraba on the proviso that the pipeline would go ahead.

The pipeline will increase confidence and investment in the area, which is more great news for the community. I congratulate the Government on its commitment to our region. I also congratulate Tamworth Regional Council and the Barraba community, spearheaded by a very passionate community leader in Mr Danny Ballard and the Barraba Development Committee. This is a great example of how all levels can work together for the common good. The community has fought long and hard and never gave up the fight. Its dedication and commitment is to be commended. Local, State and Federal governments joined in and the project is well underway. The front page of the *Northern Daily Leader* of Wednesday 7 September 2011 has a photograph of a stack of community members from Barraba and the headline, in bold print, "Funding in the Pipeline, New South Wales Budget 2011".

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Anderson delivers.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: It is great news—with great encouragement from the members behind me. The Government is starting to build the infrastructure that this State has needed for so long and in my electorate. On behalf of my community we simply say, thank you. Let us make New South Wales number one again. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [11.30 a.m.]: I make a brief contribution to this debate because anything to do with regional water supply is of interest to me. I commend the member for Tamworth for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. The member, whilst recognising the joint effort of the Federal and State governments and the regional councils in providing the Split Rock Dam to Barraba pipeline, omitted a couple of matters in his contribution. First, Split Rock Dam was a Labor proposal, as were most of the dams and water supply projects that have been built in New South Wales. I recall stating—at the very lectern that the member for Tamworth made his contribution from—despite many objections from the Assistant-Speaker, that the former Government was spending \$1 million per week on enhancing water supply and water and sewerage.

It is appropriate that the member for Tamworth has recognised the Split Rock Dam to Barraba pipeline project in this place. Whilst I welcome the actions of the O'Farrell Government, the member should give the full

story. This pipeline was needed and the project is the result of a long, protracted process. In fact, former Minister Koperberg was the first to talk about a proposal to get this project going. I also acknowledge Mr Tony Windsor, the Federal Independent member for the region, because he put this project on the table as part of his negotiations to support the Gillard Government after the last Federal election, which resulted in a hung Parliament. It is appropriate for the State Government to take some credit for this project, but one should bear in mind the saying that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. It should be recognised that perhaps a few fathers and mothers have not been mentioned in this contribution.

The Split Rock Dam project offered many benefits to the region, but this pipeline did not continue on from the construction of the dam. Barraba needed it. A lot of negotiations took place, with bureaucracy pushing and shoving as to who was financially responsible. As a result, it has been a joint effort. Tony Windsor cracked the whole process when, appropriately or not, he unashamedly told Prime Minister Gillard that this project was one of the conditions of his support for her Government. Overall, for the people of Barraba and all who have been involved in it, this is a good day to celebrate. I include in that the regional councils and the State Government for negotiating shared funding with the Federal Government to get this project going. I welcome the motion.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.33 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support the motion of the member for Tamworth. This motion highlights the hard work the member for Tamworth is doing to ensure that the much-needed infrastructure funding required in his electorate is finally being delivered. Since the O'Farrell-Stoner Government came to power on 26 March last year this State has benefited from many infrastructure improvements. The Coalition promised to restore good economic management, to promote growth and to make New South Wales number one again. When the people went to the polls they voted for change. To date, the reforms implemented by the O'Farrell-Stoner Government to ensure that New South Wales is back on track have been monumental. The people of New South Wales were over the Labor Party spin—the promises that were constantly given but never delivered on.

I know from conversations I have had with those opposite that they too are quite relieved. After one year of our Government those opposite know they can speak to the same Minister about an issue. The Labor Ministers changed so often that those opposite were confused as to who the responsible Minister was for each portfolio. Things are now happening as a result of stability. The right infrastructure can boost productivity, attract investment and enhance quality of life. In the first O'Farrell-Stoner Government budget funding of \$62.6 billion was allocated for infrastructure over the next four years. In September this year Infrastructure NSW will hand down its findings and will identify those projects most needed to open up this great State.

The Minister for Roads and Ports and the Minister for Transport have been looking at a long-term transport master plan. They have been working hard visiting metropolitan and regional communities and finding out about critical road and rail infrastructure requirements. Over the past 12 months some \$165 million has been spent in my electorate. Approximately \$60 million has been spent on roads. Some of those roads have never before had money spent on improving them. Finally, after raising safety issues with the responsible Ministers, common sense has prevailed. Not only have the major towns of Bathurst, Lithgow, Blayney, Oberon, Kandos and Rylstone received funding but the smaller surrounding villages have as well.

It is important for people across the electorate to be the beneficiaries of that funding. Funding has been allocated for education, the environment, the arts, transport, emergency services, floodplain grants, ageing and disability, sport and recreation, youth and primary industries. I acknowledge the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business who is seated at the table. Recently, the \$18.6 million Lithgow Sewerage Augmentation Scheme was opened. Some \$1.9 million has been spent on a 24-hour fire station in the Bathurst electorate. Jenolan Caves also has received tourism funding. Members on this side of the House are getting on with the job of representing the people of New South Wales and providing much-needed infrastructure funding.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [11.37 a.m.]: I make a brief contribution in support of the motion of the member for Tamworth, a fine local member. As the member for Bathurst said—another fine local member—infrastructure is all about making New South Wales number one again. That was one of the Coalition's core promises in the lead-up to the last election and the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is certainly delivering on that promise in the electorate of Myall Lakes. In the last year some \$128 million has been spent on roads. Included in that has been funding for the Bulahdelah bypass.

During holiday periods one can be delayed up to 1½ hours driving through the small township of Bulahdelah. I can inform the House that, subject to weather—we are in the second or third of the wettest years

on record—the Bulahdelah bypass should be open before Christmas this year. Funding also has been allocated for maintenance of the Martin and Tuncurry bridges and the upgrading of the southern and northern ends of The Lakes Way and the Krumbach to Nahiach stretch of Main Road 90. Those projects are now with council. The planning, geotechnical and design works are almost completed. Those roads are of the highest priority to council and work will start in the next financial year.

Another great initiative of the Government is a focus on the Pacific Highway. The Government has provided an extra \$468 million for upgrading of the northern end of the Pacific Highway. As everyone knows, the Pacific Highway is the most notorious highway in Australia, recording the most deaths, accidents and injuries. The Government is committed to completing the Pacific Highway upgrades. Interestingly, in the 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 financial years the Federal Government funded roadworks in New South Wales with a funding mix of 80:20—indeed, it was 86:14. We call on the Federal Government to honour its funding commitment to the former State Labor Government so that the Pacific Highway is finished before 2016.

I note that the Independent Federal member for Lyne has been grandstanding lately. He said that there is a commitment of \$3.5 billion in the next Federal budget, which is based on a 50:50 funding mix. That is nothing to grandstand about, because the Federal Government has reduced its commitment by 30 per cent. A funding mix of 80:20 is necessary to complete the Pacific Highway. We must take the politics out of the issue. Everyone knows that the Federal Government is the greatest tax collector in this country: It collects payroll tax, GST and all the main taxes and then divvies it up to the States. For the past three years the Federal Government divvied it out on a ratio of 80:20, and it should continue to divvy out the same amount.

The Pacific Highway upgrades must be completed as too many people are dying and there are too many accidents, and the Federal Government should be funding it. The Government is willing to commit its 20 per cent of the funding to complete the highway upgrades, and the Federal Government should commit its 80 per cent of the funding. The member for Mount Druitt said that failure is an orphan. Obviously, the member for Mount Druitt and his Labor colleagues are orphans because they failed over the past 16 years. During his watch, country water in regional New South Wales was halved.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [11.42 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Bathurst and the member for Myall Lakes for participating in this debate on the Barraba pipeline. It is great to see interest in regional New South Wales back on the agenda. The member for Mount Druitt referred to the Hon. Phil Koperberg, who did a great job as the water Minister. The member for Mount Druitt also mentioned the Federal member for New England, Tony Windsor, who played a role in securing funding for the pipeline. Although the pipeline project may have been developed during the watch of the former Labor Government and the member for Mount Druitt, as with so many projects over the years they were simply paying lip service. It was feel-good stuff. They simply said something to get a headline without backing it with any substance.

The Government has taken matters one step further. We said we would deliver on our commitments. One thing we are doing that the Labor Government did not do, is building infrastructure and therefore New South Wales. The member for Bathurst said that last year New South Wales voted for change. He is absolutely right; New South Wales voted for reform. The good member for Bathurst, who is one of the most popular members of this Parliament, said that we are getting the State back on track by building hospitals and roads. We are getting on with the job of making New South Wales number one again. The member is a great advocate for his community, and I thank him for his contribution.

The member for Myall Lakes spoke at length about roadworks and working with councils. Mention is often made about the major infrastructure project in the State, that is, the Pacific Highway upgrade. Initially, the Federal Government committed to a funding mix of 80:20, but whittled it down to 50:50. The Federal Government is backing away from its commitment at a great rate of knots. However, this Government will not allow the Federal Government to weasel out of the deal. We will hold it to its commitment to a funding mix of 80:20 so that we can proceed with our commitment of \$468 million to upgrade the northern end of the Pacific Highway, to which the member for Myall Lakes referred. The New South Wales Government is committed to upgrading that critical piece of major infrastructure. The good Treasurer of New South Wales talks about getting cranes in the sky. That is what it is about. Let us get those cranes in the sky to show that we are getting on with the job.

I note that the member for Monaro is in the chair. He knows all too well about building infrastructure in his wonderful electorate. He is getting on with the job of making New South Wales number one again. Once

again, I congratulate members on participating in this debate, and I thank them for their time. I thank the New South Wales Government for its commitment to our region, including Tamworth Regional Council and the Barraba community. We are starting to build infrastructure. I have a message for former Wallaby Tom Bowman, who lives in Barraba with his lovely family. Shortly after the election Tom approached me and said, "Kevin, get a shovel, we've got a trench to dig to start building a pipeline." My message to Tom is this: that moment is coming. I look forward to being on site with you and digging a trench to get that pipeline built so that Barraba can have fresh, clean running water. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Business Lapsed

General Business Notice of Motion (General Notices) No. 91 called on and lapsed.

ORCHARD HILLS RESIDENTS AGAINST INDUSTRIAL DUMP ACTION GROUP

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [11.47 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the dedicated work of the Orchard Hills Residents Against Industrial Dump [RAID] Action Group in fighting an inappropriate development proposal that would see an industrial and commercial recycling and dump business locate within their community; and
- (2) congratulates the RAID Action Group on gathering 9,090 submissions against the proposal within a four-week period.

I have had the great privilege of speaking on this matter on a number of prior occasions. Last year I made a private member's statement to highlight the great effort and work of the Residents Against Industrial Dump [RAID] action group and the wider community of western Sydney in fighting a proposal by Dellara Pty Ltd. This year I spoke on a petition with more than 10,000 signatures which highlighted this inappropriate and damaging proposal by Dellara to establish this business in Orchard Hills in my electorate.

I place on record the names of the individuals who make up the RAID action group: President Dirk Kurver and his wife, Lindy, and Secretary Mark George and his wife, Carmen. The other committee members include Ben Attard and his wife, Carmen, and young children Stephanie and William; Vince Azzopardi and his wife, Karen, with their even younger children Hannah and Jack; Richard Battersby, Tony Maltese and his wife, Angela; Jackie and John Wells; and Joe Mifsud. I place on the parliamentary record those names because they are the individual people and families who have worked for almost two years to fight this proposal.

The proposal by Dellara Pty Ltd to build an industrial commercial and waste recycling facility and dump in Orchard Hills was submitted to the former Labor Government under part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. In 2010, upon hearing that the proposal was being submitted under part 3A, I immediately worked with the local community affected by the proposal to form the Residents Against Industrial Dump action group. During our community fight I was privileged to invite the then shadow Minister for Planning, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, to address a large gathering of the Orchard Hills community.

At the meeting the then shadow Minister reiterated the Coalition's election promise to repeal part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act if elected to government. I had the great opportunity also to invite the then Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell, to sit around the dining table of a member of the action group and talk to that group about the impact on the community as a result of Labor's planning legislation. He too reiterated the Coalition's election commitment to repeal part 3A of the Act if the Coalition were to win government.

Since coming to office just over a year ago the Coalition has honoured its commitment and the Government has repealed part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. As a new member of this House, what we call the class of 2011, I am learning how to better and more effectively represent my community. I place on record my thanks to the member for Mount Druitt who, interestingly, in the previous debate urged the member for Tamworth to tell the whole truth, the full story behind the debate. I now have great

pleasure in placing on the parliamentary record the full story of part 3A. In about 2005 the Labor Government introduced part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. This promoted one person, the planning Minister, to be the sole judge and jury over development applications.

We all know what followed: the decision for donation culture emerged and grew. Absolute power corrupts absolutely, as they say. One of the most blatant examples of this corruption was when the member for Heffron was the planning Minister. She gave approval for Jacfin to change its zoning area in the Erskine Business Park to allow development to encroach upon an environmental zoning area, which effectively would reduce the wildlife and environmental protection corridor from 100 metres to 20 metres. One wonders why the planning Minister would allow a company to effectively destroy an environmental corridor that the council and all landowners in the Erskine Business Park had agreed to protect. There is one answer: at the time Jacfin was the largest donor to the Labor Party in that year, donating more than \$400,000.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: If the member wishes to make a substantive attack upon the member for Heffron she should do so by way of motion, not by the tawdry and inappropriate misuse of standing orders. Secondly, she is a long way from the leave of the motion, which is congratulating the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group. She is moving into an entirely different area.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: I thank the Residents Against Industrial Dump action group for their great efforts in fighting part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, introduced by the former Government. They experienced difficulty and trauma during their fight. This Government has repealed part 3A and has ensured that planning powers will be returned to local communities. We are cleaning up lobbyist engagement with members of Parliament and bringing back accountability in government. I thank the Residents Against Industrial Dump action group for their great efforts in supporting the Government in this way.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [11.55 a.m.]: The motion states:

- (1) notes the dedicated work of the Orchard Hills Residents Against Industrial Dump (RAID) Action Group in fighting an inappropriate development proposal that would see an industrial and commercial recycling and dump business locate within their community; and
- (2) congratulates the RAID Action Group for gathering 9,090 submissions against the proposal within a four-week period.

We should all congratulate a community group that gets together and signs 9,000-odd signatures to fight a particular project. I am not familiar with the dump or the commercial recycling centre and listening to the comments of the member for Mulgoa I still do not know what actually happened to that recycling project or dump. I did hear that an application was lodged with the former Government under this so-called dreaded part 3A of the Act. The member referred to the new Government honouring its commitment to replace part 3A of the Act. That is not in the wording of the motion; however, a fair conclusion is that it obviously has some connection with the development.

Perhaps in her reply the member for Mulgoa could state what has happened to the application by the resident action group. I understand the Government has rejected it and the project will not go ahead. If that is the case, the member is quite right in recognising a very successful campaign by an action group to stop what it considered to be a commercial recycling plant. The member used this debate to talk about a culture of corruption. She spoke about the previous Government nominating one person as the consent authority. She should speak to the Minister for Planning, who will explain to her that when an application is made under part 3A it does not go directly to the Minister's desk to be signed off; there is a planning process involved.

Under the new changes to the legislation I understand the current Government has the power to follow the same process for projects that are of greater significance than a local council project, so her comments are shallow. I remember the Jacfin project to which the member referred. The project was in my electorate, prior to the last distribution; it was just on the other side of the M4 motorway. The pipeline used to be my electorate boundary and now it is the M4 motorway. This issue has a long history in that area going back to the 1950s. I do not have the exact figures but I understand that something like \$60 million was being invested and I remember hearing that it would result in employment in western Sydney covering my electorate and the electorate of Mulgoa of some 10,000 people—not an insignificant amount.

The member for Mulgoa made reference to political donations by the company; I do not know what political parties they donated to but they probably donated to more than one. If the member has any allegation

that ties a donation to a decision, she should refer it to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I am a member of the parliamentary committee that monitors that body. The Opposition will not oppose the motion, as it simply acknowledges a very active organisation—the Residents Against Industrial Dump action group—which worked hard to oppose what the group regarded as an inappropriate development proposal for an industrial and commercial recycling and dump business to be located within its community.

I place on record that the company involved is Dial A Dump—that is one of the names it uses—and it has built a fairly large industrial waste recycling dump just outside my electorate. It was officially opened recently by Mr Barry O'Farrell, the Premier of New South Wales, who spoke in the most glowing terms about that substantial investment, which will create jobs and replace a massive open-cut mine. That will gradually be filled over the next 20 years with non-putrescible waste. It will mean an end to dynamite blasting and heavy trucks driving on dirt roads. They will now be using bitumen roads and all the processes will be under cover. That drew some protests from my electorate because it is on the other side of the motorway. However, I think the proponents have addressed all the concerns. It certainly will be a cleaner and tidier project than was the old gravel extraction business that had been there for the past 30 or 40 years.

The Premier, quite appropriately, given that it is a substantial project, went there and officially opened it even though the application, I understand, was probably lodged with the former Government under the so-called dreaded part 3A or a similar provision. The Opposition supports the motion because it gives due recognition to an action group that said that a particular dump and recycling business were not appropriate for the Orchard Hills area and its residents. Given that the matter has been raised in this Parliament I can only assume that the local member and the action group have been very successful in stopping that project from going ahead.

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [12.01 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Mulgoa, Mrs Tanya Davies. The member for Mulgoa hit the ground running on the Sunday morning after the election on 23 March 2011 and she has not stopped. It is not an easy job to be the member for Mulgoa, as is the case for me in my electorate of Smithfield. The previous Labor members of Parliament did very little and have left much to be done. I congratulate the member for Mulgoa for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I also congratulate the members of her community for having such pride in their community and for demonstrating great spirit in forming the Residents Against Industrial Dump [RAID] action group as well as for standing up and voicing their concerns about what they believe is an important issue affecting their local community.

The member for Mulgoa, with the local Orchard Hills community, formed the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group as a direct response to the industrial and commercial waste recycling dump proposal by Dellara Pty Ltd. As we have heard this morning and on previous occasions from the member for Mulgoa, the actions and efforts of the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group have been outstanding. Not only have they formed an effective, professional and efficient community action group but also they have worked with experts and the professionals at Penrith City Council and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to fight this proposal. Hundreds of community hours have been dedicated to the fight against Dellara that could have been spent with family and friends—hours that could have been spent on health and recreation and hours that should have been spent on building small businesses.

As a councillor I understand how bad planning decisions can impact a community, a household, a family or even an individual. I have campaigned against a number of bad planning proposals. In this case the community has also been impacted by families selling up and moving out in case the proposal succeeds. The community has also been impacted by the decrease in the valuation of their land while this uncertainty plays out. I know from speaking with real estate agents that the wider community is hesitant to move into this area because of the Dellara proposal. The Dellara proposal for an industrial and commercial recycling dump has caused the community a great deal of anxiety. The fight against Dellara has been monumental and successful so far. The community has pushed and fought the director of Dellara, Rick Miller, to the very end.

Under the former Government the part 3A process was operating. The community worked tirelessly to gather 9,090 submissions in opposition to the proposal. No other part 3A application has received this level of opposition before, so much so that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure had to employ two additional staff to enter the data from the submissions. Thankfully, the then Minister for Planning refused the proposal but Dellara has appealed the refusal through the Land and Environment Court. All 9,090 submissions then became irrelevant and the whole process had to start again. During the Land and Environment Court hearing process the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group worked feverishly to gather community objections, with even

less time to act. More than 18,000 letters of objection were submitted to the court in opposition to this proposal. More than 18,000 individual pieces of paper were distributed throughout the community of western Sydney. More than 18,000 individual pieces of paper were signed by more than 18,000 western Sydney residents.

This level of opposition to a proposal is unprecedented. We have the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group to thank and admire for such an extraordinary job. While the matter is now in the hands of the Land and Environment Court for a decision, the community waits anxiously for the outcome. Together with the member for Mulgoa I hope that justice will prevail for the sake of the families, the children, the retirees and the environment of western Sydney. This industrial and commercial dump proposal is wrong. It will damage our health and the environment. It will destroy the peaceful rural lifestyle of Orchard Hills. I urge the commissioners of the Land and Environment Court to listen to the loud voice of western Sydney which is calling for the Dellara proposal to be rejected. I commend this motion to the House.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [12.06 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Smithfield for their contributions to this important debate. The member for Mount Druitt mentioned that he was not entirely familiar with the engagement of Jacfin with the previous Government. I encourage him to look at the parliamentary record last year and to read the debate on the priority motion in which I spoke in detail about the specific engagement of Jacfin with the former Labor Government. He also mentioned that there was a particular process that the former Labor Government permitted under its planning legislation, specifically part 3A. The process he referred to is one that not only this Government but also the community have observed. It was quite straightforward. All developers needed to do was lodge a part 3A application with the Department of Planning, donate to the Australian Labor Party and the Minister would approve it.

It is pleasing to put on the parliamentary record that in stark contrast, under the O'Farrell-Stoner Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has delegated his authority to the Director General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure or the independent NSW Planning Assessment Commission. Once again our Government is demonstrating that it is committed to open, transparent and accountable government. I also have much pleasure in saying that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has implemented a process that places the decisions on these types of developments at arm's length from him. Once again that is restoring confidence in the planning system. I specifically thank the member for Smithfield for his very thorough and detailed summary of the stage that this matter has now reached. As he stated, the Dellara appeal against the rejection of its proposal by the former Minister for Planning is now in the Land and Environment Court and the community is awaiting a decision.

Mr Richard Amery: The former Minister rejected it.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: Was the member for Mount Druitt not listening? He needs to listen. I said that. I thank the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group which has led the community of western Sydney in fighting this proposal, not only when it was before the former Labor Government but now that it is before the Land and Environment Court. Last year we prepared more than 9,000 submissions and more recently another 18,000 submissions. Eighteen thousand pieces of papers were individually signed by mums, dads, children and grandparents to ask the court to stop this inappropriate and damaging proposal that will destroy their community and their livelihoods.

Many members of the Residents Against Industrial Dump Action Group are now my very good friends because we worked so closely together. They have done an extraordinary job—the best job possible. They ought to hold their heads high regardless of whatever outcome the court will deliver because they know that they did everything within their power legitimately to fight this proposal. I commend them, applaud them and thank them for being such champions of our community. Once again I implore the Land and Environment Court to take note of the opposition and to reject this proposal. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

General Business Notice of Motion (General Notices) No. 109 postponed on motion by Mr Richard Amery, on behalf of Mr Michael Daley.

PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS AND CONDITIONS

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.11 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Government for its continued bullying of workers in the public sector, in preventing them from attending a rally at Parliament House on 15 June 2011;
- (2) acknowledges the Government's attempts to avoid scrutiny of the changes to industrial relations laws designed to erode wages and conditions for front-line workers and their families, by gagging debate in the Legislative Council; and
- (3) notes that the action of the Premier in gagging debate has not been attempted for more than 100 years.

I refer to what I consider to be the continuing and outrageous treatment of public sector workers in New South Wales by the O'Farrell Government. Last year the despicable actions of this Government shut down debate on its controversial industrial relations legislation in the Parliament even though a petition containing more than 15,000 signatures from nurses, police, teachers and concerned community members was received. Premier O'Farrell did something no Premier has done in more than 100 years—he shut down debate in the Parliament and gagged debate in the upper House on the Government's industrial relations laws. Local nurses, teachers, firefighters and public sector workers have been protesting against these unprecedented laws since the proposal first came to light.

Research that was carried out at the time revealed that if the O'Farrell Government's laws had been introduced 10 years ago nurses would be earning in the region of \$12,000 less a year than they are now. The O'Farrell Government's workplace laws have slashed the power of the Industrial Relations Commission and removed public sector workers access to an independent umpire. It was obvious at the time that the Premier was trying to avoid scrutiny by rushing these laws through the Parliament, otherwise why did he shut down debate? The O'Farrell Government's decision to shut down parliamentary debate on the issue was a slap in the face to the 15,000 public sector workers who signed a petition against the proposed laws, and the 12,000 workers who rallied at the front of Parliament House.

Members might recall that whilst the rally was somewhat emotive people clearly were determined to try to institute changes. They were intimidated by government directives not to attend the rally and they were informed that those who attended the rally would have to use their leave entitlements, which is unheard of in this country and in this State, and is in violation of their rights. The ball was always in the Premier's court to handle the issue sensibly and in the interests of the people of New South Wales but, instead, the Premier sought to shut down the Parliament. To make matters worse, at the time only five of the 13 Labor members of the Legislative Council had an opportunity to speak on a bill that affects more than 300,000 workers in New South Wales.

The O'Farrell Government's laws mean a cut in real wages for teachers, nurses, firefighters, bus drivers and other public sector workers. Wage increases for nurses, teachers and other public sector workers were frozen, although there has been some tinkering around the edges, at 2.5 per cent for the foreseeable future and well below the 3.3 per cent inflation rate. That wage freeze came at a time when many local families were already struggling to meet the rising cost of living and, as we have seen in recent times with the power increases and additional cost increases, making it difficult, in particular, for people who live in the Wollongong electorate and in other areas with low socio-economic indicators who need assistance as opposed to additional stress. The basic conditions of local workers such as penalty rates and shift loading are threatened because they have been excluded from the O'Farrell Government's list of minimum conditions.

There is nothing new about a Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government seeking to force downwards the entitlements and conditions of workers. After I heard the Liberal-Nationals Coalition commitments prior to the last election it came as no surprise to me that one of the first things it did was to slash 5,000 public service jobs in line with the old master-servant mentality that seems to resonate when a Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government is in office. When a list of minimum conditions is developed and important things such as penalty rates are omitted, those are matters of concern for ordinary folk. These laws will force the Industrial Relations Commission to do the Government's bidding and leave public sector workers with no access to a genuine and independent umpire. Quite frankly, our local nurses, teachers and public sector workers deserve better.

The Premier did not go to the last State election saying that he would amend industrial relations legislation to remove the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission and hand that power to

politicians. The Premier gave himself the power to strip the wages and conditions of all public sector workers in New South Wales and, worse, he is pretending that is okay because he has no intention of using that power. Call me a cynic but I do not fancy waiting around to see whether the Premier changes his mind. Public sector workers in my electorate of Wollongong and across the State deserve security in their work and appropriate wage increases. Once again I call on the Government to give back the independent powers to the Industrial Relations Commission, unfreeze wage increases and start putting workers and their families first for a change.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [12.18 p.m.]: I oppose the motion moved by the member for Wollongong and will outline my reasons for doing so. The Government's wages policy, which in effect is the Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Act 2011, is a sensible and fair policy that continues the policy of former governments. The Labor Government's 2007 policy was exactly the same. A Premier's memorandum dated 11 September 2007 states:

It is intended to maintain real wages by allowing for increases of 2.5 per cent per annum. Additional increases are available where employee-related cost savings are achieved.

Labor's failure to implement its own policy has cost this State \$900 million and it could cost a further \$2 billion if it is not addressed. This Government is giving real teeth to the policy by not permitting any increases until the savings are achieved. The Government has chosen the 2.5 per cent cap on funded increases for the same reasons that previous governments have chosen it. That figure reflects CPI benchmark forecasts for Sydney and Australia and is consistent with the approach taken in other jurisdictions. The CPI is now 1.6 per cent and the public sector wage cap is 2.5 per cent. Although the CPI goes up and down, at the moment it is lower than the 2.5 per cent guaranteed increase. That is an independently verifiable figure and it is the midpoint of the inflation target range of the Reserve Bank of Australia. Choosing it as the cap for public sector wages growth is consistent with long-term movements in the CPI, which must be considered.

The inflation target is between 2 per cent and 3 per cent and I congratulate the Reserve Bank on its management of that target. The 2.5 per cent figure is a midpoint and the CPI will go up and down, but we must take a logical stance and that seems to be the solution. The Reserve Bank's "Statement on Monetary Policy" dated May 2011 points out that while the headline rate of inflation is 3.3 per cent, "based on a range of measures, year-ended underlying inflation is estimated to be around 2¼ per cent, well below the headline rate of inflation". That supports what I am saying; that is, that 2.5 per cent strikes a balance between the high and low points and is fair and affordable in relation to public sector wage increases. It guarantees that public sector wage increases will be ahead of the underlying rate of inflation.

Members opposite conveniently ignore the fact that the policy does not cap wage increases at 2.5 per cent. An increase of more than 2.5 per cent can be gained if offset savings are delivered. The Government will be happy to deliver the additional wage increases if the parties identify and agree to the necessary savings and deliver them. That is consistent with the fair and sensible approach being taken by other State and Territory governments. I talk to businesspeople and others in the community and generally it is agreed that offset savings were not delivered under the former Government. This Government is basing its policy on actual savings. Workers must demonstrate that the savings have been delivered and if they are they will be granted an increase over and above that 2.5 per cent.

Therefore, public sector wage increases are not capped at 2.5 per cent; that is simply the guaranteed increase. In fact, public sector workers will be able to achieve higher wage increases if they demonstrate that they have made savings. The Liberal-Nationals Government has made tough decisions and has struck a balance between fiscal responsibility and supporting the public service and its employees. These measures are necessary not only because of the global financial crisis but also because the former Government left behind a \$5 billion black hole after 16 years of neglect. This Government is making tough decisions to keep the economy afloat.

Householders and business owners know that when their costs increase and their revenue decreases they must adjust their budgets. This Government is making fiscally responsible decisions that strike a balance between what is affordable and fair and appropriate public service wages. The business owners I speak to in my electorate of Parramatta—the capital of western Sydney—would love to be guaranteed a 2.5 per cent increase in profit without making any extra effort. Their employees—many of whom I meet in my electorate—would also like to be guaranteed a 2.5 per cent wage increase every year and the opportunity to get more if they increase their productivity. These are tough but reasonable economic decisions.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [12.25 p.m.]: I support the member for Wollongong in condemning this uncaring O'Farrell Government because of its blatant and continued attack on the livelihoods of the dedicated public sector workers of New South Wales. The workers are furious at their treatment by this Premier and the Coalition Government. There could have been no louder vote of no confidence in Barry O'Farrell's leadership than the estimated 30,000 public sector workers who marched on Parliament House in August last year. Confusion reigns in the public service as a result of job cutting. The Premier is undermining public sector workers' confidence in their job security and they are angry because the O'Farrell Government is cutting real wages and removing workers' rights to settle bargaining disputes before an independent umpire.

The Premier described that rally as pointless. That is the sort of statement we have come to expect from this uncaring Premier. I assure members that those 30,000 public servants will not be fooled again and are already eagerly awaiting polling day in 2015 to teach the Premier and his Government a lesson. I was proud to attend the rally that day in support of the unions, especially my local unions such as the Fairfield Teachers Federation. I was proud to cheer them on as they marched on Parliament House. The Premier has previously said that he would like the New South Wales public service to be the best in the nation and a world leader. Why does he then insist on punishing public servants with unfair working conditions? Professor Andrew Stewart from the University of Adelaide made the following comments about New South Wales's new industrial relations laws:

That the Government can direct the Commission to make a finding that the Government's view is to prevail and that is a pretty extraordinary step to take with what is meant to be an independent umpire.

We can kiss goodbye to the independent umpire. This Government is no friend of public sector workers. New South Wales is blessed with one of the hardest working and dedicated public services in the country. In our great State we have a Police Force that fiercely protects our local communities and their families. It has taken the O'Farrell Government 12 months to give police officers the power to control gun crime in this State despite the fact that the Premier said he would be tough on crime. He has also watered down the police death and disability scheme, attacking those who put their life on the line every day to protect the community. If he does not care about them, why would he care about other public sector workers? We have a Fire and Rescue service, whose members bravely put themselves in harm's way when there is an emergency. We have hardworking doctors and nurses whose primary aim is to care for and to heal the vulnerable members of our community.

We have the most dedicated teachers who, each and every day, provide the essential learning and educational skills for our State's future. These are just a few of the examples of the outstanding public servants we have in New South Wales. Amongst others who deserve praise are the caseworkers and social workers of the NSW Department of Community Services, Corrective Services NSW officers and our dedicated team of staff who look after and administer public housing in my electorate of Cabramatta. The Liberal-Nationals Government stands condemned for its continual bullying of workers in the public sector in an attempt to prevent them from rallying outside Parliament House in June 2011. I thank the member for Wollongong for bringing this to the attention of the House. It is a serious matter and the Government will have to bear the consequences of its actions in 2015.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [12.30 p.m.]: I oppose the motion of the member for Wollongong. It is good to see the girls from Pymble Ladies' College in the visitors' gallery. They have the opportunity to hear debate on the motion moved by the member for Wollongong, but next time they come into the Parliament she will not be here. This is her final motion.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The member for Castle Hill ought to be advised on the issue if he wants to impugn my reputation.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member may pursue that by using the correct processes if she feels that her reputation has been impugned.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I understand the girls from Pymble Ladies' College are in Year 11. Two years ago I coached a mock trial team at a local school—Tangara School for Girls in Cherrybrook. There may be some mock trial participants in the visitors' gallery, as well as those involved in debating. They have been able to witness an important debate today about whether enough time was given to debate in the other place on the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy. The member for Wollongong says that not enough time was given to this debate because the Government gagged debate and did not allow proper scrutiny of the bill. When I was at school—and I do not think things have changed much—debates were held between two teams of three or four members with each speaker having three, four or five minutes to put the case.

But this debate in the upper House went on for days. One member of the upper House—Mr David Shoebridge—spoke for more than six hours. If you cannot make your point in six hours, what hope do you have? And you learn pretty quickly—as I am sure students at the Presbyterian Ladies' College have learnt—that you have to make your point succinctly. You get up, make a point, scrutinise and sit down. It took Mr Shoebridge more than six hours and even then they wanted to continue. What is the bill? The member for Wollongong said, "We have the same old policies coming from the Government" and she is right: It is the same old policy that the Opposition had when it was in government. I quote from the Premier's memorandum dated 11 September 2007:

It is intended to maintain real wages by allowing for increases of 2.5 per cent per annum. Additional increases are available where employee-related cost savings are achieved.

Does that sound familiar? It is very familiar because it is exactly the same policy. But there is one major difference between their side and ours: they continually mismanaged everything when they were in government. But this is a Government that is focused on making sure that we manage the economy properly. We are making the tough decisions to make sure that this State gets back on track. We make the tough decisions—unlike members on the other side of the House.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [12.34 p.m.]: I am going to do something that the Government has not done, and that is to thank all of the hardworking teachers, nurses and public servants in New South Wales. I was a teacher for many years and I know—as a former teacher in some of the hardest schools to staff in New South Wales—that it is a job that requires a great deal of dedication. I welcome the students from the Pymble Ladies' College and their teachers. It is an independent school and its teachers would know that they would not have their pay increases capped at 2.5 per cent. As a former public servant I am concerned that the wages of nurses, teachers and the police will be capped at 2.5 per cent and that the power of the Industrial Relations Commission has been slashed.

When I was a teacher and we were fighting for wage increases we feared going to the Industrial Relations Commission because we knew that often we would not get what we wanted. But we also knew that the Industrial Relations Commission decision would be frank and fair. It would be balanced, both for the Government and for the teachers. By taking away the power and scrutiny of the Industrial Relations Commission the Government is doing itself a disservice, and certainly doing a disservice to the hardworking nurses, police and teachers in New South Wales. The petition of more than 15,000 hardworking public servants in New South Wales represents their dedication and commitment to ensuring that people are protected in our public service. That is something I tried to do consistently as a member of the Labor Government. I did that for four years and I will continue to do it.

This policy represents a real cut in future wages for nurses, teachers and other public servants. I say to those in Government—as a teacher who started in Walgett—what incentive would a young person have to go to university to become a teacher or a nurse and then to be sent to a school or hospital in a distant town like Walgett, eight hours away from where you grew up, with the promise of a 2.5 per cent wage increase every year? Is that the big incentive to teach or to work as a nurse in Walgett? This policy is wrong and the Government should rethink it. When Government members start saying—as the member for Parramatta said—that 2.5 per cent "strikes a balance that is fair and affordable", I say that what it does not do for the hardworking members of the public service is make life affordable for them. Members opposite should rethink this bill. It is unfair and draconian. I will continue to support the hardworking teachers, the hardworking nurses and the hardworking police in my community, as I have always done.

Dr Geoff Lee: This will be interesting, here we go.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.38 p.m.], in reply: Listen and learn, Parramatta, you are obviously new.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I ask the member to direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I thank the members for their contribution to the debate. I will even acknowledge the contribution, albeit wrong, of the member for Parramatta. I congratulate the member for Cabramatta and the member for Wallsend on their contributions. I am not sure whether to congratulate the member for Castle Hill on his contribution because I do not know whether he understood the motion. I will be generous and say that perhaps the member for Castle Hill also needs a little bit more time in this place. For the benefit of the new members of Parliament, such as the member for Parramatta and the member for Castle Hill, I will explain what has happened.

Perhaps then the young ladies sitting in the public gallery will get the picture as well. The O'Farrell Government has frozen the pay rates of public sector workers at 2.5 per cent, and whilst there is no problem with people negotiating further increases with offsets, those on this side have a problem with the removal of the independent umpire—the Industrial Relations Commission—and the gagging of debate in the upper House.

The member for Castle Hill, having fought to get here for his first term, seems to think debate in the New South Wales Parliament somehow equates to a high school debate. Perhaps he needs a bit more time in this place to learn how Parliament actually works. Only five upper House Opposition and crossbench members were able to make a contribution to the debate before the O'Farrell Government saw fit to gag it—the first time in 100 years such action had been taken. Not only did the O'Farrell Government slash 5,000 public sector jobs, freeze public sector pay rates, and remove the independent umpire who could negotiate whether there was a satisfactory trade-off for a pay rise, it then gagged the debate by using its numbers in the upper House. I can assure the member for Castle Hill that, having won three elections, I expect to be here for a lot longer than he will be.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Government members will stop calling out.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I will not be bullied by those on the other side. Those opposite have not one argument between them. They could not hold an argument in a wet paper bag. I say to the young ladies in the public gallery that if they want a career in politics then they should not be bullied by those on that side of the Chamber. I will be afraid when those on the other side get some ability, but whilst they are as insignificant as they are I will not be deterred. The Government was out of order in gagging the debate and removing the independent umpire. Those opposite have the master-servant mentality and they should get rid of it. The O'Farrell Government should start governing for the whole of New South Wales.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 19

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

Noes, 62

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

Pairs

Mr Park
Mr Rees

Mr Piccoli
Mrs Williams

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): It being close to 1.00 p.m. the House will now proceed with committee reports.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 15/55**

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.53 p.m.]: As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee—the hardest working committee in Parliament—I take this opportunity to comment on the recent Legislation Review Digest report tabled on 1 May 2012. This is the fifteenth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. The role of the committee is to identify issues in proposed legislation and regulations as outlined in sections 8A and 9 of the Legislation Review Act. The fifteenth digest examined three bills introduced in the sitting week commencing 2 April 2012. The bills are the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012, the Local Government Amendment (Elections) Bill 2012 and the Sydney Water Catchment Management Amendment (Board Members) Bill 2012. I will now speak briefly on these bills.

The Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012 enacts cooperatives legislation as part of a proposed substantively uniform scheme of legislation applying the Co-operatives National Law across all States and Territories. The committee has referred elements of the bill to the Parliament for its consideration. The bill allows for the regulations to make provisions in relation to the supervision and inspection of cooperatives and to create offences and impose penalties for such offences. The bill also permits inspectors to enter places, including residences, without a warrant and require the production of documents and the answering of questions. The bill provides that cooperatives are required to treat as a refusal any lack of notice from the registrar in response to an application or an approval.

The committee is concerned that provisions for the winding up of a cooperative may be outlined in the regulations. The committee noted that aspects of the bill raised issues relevant to the committee's remit, including protecting officials from liability, strict liability, reversal of the onus of proof, required actions, reasonable time frames and repayments, compulsory acquisition of shares, compulsory transfer of funds to the registrar, compulsory loan commitments, multiple punishments, powers of the registrar, commencement by proclamation, retrospectivity, delegated legislation not subject to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989, and the Henry VIII clauses. However, the committee resolved that as the intention of the bill is to implement national law, the committee perceived such provisions are reasonable in order to achieve this purpose.

The committee commends the Government for taking the lead in enacting this legislation, which removes variations between jurisdictions and updates some provisions, in particular provisions that apply parts of the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001. Consistency of legislation across State borders is essential in providing a level playing field for the agricultural producers who are subject to such Acts. The committee noted two issues in the Sydney Water Catchment Management Amendment (Board Members) Bill 2012, but made no adverse comment in relation to either issue as the legislation is based on common sense. In reviewing the Local Government Amendment (Elections) Bill 2012, the committee did not identify any issues arising under section 8A (1) of the Legislation Review Act 1987.

For a detailed consideration of these issues in the bills, I invite members to review the digest. I remind the House that the digest aims to assist members in their consideration of bills and highlights the issues that the committee has considered when reviewing bills that have been tabled in the House. I thank the members of the committee staff who worked on the digest, together with the members of the committee, namely, the member for Kiama, the member for Rockdale, the member for Bankstown, the member for Parramatta and our

colleagues in the other place, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and Mr David Shoebridge, who have provided invaluable assistance in the scrutiny of bills introduced to this Parliament and in ensuring that the digest will continue to be of assistance to all members.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [12.58 p.m.]: I acknowledge my fellow members of the Legislation Review Committee, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Parramatta, the member for Kiama, the member for Rockdale and our colleagues in the other place, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and Mr David Shoebridge. Once again, I acknowledge also the hardworking committee staff: Emma Matthews, Emma Wood, Jason Ardit and Todd Buttsworth. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the committee meeting this week due to family reasons. However, I look forward to next week's meeting, which I understand will be held at lunch time. I had a quick look at the minutes of the committee meeting—there must have been some vigorous debate as the committee meeting lasted only two minutes.

Last sitting week Government members took exception to my practice of raising my concerns about Government legislation during the take-note debate. Members opposite accused me of disrupting what they believe is a bipartisan committee. Unfortunately, it would seem that these members are unfamiliar with the history of Legislation Review Committee take-note debates. I refer members opposite to *Hansard*. On 29 October 2010 the member for Davidson, Mr Jonathan O'Dea, who joined in condemning the content of my speech, used his speech in reply to criticise the way the Labor Government handled its legislative agenda. He made the same criticism on 12 November 2010. On 21 May 2010 the member for Burriajook, Katrina Hodgkinson, criticised the chair of the committee because she could not find a hard copy of the digest. I refer those members insisting this committee is bipartisan to the comments made by the member for Bega on 19 March 2010, when he said to the then member for Bathurst:

How can you say I have been plagiarising, you dill? The member for Bathurst is plain stupid.

But the single most critical member of the former Government during the 2010 take-note debates was the member for Wagga Wagga on 15 May 2009, when he criticised the Government for, in his words, failing to implement water recycling legislation. Finally I refer to the comments of the member for Wagga Wagga on 8 May 2009, describing the content of his take-note speeches. He said:

I have offered some constructive criticism, complimented the committee from time to time or chastised the member for Londonderry, who is the chairman of this hardworking committee.

I put this to the Coalition members in this place: There should be no double standards. If during their time in opposition they criticised the then Government during take-note debates the same courtesy should be extended to me. If they continue with this behaviour they will demonstrate to all and sundry that the O'Farrell Government members truly have glass jaws. This week's digest considered three pieces of legislation. The digest reviewed the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. Yesterday I led for the Opposition in support of the bill, which is the culmination of several years of work by successive State and Federal governments to bring about national reform of the cooperatives sector.

I place on record that the committee staff provided a particularly detailed analysis of what is quite a complex piece of legislation. I thank the hardworking committee staff for their work in presenting that part of the digest. I encourage all members to take advantage of the digest in understanding this bill and all legislation. The digest is a great resource that all members have at their disposal. It can significantly add to the quality and depth of debate in this Chamber. The digest reviewed also the Sydney Water Catchment Management Amendment (Board Members) Bill 2012. Yesterday we were treated to the nauseating spectacle of successive Government members speaking to the merits of this piece of legislation. [*Time expired.*]

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [1.02 p.m.]: The Legislation Review Committee has a long history in this Parliament. It was established with very specific terms of reference and functions. I recall being a member of the committee for close to eight years when I was a member of the other place. I accept that the member for Bankstown is new to this place. I have listened to her showing her misunderstanding of the functions of the Legislation Review Committee. It is not acceptable for her to abuse other members. She was unable to attend the committee meeting and, as she usually does, instead of talking about substantive issues she has spoken about other members who are not here to defend themselves.

Whether or not the committee is bipartisan, there are clear objectives in how the committee works. It is not about substantive issues or the substantive nature of legislation. The time and place for speaking about

substantive issues is when the bill is being debated. The Legislation Review Digest has in the first pages of each digest the functions of the committee and why it was established. With respect to bills, the committee is to consider any bill introduced to Parliament, to report on that bill and to consider whether the bill trespasses unduly on personal rights and liberties or makes rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers or makes rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions, or inappropriately delegates legislative powers, or insufficiently subjects the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny.

Those are very clear objectives. With respect to regulations, it is particularly about personal rights and liberties. In the absence of a civil rights Act, this is one way in which we can address whether personal rights and liberties have been interfered with or trespassed unduly on. It is a way in which the rights and liberties of the business community can be reviewed with respect to undue impact. It is not about the substantive nature of the legislation. Week after week the member for Bankstown comes into the House and sledges other members. She speaks about substantive matters in legislation. The committee has clear objectives and if the committee takes only a few minutes to consider a bill it is because committee staff have done the preparation, have provided the briefing information. Usually they are outstanding committee staff members.

I do not know the committee secretariat of the present committee but I know how well they researched and made recommendations to committee members when I was a member. If members of committees take only a small time to meet and reach conclusions perhaps it is because the legislation has been drafted without undue trespass on anybody's rights or liberties. Perhaps it is because the legislation has taken those things into account. They are the only things the committee needs to review; not substantive issues. If it takes only two minutes to come to a conclusion, so be it. If it takes 10 or 15 minutes or two hours, it does not matter as long as the relevant matters have been addressed and recommendations have been made. The digest is a good resource and the take-note debate is not an opportunity for members to score political points. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Bankstown has had the opportunity to make a contribution.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [1.06 p.m.]: I commend the chairman for bringing forward Legislation Review Digest No. 15/55, dated 1 May 2012. I note his comments on legislation before the Legislation Review Committee and his recognition of the staff who support committees. The Minister just gave us a lecture on the role of the Legislation Review Committee. I could have saved her three or four minutes; it is all written on page iii of the digest, which is produced every week. No member of this Opposition or the previous Opposition has ever challenged the functions with respect to bills and regulations about trespassing on rights and liberties and adverse impact on the business community. These are functions of the committee, not the committee take-note debate. I was chairman of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The member for Davidson has been quite strident in his criticisms in the way the committee operates.

Ms Robyn Parker: Only take note of the recommendations of the committee, not the substantive nature of the legislation. Only take note of the recommendations.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: Will you please be quiet while the grown-ups are talking? The functions of the committee do not restrict a member in a take-note debate if a member wishes to say that a two-minute committee is too short or that there has been insufficient scrutiny. As a member of the Opposition and a member of that committee he or she is entitled to make such remarks. If a member is not happy with the hours that a committee may sit because of certain obligations the member is entitled to say so. If something is said by a Government member or a ruling is made that affects the operation of the committee and an Opposition member—whether it is this member or any other member—wishes to raise that matter in the take-note debate there is nothing in the rules of debate to prevent that from occurring.

I have listened to these debates on the monitor and heard the points of order that have been raised. In many ways it hampers proper debate and the role of the committee. This committee is, as the chairman said, the busiest committee in the Parliament. Members opposite raising points of order against a member who has only four minutes in which to speak are challenging her democratic right to raise genuine concerns. I am not referring to today but on previous occasions. The chairman is right: members have only four minutes so they cannot have a substantial debate on all the bills that have been discussed and only certain references can be made. I thank members for not taking points of order in relation to those matters too.

The contribution of the member for Bankstown today highlighted the fact that the now Government when in opposition made strident criticisms of the then Labor Government. I took no exception to that as chairman of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and I do not think any other chairman did. The Minister continues to try to interrupt what I am saying but she should understand that the take-note debate is not related in any way to the stated legislative functions of the committee. The committee is not meeting now; this is a take-note debate. The committee meets at another time. The member for Bankstown is within her rights to raise any issues relating to the committee that she feels affect her role as a member or affect the standard of scrutiny of the legislation. It is the busiest committee and members are able to make only a four-minute contribution. They should not be frustrated in any way.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [1.10 p.m.]: It is a privilege to be a member of the Legislation Review Committee. I commend the chairman, the member for Myall Lakes, on his expedient and efficient management of the committee. I remind everyone, not just members of the committee, that committee members do a lot of work behind the scenes. I agree with the member for Mount Druitt in that regard. There is a lot of legislation to read and the staff of the committee certainly perform excellent work in preparing reports. I draw members' attention to the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012, a document of some 300-odd pages. The committee staff did an excellent job of putting together the recommendations in accordance with the role of the committee. Their contribution towards the smooth and efficient running of the committee should not be underestimated. Similarly, I acknowledge the efforts of most, if not all, members of the committee. I commend the Minister for taking an interest in the committee and the take-note debate.

The member for Bankstown continues to use the take-note debate for political point-scoring and muckraking and trying to diminish the important role of the Legislation Review Committee by raising the Opposition's views about the committee. That is very sad because we all commit a lot of time to the committee. We meet every week and the staff make a great effort. It is a bipartisan committee and it does a significant amount of work. It is with a great deal of sadness that I again have to raise these difficult matters and remind the member for Bankstown that the functions of the Legislation Review Committee are to look at legislation and identify trespasses on personal liberties and adverse impacts on the business community. My advice to her would be to confine her comments in the take-note debate to the recommendations of the committee rather than attempt to score political points.

I also thank the Minister to taking the time to reiterate the functions of the committee, which are obviously very important. I invite the member for Bankstown to look at *Hansard*, which the member is quite fond of doing, and read what has been said about the functions of the committee. That is what the member for Bankstown should be focusing on rather than engaging in a point-scoring and muckraking exercise, which she has clearly embraced. It is a bipartisan committee that meets every week and does a lot of work behind the scenes. It has an excellent staff who do a great job. I commend the entire committee.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

[The Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) left the chair at 1.15 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the public gallery Mr Jow Zhou and members of the China-Australia Mining Alliance, and also Mr Ken Ford and Mr Phillip Sellers from Industry Capability Network, guests of the member for Newcastle. I welcome also Mr Bruce Morgan, Chairman of PWC Australia, guest of the member for Vacluse. I warmly welcome members of the Berry garden club, guests of the member for Kiama, and 19 year 10 commerce students and their teacher from St Vincents College, guests of the member for Sydney.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.18 p.m.]

FATHER FINIAN EGAN POLICE INVESTIGATION

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. In light of the refusal of the Attorney General to do so, will the Premier apologise to all victims of child sexual abuse offended by the comments of the Attorney General to Father Chris Riley?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent so that the Premier can hear the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I heard the question, Madam Speaker. Of course we are all concerned about any incident of sexual abuse, harassment or violence that occurs within our community, but let me go specifically to this matter. It is important that the police and the justice system be allowed to do their job without any political interference.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked his question and the Premier is answering it.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: When this matter was first raised, and again this week, I made inquiries through the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and those inquiries have assured me that at no stage has the Attorney General or his staff been involved in the handling of this matter by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr John Robertson: That is not my question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Director of Public Prosecutions at both State and Federal levels operates independently of government. That is the way they are meant to operate.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members that they should not attempt to debate the subject of the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: What is important for victims of sexual assault is that their matter be dealt with by the law. The matters are dealt with in the first instance by the police, who then refer them on to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Director of Public Prosecutions has made a recommendation in this case and the matter is before the courts and, as the Attorney said earlier this week, it would be inappropriate to go into the specifics of the case.

HEALTH SERVICES UNION EAST BRANCH

Mr ANDREW FRASER: My question is addressed to the Premier. What is the Government's response to the unfolding drama at the Health Services Union, East Branch?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Premier does not need any assistance to answer the question.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Like the wider community I share the concerns of the member for Coffs Harbour about the horrifying claims of corruption that have dogged the Health Services Union East Branch and cast a stain over the union movement generally, and also over the Labor Party. The hardworking members of this union, the majority of whom work in hospitals, aged care and disability services—areas of critical importance to the community—understandably feel incredibly let down by the raft of allegations that have been levelled at those at the highest levels of an organisation that at its heart is meant to protect the interests of its members. It is hard to imagine a more tawdry series of events.

We are all familiar with the machinations involving the Federal member for Dobell and the case made against the union's general secretary, Michael Williamson, the former national president of the Australian Labor Party. This week it is clear that the Temby report has revealed what appears to be shocking, systemic swindling of union funds—millions of dollars allocated and awarded to big contracts without any tendering. Yesterday—as we saw on our television screens last night—New South Wales police raided the union's office, and allegations have been made that Mr Williamson and his son were sprung stuffing a suitcase of documents into a vehicle in the car park in contravention of a warrant held by police. It does not get much worse. It is for those

reasons that I announce today that the New South Wales Government will be bringing forward urgent legislation to ensure that the appointment of an administrator to this now notorious union occurs in the proper jurisdiction—New South Wales.

For some reason, and it is not too hard to guess for what reason, the Federal Government wants to pull the strings when it comes to the appointment of an administrator to this union. It wants to appoint an administrator under the Federal Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act. However, legal doubts have arisen about whether the Federal Court has the power to appoint, at the request of the Federal Government, an administrator to a New South Wales registered union. I understand that jurisdictional concerns about this matter were voiced only this morning by a Federal Court judge when the matter was being considered.

The Federal Court, in which the Federal Government has launched its action, is the wrong jurisdiction to deal with a New South Wales registered union. Therefore, I advise the House that the New South Wales Minister for Finance has today written to the Federal Minister for Workplace Relations to advise him that our Government will seek to pass urgent legislation to ensure that an administrator can be validly appointed to a New South Wales union. As I said, the Health Services Union represents some of the lowest paid workers doing vital jobs in both the New South Wales public health system and the private sector. They deserve justice and better than they have been getting from the colleagues, cohorts and co-conspirators of members opposite.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: As the Minister for Finance warned, the Federal Government's jurisdictional over-reach put a question mark over the efforts being made to clean up the union. I do not want a legal technicality to stop the appointment of an administrator to a union that so desperately needs one. I also do not want the appointment of the administrator subject to further legal challenge down the track. That means that the power to appoint an administrator must be put beyond doubt. This Government will introduce legislation to ensure that that happens. We intend to ensure that an administrator is appointed to the Health Services Union East Branch—an administrator proposed by the New South Wales Government under New South Wales law covering a New South Wales union. Only when an administrator is in place can the clean-up of the union begin. I look forward to the Opposition's support of that legislation. I also advise the House that Mr Williamson is no longer on the board of State Water—an appointment made by the Labor Government. The 50,000 members of the Health Services Union East Branch can be assured that this Government will do everything in its power to ensure that credibility is restored to their union.

ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL STAFFING DISPUTE

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I direct my question to the Minister for Health. Why has she refused to intervene in the Royal North Shore Hospital staffing dispute when she knows patient care is being put at risk?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: How unexpected. I will make one thing clear from the outset: The person who asked this question was the Parliamentary Secretary for Health in the Government that signed this contract. It is a bit rich for the member to be asking me about the problems created by the former Government, of which he was a member.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The Minister is now debating the question, which is completely inappropriate.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question and address her comments through the Chair.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: They do not like being held to account for the mess that they left us.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. It may have escaped—

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: This matter is before the Industrial Relations Commission following a dispute lodged—

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —by the Health Services Union East Branch against a private contractor—ISS Health Services, which provides cleaning services as part of the Royal North Shore public-private partnership entered into by the Labor Government.

Mr John Robertson: So you are doing nothing.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: If the Leader of the Opposition is interested in an answer—

Mr John Robertson: So you are doing nothing.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —he will be quiet and listen. The local health district has advised that patient care is being prioritised and infection control processes are being properly managed. The chair of the Medical Staff Council, Dr Tony Joseph, said on radio this morning that he did not believe that patient care was at risk, that this was a problem I had inherited—he is right in that regard—and that everything is being done, as it should be, to fix this problem. NSW Health has been listening to clinical staff and working with the local district health service to ensure that cleaning services are delivered as they should be.

When ISS Health Services reduced staff without consultation, NSW Health was quick to intervene to ensure that patient care was the number one consideration. NSW Health ensured that ISS Health Services was able to work closely with clinical staff to determine priorities and was in constant communication throughout the day to ensure that patient care was not disrupted. In addition, NSW Health actively engaged expertise to support the operational performance of ISS Health Services and to improve working relationships. As part of this transitional phase the district health service is meeting the cost of employing extra cleaners to ensure patient care is not compromised or disrupted while an Industrial Relations Commission endorsed action plan is being implemented.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was about the Minister's refusal to intervene. I would like her to return to the point of the question.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member simply does not like the answer. Mike Wallace, a former senior health executive, has been engaged to directly and actively manage the implementation of this action plan, which he developed. Professor Cliff Hughes AO, Chief Executive Officer of the Clinical Excellence Commission, has agreed to provide expert advice to Mr Wallace on patient safety and infection control issues as the plan is being implemented, to ensure that patient safety is not compromised. Mike Wallace and local health district management officers are meeting with nurse representatives at the hospital shortly to take them through what is being done to sort out any problems.

This has been an ongoing practice. I am pleased to say that this meeting was agreed to in the Industrial Relations Commission on Tuesday at 4.00 p.m. Unfortunately, the Health Services Union—the very same union that the Premier mentioned earlier—has ignored the ruling of the Industrial Relations Commission at the suggestion of ISS Health Services, because it is threatening industrial action. Those parties will be back in the Industrial Relations Commission at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow. The Government is determined to ensure that patient safety is not compromised and that the dud contract signed by those opposite will be sorted out.

SYDNEY FERRIES

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's election commitment to fix Sydney Ferries?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for this important question and for her continued support for public transport reform. Today is a great day for ferry commuters and for anyone who cares about

the future of public transport in New South Wales. Today marks a new way to deliver ferry services in New South Wales and in Sydney. Today the Government is delivering on its election commitment to fix Sydney Ferries. Better still, the Government is delivering on this commitment earlier than expected. I have always undertaken to have a new operator in place for Sydney Ferries by the end of this year. That will now happen by the end of July or early August—five months ahead of schedule. I am pleased to announce that, after an exhaustive tender process, a partnership between Veolia Transdev and Transfield Services has won the right to run Sydney Ferries.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Importantly for customers, the name "Sydney Ferries" and the iconic trademark of the existing fleet will be retained. A key responsibility for the new operator will be to improve the service for the 14 million trips that occur every year on Sydney ferries. There is no doubt that Sydney Harbour is an international icon and it deserves a ferry service to match its iconic status. The contract will run for seven years and it requires the new operator to meet a number of performance benchmarks in key areas such as safety, reliability, customer service and patronage growth. Under the franchise model, the existing vessels of Sydney Ferries and the Balmain shipyard—which the member for Balmain has raised with me on a number of occasions—will remain in public hands. In addition, the Government will continue to retain full control over fares and service levels.

A transition period of approximately three months will commence today, with the new operator expected to take its place at the end of July or early August. Importantly, the agreement reached between the Government and unions late last year provides certainty for staff that transfer to the new operator over the terms and conditions of their employment. I did not always see eye to eye with the eight unions that were involved in the discussions; however, a very respectful and constructive process was able to be undertaken during the franchise discussions.

The Government has already reinstated the 140 ferry services that were cut by—guess who?—the Leader of the Opposition when he was transport Minister in the previous Government. He can be proud that as the Minister for Transport he slashed 140 ferry services. The O'Farrell Government has reinstated those 140 ferry services and—better still—it has increased services by 25 new weekly services along the Parramatta River. I know the members representing the electorates of Drummoyne, Strathfield and Balmain—and many others—welcomed that move; it is a great improvement for commuters.

Mr Richard Amery: Point of order: Ministers should address their comments through the Chair. For the last three minutes, for all but about 10 seconds, the Minister has had her back to the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is quite capable of addressing the Chair while she has her back to me. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite are desperate to close down good news on public transport. The Government is delivering what those opposite could not. They are embarrassed and will use any excuse to waste my time. What we are doing today is again in stark contrast to what Labor did while in office. Do members remember Labor's last transport plan? Those opposite forecast a decrease in patronage in Sydney Ferries over the next 10 years. They wanted to see fewer customers, not more. In stark contrast the Government is returning services. The Government has announced a number of wharf upgrades at Balmain, Neutral Bay and Rose Bay—and there are more to come. This Government is working hard to deliver better services for transport customers, and today is great news for our ferry customers and for public transport in New South Wales.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I request an extension of time for the Minister to enable her to complete her answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has an additional two minutes to conclude her answer.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: A practice has arisen whereby, at the conclusion of the allocated five minutes for a Minister's answer, Government members stand up and seek an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: Yes, and that is in accordance with the standing orders.

Mr Michael Daley: There is no provision in the standing orders that enables a member to seek an extension of time. Standing Order 131 (3) provides that a member may seek your indulgence, your discretion, to

have the Minister provide additional information. I suggest that this standing order—which was used on five occasions yesterday and has been used once today already, and which it is anticipated will be used on further occasions in the future—is starting to be abused. I would invite you to refuse discretion, particularly as the Minister has not gone anywhere near answering the question. The standing order is on the verge of being abused.

The SPEAKER: Does the Leader of the House have something to say about the way I should use my discretion?

Mr Brad Hazzard: To the point of order: If members opposite were to listen, without interruption, to the information that Ministers try to provide to them and to the public of New South Wales, there would not be a need for Government members to seek more time. Because of continual interruption from the Opposition—as there usually is—there is an obligation on the Government to provide additional information, if necessary. That is what the standing orders and sessional orders provide, and members on this side of the House want them to be applied.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have listened to both sides of the argument. I will continue to use my discretion as I see fit. I do not believe I have abused the relevant standing order. I will allow the member for Vaucluse to seek additional information by granting the Minister an extension of two minutes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I was saying, the Government is working hard to deliver better public transport services. Labor did not have the guts to implement the recommendations of the Walker inquiry, as we have done. Those opposite conducted a tender process to franchise Sydney Ferries that cost taxpayers \$6 million. They wasted that money; they did not make the decision at the end of the day. Waste, mismanagement and feeble leadership were the hallmarks of public transport under the previous, Labor Government. The Coalition is offering more services, more job opportunities, more growth and better value for money. Labor was about slashing public transport services and about reducing growth. But do not take my word for it. A number of organisations have congratulated the Government on what it has done today. I will list some of those organisations and their comments. The Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism and Transport Forum, Mr John Lee, said:

The announcement of a new private operator for Sydney Ferries will mean improved customer service, more innovation and better reliability for what is one of our city's great icons.

That is a great response from the Tourism and Transport Forum. Similarly, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia commented:

This is a landmark step in transforming the iconic service and delivering a first class ferry system.

The Sydney Business Chamber commented:

Sydney deserves a world-class ferry service for our world famous harbour. But until today, we have had to make do with a disappointing management and service operation.

This is a great day for public transport commuters. It is a great day for anyone who cares about the future of ferry services in this State. It is also a great day for the growth of ferry services into the future.

ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL STAFFING DISPUTE

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given that the dispute at Royal North Shore Hospital has been going on for months and nurses have described the situation as "having a debilitating effect on the hospital", will the Minister now admit that her hands-off approach to the health system has failed?

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: To be perfectly frank, I do not think there is a less hands-off Minister in Cabinet. Certainly as the Minister for Health I have visited hospitals, talking to doctors and nurses. Most recently I walked around Royal North Shore Hospital with the director of trauma services and chair of the Medical Staff Council and two of his nurses, and I recently met with nurse union representatives. Let me delve a bit deeper. I am glad to have the opportunity to talk on this issue. Please keep asking me questions—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Don't worry, we're not the only ones.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am glad the former Minister for Health has bought into this. Who is running InfraShore? Who is the chief executive of InfraShore? Any guesses? It is her former chief of staff, Scott Gartrell. I draw the attention of the House to an article that appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on 18 January 2011, just before those opposite lost office, written by my friend Andrew Clennell.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The article stated:

Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt's chief of staff will be referred to ICAC after taking a job as the chief executive of the consortium rebuilding Royal North Shore Hospital.

Scott Gartrell worked as a lobbyist for the consortium before it won the \$1 billion redevelopment contract ...

Mr Gartrell's former lobbying firm Government Relations Australia received a "success fee" when the consortium he was lobbying for won the hospital contract.

I could go on, but there is no doubt there are Labor fingerprints all over this media campaign.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I have a great deal of confidence in the negotiations that are taking place on behalf of the Ministry for Health involving discussions with management, nurses, doctors and others at the Northern Sydney Local Health District. I have great confidence in the action plan that is being developed to help resolve this issue. Members should keep in mind that this is a contractual dispute between ISS Health Services, a subcontractor of InfraShore, and the Health ministry. It is a legal dispute and all proper care is being taken to address the issue.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Not by you.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: As I said, the matter has been before the Industrial Relations Commission. I do not remember too many times the former Minister for Health going to the Industrial Relations Commission. Did she ever go? Perhaps once. I have been there many times.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: No, but I fixed matters, unlike you.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: As shadow Minister I went and listened to matters before the Industrial Relations Commission. I do not think she has ever been there. This is a contractual matter.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The Industrial Relations Commission will hold a further hearing and make a ruling, I trust, on the intended industrial action by the Health Services Union, which is at odds with the agreement that it reached just two days ago. In the meantime, cleaners have been in place and patient care remains the priority. The Government is doing all it can to ensure that the contractor delivers the standard of service that was agreed to and signed off on by those opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields has had his opportunity to contribute.

SYDNEY METROPOLITAN STRATEGY

Mr ROB STOKES: I address my question to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Order! I can hardly hear the question because of all the interjections, including interjections from the Leader of the House. I will ask the member for Pittwater to start his question again.

Mr ROB STOKES: I address my question to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. How is the Government ensuring that Sydney has the right planning framework to grow over the next 20 years?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What a great question from a great member of Parliament. It is a pleasure to work with the member for Pittwater, the member for Davidson and the great northern beaches team who ensure that planning for northern beaches is at the forefront in New South Wales. When one makes comparisons to what has gone on in the past, one has to reflect on that lot over there.

Mr Michael Daley: You are kidding.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You are in it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that interjections are disorderly at all times.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: He is excited. I have a whole portfolio on him. Members will recall that in 2005 the former Labor Government introduced to much fanfare a metropolitan strategy. Let us be fair and—

Mr Chris Hartcher: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The Minister does not want me to be fair? I will be fair and acknowledge that the strategy was based on some sound principles, yet they failed in almost every aspect. For a start, New South Wales Labor failed to satisfy its own colleagues, the Federal Labor Government. When it came to the first big test to support New South Wales getting its fair share of funds from Infrastructure Australia, how much did we get? We got zip. That is what those opposite managed to achieve.

Mr Michael Daley: What about the \$1.4 billion?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If the member for Maroubra had been the Minister for Planning the whole place would have been turned upside down. Actually, when I think about it, the whole place was turned upside down by Kristina Keneally and Tony Kelly.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question and not incite the member for Maroubra.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It would not have made a lot of difference. So New South Wales got next to nothing from the Federal Labor Government for infrastructure in New South Wales because the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy was largely ad hoc; it was not married with a transport master plan.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The Leader of the Opposition is very excited. Federal Labor gave us nothing because State Labor gave us nothing.

The SPEAKER: Order! If Opposition members do not come to order they may find themselves out of the Chamber.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: With all these interruptions, it is hard to provide my answer. I will ask the impartial members on this side—the very large group who represent the community—a few questions. Did members have a good look at the 2005 Labor strategy?

Government members: Yes.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Did it satisfy any member in relation to housing?

Government members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Test answered. Did it satisfy any member in relation to costs?

Government members: No.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order has two parts. The first part relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister's comments have nothing to do with the question asked. Secondly, a Minister inciting interjections is a disorderly act. That is precisely the behaviour the Minister is indulging in.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question and I caution the Minister not to incite interjections from those opposite.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Madam Speaker, I can assure you that my answer is relevant. I am comparing the failed effort of the previous Government on the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy to the actions of this Government to ensure sound planning. I have one final question for the impartial members. Did the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy satisfy members in relation to infrastructure?

Government members: No.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: The Minister is ignoring your ruling, Madam Speaker, and, once again, engaging in disorderly conduct.

The SPEAKER: Order! Referring to Government members as impartial is hardly inciting the Opposition.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is more important that I look in more detail at the infrastructure that was promised in the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy. At page 165 it states, "The South West Rail Link from Glenfield to Edmondson Park and Leppington is due to be built by 2012". Did they deliver that infrastructure?

Government members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Another statement in the strategy relates to "the North West Rail Link from Cheltenham to Castle Hill, Norwest and Rouse Hill". Did they deliver that infrastructure?

Government members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: These are all in Labor's strategy document. It also states, "The harbour rail link south of Central Railway Station to St Leonards will provide new stations in the CBD and provide additional capacity to support the extension of the network at the outer edge, due to be completed by 2017." Did they deliver any of that?

Government members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is with great pleasure that I indicate to the House— [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Liverpool.

Mr Paul Lynch: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member for Pittwater asked for an extension of two minutes.

The SPEAKER: I did not notice. He is too well mannered and polite.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: He clearly asked you.

The SPEAKER: Order! I apologise to the member for Liverpool. A request has been made for an extension of two minutes and it is granted. The member for Cessnock will come to order. I understand that Opposition members are frustrated, but I have granted the extension.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Madam Speaker, I am sure you are interested in the Government's discussion paper released today. So we have set the scene of Labor's failed 2005 Metropolitan Strategy. The member for Heffron presided over that strategy for some time. Today I announce that the Government is releasing a discussion paper for the next metropolitan strategy, the plan for Sydney for the next 20 years. This is a genuine attempt to ensure that there is a marriage of planning, infrastructure and transport. This is the first time that has occurred. It took a change from a Labor Government to the O'Farrell Coalition Government to ensure that we have a coordinated strategy.

[Interruption]

The member for Canterbury cannot count the number of pages because the number goes beyond the fingers on her two hands. I encourage the community to take an interest in the discussion paper. Indeed, I encourage members opposite to have their say. They must have learnt something from their failures over the past few years. It is fascinating that members opposite are cynical. Before I came into the Chamber I was reading comments made by the member for Heffron; I always find her commentary on planning interesting. In this place on 24 September 2008 the member for Heffron said:

The planning reforms undertaken by the Government will be best implemented when the community has a good understanding of them and is able to make an input.

The community had an input on 26 March last year. The community said that Labor had not planned for New South Wales. We are planning for New South Wales. I invite the community to have a say on the transport and other integrated plans for the next 20 years.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will make a comment about the extension of time of two minutes. I will be extremely reluctant to grant an extension of two minutes if I believe a Minister has not been addressing the original question in the first five minutes. The Opposition made that point and I have taken that point on board. I call the member for Liverpool.

FATHER FINIAN EGAN POLICE INVESTIGATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH: My question is addressed to the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. In June last year the Attorney General told the House that the last time he saw or spoke to Finian Egan was in about July 2010. He went on to say that the only other contact he had had with Finian Egan since then came through two third parties. Who were those third parties?

Mr GREG SMITH: The member for Liverpool is the shadow Attorney General and, as such, is expected to act responsibly. He knows that this matter is sub judice. It does him no credit to raise sub judice matters.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Liverpool has asked the question. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr GREG SMITH: Father Egan is now facing serious criminal charges. The member for Liverpool may disregard that. I do not.

BUSINESS EVENTS

Mr JOHN FLOWERS: My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. What will be the value to the State's economy of upcoming business events in New South Wales?

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I can inform the House that Sydney and New South Wales are the business events capital of Australia. Indeed, between May and the end of the year the New South Wales economy will receive an injection heading towards \$150 million from about 50 business events. Recently I announced that New South Wales has secured one of the largest business events from China: the Perfect China Leadership Seminar 2013. This alone is expected to deliver an economic impact of \$21 million to New South Wales and reinforces Sydney as Australia's premier destination for business events and conferences. So far this financial year New South Wales has secured 30 corporate events from Asia worth an estimated \$88 million in economic impact, and the State will get an injection of more than \$224 million from other business events to take place this calendar year. Perfect (China) Company Limited is a large direct-selling company that has built a strong market in China and throughout Asia for its health food and personal care products. It will bring some 3,500 staff to Sydney next year.

The month of March alone saw \$42 million in economic value for New South Wales, with nine international business events taking place. These events include luminaries from all over the world attending four leading medical events. The legacy of business events goes well beyond the tourism spend. Business events create opportunities for trade, investment, innovation and knowledge exchange. About half of all business travellers to Australia come to New South Wales, according to Tourism Research Australia. Business

expenditure in New South Wales is at its highest level on record, contributing \$2.9 billion to total visitor expenditure in the year ended December 2011. Domestic overnight business travel expenditure increased by 25 per cent in the past year and is now worth \$1.8 billion to our economy. Domestic business day trip expenditure also increased by 26 per cent and is now worth \$382 million.

International business travellers are also choosing to do business in New South Wales. Forty-four per cent of all international business visitors to Australia come to New South Wales, and this spending pattern is significant. In the year ended December 2011 international business travel expenditure reached \$778 million—an increase of 20 per cent on the previous year. Even at home New South Wales is still the top choice for business, with 21 per cent of our business visitors coming from Victoria. That has been happening thanks to the encouragement and policies of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government. But Sydney is not the only winner. New South Wales business people are travelling throughout New South Wales, with intrastate business visitation now accounting for 55 per cent of business visitors.

And why would Sydney and New South Wales not be an attraction for business events and conferences when this Government now has a strategy to keep a continuous diet of blockbuster shows, peak arts events, major sports events of all codes and festivals all year round? In this way any tourist, business or otherwise, arriving at any time of the year will be greeted with exciting offerings and attractions throughout the State. It is pleasing to note that the Sydney Festival injected close to \$60 million into the State's economy, with \$32 million from direct visitor expenditure and the rest from indirect spending such as hotels, restaurants and retail shopping. I should point out that these conventions have been secured by Business Events Sydney, which is a partnership between the New South Wales Government and the private sector, together with Destination New South Wales.

Both organisations are dedicated to promoting New South Wales as a business events destination, identifying new event opportunities and competing to bring these events to New South Wales. The Government is committed to rebuilding the previously neglected New South Wales economy, and a continuing growth in business events is an important plank in that effort. New South Wales will soon be embarking on the redevelopment and expansion of the Darling Harbour Convention Centre and the Entertainment Centre. The project will produce the best, highest capacity, state-of-the-art international conference and convention centre, pre-eminent in Australia and south-east Asia. The goal is to double visitor expenditure by 2020, and business events and conferences will be part of the success of the New South Wales Government's strategy.

WYEE SEWERAGE SERVICES

Mr GREG PIPER: My question is addressed to the Treasurer, representing the Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. Are the requirements for Hunter Water to pay dividends or tax equivalents to the Government an impediment to the provision of a basic sewerage service for the long-suffering residents of Wyee?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question. I note for the benefit of members opposite that that is how to ask a community question. One does not need to go into the gutter, as Labor members have done so; one asks a community question such as that asked by the member for Lake Macquarie.

Mr Paul Lynch: You have no sense of accountability.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Did the member for Liverpool smile? Did anyone see it? No, I do not think so. We are waiting for that day. It is great to have a new leadership team in the Hunter; with the fantastic new members for the electorates of Newcastle, Charlestown, Swansea and Maitland. That is the sort of leadership, together with the member for Lake Macquarie, that the Hunter has been desperately calling for. We should not forget the landslide, of course. I note that the township of Wyee is not serviced with a reticulated sewer. Hunter Water has a large capital program of over \$150 million a year and needs to assess its capital priorities. Hunter Water has been working closely with Lake Macquarie City Council and a local developer to identify a suitable solution to address this issue in the township and to service potential growth in the area. Hunter Water has provided an in-principle agreement to council and the developer to share the cost of lead-in infrastructure that may be required to service the local community's future growth.

I am advised that Hunter Water also has assisted council with an application for a Federal grant to contribute towards its share of the costs. Should council be successful—and we are very hopeful that council will be successful—in obtaining this grant, Hunter Water will pursue regulatory approval to proceed with the

proposed funding arrangements. The result of the grant application should be known towards the middle of this year. Together with the member for Lake Macquarie, we will put pressure on the Federal Government to deliver that grant so that we can deliver a solution. I note that in addition to the Federal Government's continuing leadership speculation and the new leadership in the Hunter, there are leadership concerns in this State, and it is happening on the Opposition benches. There are concerns over there.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: Not surprisingly, the Minister's comments have nothing to do with the question that was asked. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129—and I will smile when the Treasurer can learn to count.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They are entirely relevant because we are interested in leadership in Canberra to help the local council deliver this important project. In relation to leadership, what happens in this Parliament has implications federally. There are three approaches. There is the subtle approach that we are seeing from the member for Toongabbie. He is trying to play a team game but he is winning colleagues. He has almost won over the member for Wollongong, which is a positive step.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Although I should warn him about State-Federal budget nights with the member for Wollongong.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question had nothing to do with the member for Toongabbie.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is trying to make a point about leadership; he is attempting to make it relevant.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We need leadership to deliver this grant from Canberra. The other leadership approach we are seeing is a little less subtle from the member for Maroubra. His job seems to be to talk down the economy and do the costings on the leader's budget in reply speech. But he does not do that well; he gets a bit sensitive when he talks down the economy. The last leadership approach that does link into Canberra is from someone who has put Moving Pictures and their song *What About Me* back into the Top 40, that is, the member for Heffron.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do not know what her strategy is or how it works; I do not whether the application is for Canberra or whether it is for Robbo's job but the member for Heffron is back.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Minister that he should be generally relevant.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We will work with the member for Lake Macquarie, we will give him the leadership he needs from the State Government to work with the leadership at council level in solving this problem and delivering for his community.

MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Mr THOMAS GEORGE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast. In light of alleged corruption within the Health Services Union East, what are the responsibilities of Ministers of the Crown?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: This is a very serious question. Upon appointment as a Minister, as both past and present Ministers in this House know, Ministers receive a code of conduct and are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities. The code of conduct outlines standards Ministers are expected to uphold and it also requires Ministers to report any matter that may concern corrupt conduct. I repeat: any matter that may concern corrupt conduct. Last month the *Sydney Morning Herald* revealed that a certain Minister had been warned three years ago of alleged misuse of credit cards by Health Services Union Vice President Michael Williamson. That person was, in April 2009 when he received his warning, a Minister of the Crown. The warning was sent by Health Services Union official Peter O'Toole.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant. Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: He advised the Minister as follows:

Didn't I mention the number of times Michael—

that is Michael Williamson—

had been mugged at ATMs and had to withdraw additional money with the union credit card?

Didn't I mention the six hour lunches every Thursday before ... Labor Council?

Why isn't there a standard of practice for these guys?

You—

he said "you" to the Minister—

have the power to do something about this, why [did you not do it]

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Canterbury that she is already on three calls to order.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: Why did the Minister, holding as he did the office of Minister of the Crown on a report of corrupt conduct, fail to take action in respect of that report? Members may be intrigued to know the identity of that Minister of the Crown. They may wonder who I am referring to. May I name him and name him now—John Robertson. The Hon. John Robertson was appointed in January 2009.

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

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: He can give a personal explanation at the end of this; we await his personal explanation.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: We have suffered this piffle for 2½ minutes.

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

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is under Standing Order 73, imputations of improper motives.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Minister about imputing improper motives against the Leader of the Opposition. At the moment he is being factual.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The Hon. John Robertson was appointed a Minister in January 2009. These allegations were April 2009, but when presented with allegations of corruption the honourable Minister, the member for Blacktown, told Peter O'Toole to "take the matter up with ... national office". He chose not to mention it. In the words of the United Kingdom report on a certain media proprietor in the United Kingdom he was "guilty of wilful blindness".

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. The Minister is being relevant to the question. Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I am not going to repeat the allegations but if the words the Minister just used are not an imputation of any improper motive nothing is.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I rule that so far there have been no indications of improper motive. The Minister has the call.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: Last month the Leader of the Opposition said:

It's important that the union movement sends a very clear message they're not going to tolerate this sort of behaviour ...

Last month he was aware that this behaviour was intolerable and could not be condoned, yet as a Minister of the Crown, sworn to uphold the standards of the code of conduct, he failed to take the action which last month he condemned as improper and intolerable. There are a number of questions that the member for Blacktown needs to answer. [*Extension of time granted.*]

The member must answer these questions: Why did he not take the action three years ago? Why did he not pass the information on to relevant authorities? Why did he effectively condone a cover-up? Why did he take his responsibilities as a Minister in such a flippant manner? These are the allegations that are now put to the member for Blacktown. These are not light allegations. These are serious allegations of a breach of the ministerial code of conduct. We await the end of question time, in one minute and 20 seconds, when the member for Blacktown will have the opportunity to explain to this House. If he fails to explain to the House, if he dinges out as soon as question time ends he will be admitting that the allegations put to him are correct because he does not have the courage to confront in this House serious allegations posed against him.

I raise a further matter about the code of conduct that relates to the chief attention seeker in the Parliament, the one person who seeks attention more than anyone else—yes, the member for Heffron. In October 2010 Premier Keneally issued a directive that there were to be no significant appointments during the election campaign, yet on 25 March 2011 she appointed Michael Williamson, the head of the Health Services Union, to the board of Sydney Water. Michael Williamson, the Health Services Union heavy, got his reward for backing her elevation to the premiership of New South Wales. We await her denial and her personal explanation at the end of question time.

Question time concluded at 3.11 p.m.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2) I advise the House that on 2 May 2012 Mark Raymond Speakman was elected Deputy Chair of the Joint Select Committee on the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme.

PETITIONS

The Speaker announced that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:

Coal and Coal Seam Gas Exploration

Petition requesting legislation to halt or exclude coal and coal seam gas exploration in the Southern Highlands and a moratorium on any current or proposed mining or extraction-related activity in the area until the enactment of legislation, received from **Ms Pru Goward**.

Discussion on petition set down as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Armidale Rural Referral Hospital Upgrade

Petition requesting support for funding for the major upgrade of Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, received from **Mr Richard Torbay**.

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

White Bay Development

Petition demanding an immediate moratorium on development at White Bay and requesting a new master plan for White Bay and an increase in community representation on the Bays Precinct Taskforce, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Coal Seam Gas Mining

Petition calling for a royal commission into the impacts of coal seam gas mining, a moratorium on coal seam gas mining and a ban on the extraction technique known as hydraulic fracturing, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Eurobodalla Shire Council Local Environmental Plan

Petition requesting the Government reject the Eurobodalla Shire Council draft local environmental plan and calling for the immediate suspension of all related activity by Eurobodalla Shire Council and the New South Wales Department of Planning, received from **Mr Andrew Constance**.

TATTOO PARLOURS BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [3.15 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. This bill is part of the Government's continued response to gang crime in New South Wales. It follows on from the Crimes Amendment (Consorting and Organised Crime) Act 2012 and the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012, which the Government brought before this House and the Parliament earlier this year. The Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012 aims to break the stranglehold that outlaw motorcycle gangs have over the tattoo industry in New South Wales. But I note that the biker problem is not unique to New South Wales, nor is the dominance of bikies in the tattoo industry. I expect other States will be watching New South Wales closely, particularly South Australia and Queensland, which as we have seen recently are no strangers to outlaw motorcycle gang violence. Last weekend a man and a woman were shot in broad daylight in a crowded Gold Coast shopping centre, while a nearby tattoo parlour was the target of a shooting only days before.

Removing bikies from the tattoo industry will reduce the reasons for rival gangs to fight turf wars, because these businesses will no longer be symbols of a gang's territory. The fatal brawl between members of the Comancheros and Hells Angels at the Sydney Domestic Airport Terminal in March 2009 has been linked to the Hells Angels opening a tattoo parlour on what the Comancheros considered was their turf. When tattoo parlours are no longer controlled by bikies they will not be so closely associated with serious acts of violence, such as shootings and fire-bombings. Bikies will no longer feel that they own the industry and that they have the right to stand over, and extort, owners of tattoo businesses who are unaffiliated with outlaw motorcycle gangs. Nor will tattoo parlours be able to provide a means for organised criminals to launder the proceeds of crime. I am advised that currently some parlours even advertise themselves as cash-only businesses. This is highly suspicious, to say the least.

This bill makes good on the Premier's announcement to get bikies out of tattoo parlours. The bill introduces a licensing and regulatory regime for tattoo parlours and tattooists. The bill provides for the Commissioner of Police to conduct investigations into licence applicants and licensees to ensure that only fit and proper persons are granted and able to hold such licences. The bill makes it compulsory for any person currently operating, or wanting to operate a business that offers body art tattooing services, to obtain a licence. I say "body art tattooing" because there are a few different types of tattooing procedures and this scheme does not seek to regulate them all. The bill differentiates between different types of tattooing and regulates what it defines as "body art tattooing". The bill's definition is provided in three parts: tattooing procedures, body art tattooing procedures and cosmetic tattooing procedures. The bill defines a tattooing procedure as:

any procedure involving the making of a permanent mark on or in the skin of a person by means of ink, dye or any other colouring agent.

The bill defines a body art tattooing procedure as:

a tattooing procedure performed for decorative purposes, but does not include a cosmetic tattooing procedure.

The bill defines a cosmetic tattooing procedure as:

- (a) a tattooing procedure performed for the purpose of providing the individual on whom it is performed with an eyeliner, eyebrows or any other make up effect on a permanent basis,

and

- (b) a tattooing procedure performed by a medical practitioner or for a medical reason (for example, to hide, disguise or correct a medical condition or a post-operative outcome),

The bill also provides for other cosmetic tattooing procedures to be prescribed by the regulations. This three-part definition allows for the differentiation of body art tattooing from cosmetic tattooing. The bill does not regulate cosmetic or medical tattooing. Businesses that undertake only cosmetic and medical tattooing procedures will not need a licence. Providing that their employees do not carry out body art tattooing, employees of cosmetic and medical tattooists will also not require a licence.

Tattoo parlours, and cosmetic and medical tattooists, are currently subject to regulation under the Public Health Act 1991, the Public Health (Skin Penetration) Regulation 2000 and the Skin Penetration Code of Best Practice. These current regulations, which seek to reduce the health risks associated with tattooing, remain appropriate and do not require amendment at this time. However, they are insufficient to end the criminal penetration of the tattoo industry. The regulatory scheme this bill creates will operate alongside these health-focused regulations, and does not seek to limit their requirements. Nor does it seek to limit any requirements under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 which are primarily concerned with the development approval process for tattoo parlours. The bill creates two classes of licence: an operator licence and a tattooist licence. Applications for licences will be made to the Commissioner for Fair Trading.

An operator licence will authorise the licensee to carry on a body art tattooing business at a specific premises. A tattooist licence will authorise the licensee to perform body art tattooing procedures. Sole operators will require only an operator licence. The bill includes a regulation-making power which will allow for exemptions from these requirements, for example, exempting body art tattooing where it is being undertaken for a body art or trade show exhibition. Only an individual can apply for a licence, even when the individual is applying on behalf of an organisation. Offences and penalties under part 5A of the Crimes Act 1900 will apply in relation to false or misleading applications. A person who is under 18 years, or who is a controlled member of a declared organisation, may not apply for a licence. Controlled members of declared organisations are those persons who are subject to interim control orders or control orders under the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012. An applicant must also be an Australian citizen or resident.

I welcome and pay tribute to the Hon. Dr Brian Pezzutti who was a member of Parliament for many years and who continues to serve not only the Australian Army but also the medical profession and the people of New South Wales. Applicants for operator licences must include the following information: the address of the proposed licensed premises, the names and addresses of each staff member employed or proposed to be employed at the premises and specific details on close associates. It will be important to ensure that every licensee is who he or she claims to be; accordingly, an applicant must also consent to having his or her fingerprints and palm prints taken. Former licence holders may apply to the Commissioner of Police to have their fingerprints and palm prints, along with any copies, destroyed and if an application is withdrawn, the Commissioner of Police is to ensure that any fingerprints, palm prints or copies of these are destroyed as soon as is practical.

The bill provides a definition of "close associate". Defining close associates is important to ensure that all persons with a relevant interest in a body art tattooing business are identified. A close associate is someone who will hold a financial interest, or can exercise any power in the applicant's business, and who by virtue of that power will be able to exercise a significant influence over the business. "Close associate" also will include a person who has any relevant position in the business that will be carried on under the authority of the licence. In some cases bikie gangs, who have effective control over a tattoo parlour, have, on paper, no legally enforceable interest in the business. The bill makes it clear that a close associate is someone who can, in fact, direct the business, or receive a financial benefit from it whether or not it is legally enforceable. Applicants for both an operator licence and a tattooist licence must also pay a fee.

It will be an offence for applicants to fail to notify the Commissioner for Fair Trading of a change in the information provided within an application, while that application is still under consideration and before a decision is made. The maximum penalty for this offence will be 20 penalty units. The bill permits the Commissioner for Fair Trading to undertake investigations and inquiries with respect to a licence application and requires him to refer the application to the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner of Police will determine whether the applicant is a fit and proper person and whether granting the applicant a licence would be in the public interest. Either the Commissioner for Fair Trading or the Commissioner of Police may require a licence applicant or close associate to provide or produce further information or records. Where an applicant fails to provide or produce such information, the Commissioner for Fair Trading may refuse to determine the application.

The Commissioner for Fair Trading may grant, or refuse to grant, a licence, after having considered the report of the Commissioner of Police on whether the applicant is a fit and proper person. The Commissioner for Fair Trading is not permitted to grant a licence if the Commissioner of Police has reported that the applicant is not a fit and proper person or that granting the licence would be contrary to the public interest. The Commissioner for Fair Trading must also not grant licences where an application has not been duly made or the applicant is a controlled member of a declared organisation. In addition, the Commissioner for Fair Trading may refuse to grant an operator licence in respect of premises where a prohibition order under part 3 of the Public Health Act 2010 is in force in connection with the carrying out of skin penetration procedures, or where development consent is required under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and there is no development consent or approval in force. Both classes of licence will remain in force for three years unless surrendered, suspended or cancelled. Licences cannot be renewed.

Where licences are due to expire, licensees will be required to apply for a new licence if they wish to keep operating their body art tattooing business or working as a body art tattooist. The bill sets out the role of the Commissioner of Police in the scheme. In addition to the role of the Commissioner of Police in the granting of a licence, the Commissioner of Police can undertake inquiries into licensees at his own initiative, or at the request of the Commissioner for Fair Trading. This will be important where police become aware that a licensee is engaging in conduct that might cause the Commissioner of Police to determine that the licensee was not a fit and proper person, or that it would be contrary to the public interest for the licensee to retain a licence.

The bill provides that the Commissioner of Police may consider criminal intelligence or other criminal information in relation to an applicant or licensee or in relation to a close associate of an applicant or licensee. Criminal information and intelligence can include information relevant to the business or procedures to be carried out under the licence, or that gives an indication that some improper conduct could occur if the applicant were granted a licence, or a licensee were permitted to retain a licence. However, it should be made clear that some people currently in the tattoo industry may regularly associate with bikie members unwillingly. For example, they may be forced to pay them protection money. The Commissioner of Police will distinguish between those who have willingly assisted and associated with criminals on the one hand and, on the other, people who are essentially victims of extortion.

The bill also provides protections for criminal intelligence considered by the Commissioner of Police or the Commissioner for Fair Trading. The Commissioner of Police is not required to give any reasons for making a determination and recommendation that an applicant or licensee is not a fit and proper person, or that granting a licence is contrary to the public interest if giving those reasons would disclose criminal intelligence or other criminal information. For the same reasons, the Commissioner for Fair Trading is not required to give any reasons for having acted on such a recommendation by the Commissioner of Police and as a result refused to grant a licence, or suspended or cancelled a licence. In fact, the Commissioner for Fair Trading is obliged to follow the recommendations of the Commissioner of Police on these matters.

The bill makes it an offence to carry on a body art tattooing business without an operator licence. The maximum penalty for this is 100 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 50 penalty units in any other case. However, a continuing offence provision also applies to this requirement, meaning that the penalty will increase by the same amount each day that the offence continues. This is an important provision because it will provide a strong deterrent and recognises the considerable resources that many criminal elements have at their disposal. This offence will not apply during the seven-day period after the death or incapacitation of a licensee who holds an operator licence for the premises and, in either of these cases, if an application for an operator licence is made during the seven-day period, the offence will not apply until that application is determined by the Commissioner for Fair Trading.

Performing any body art tattooing procedure for a fee or reward without a tattooist licence will also be an offence with a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units for a first offence and 100 for second and subsequent offences. The bill also makes it an offence for a body art tattooing business, whether or not that business is licensed, to employ an unlicensed body art tattooist. The maximum penalty for this offence is 100 penalty units for corporations and 50 penalty units in any other case. Again, a continuing offence provision applies in respect of a breach of this requirement, allowing the penalty to increase by the same amount on a daily basis. The bill also creates a defence if the person can satisfy the court that he or she did not know, or could not reasonably have been expected to know, that the body art tattooist he or she employed was unlicensed. Licences will be subject to conditions. The bill sets out a number of these conditions and also makes provision for further conditions to be prescribed in the regulations. It will be an offence to fail to comply with any condition of a licence, with a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units.

One of the Government's aims in introducing this legislation is to ensure that tattoo parlours cannot be used to launder the proceeds of crime. To that end, the bill makes it a condition of an operator licence that the licensee must make certain business financial records available for inspection by an authorised officer at a reasonable time. Licensees will also be required to report on any change of licence particulars within 14 business days of the change occurring. Particulars could include change of the licensees' residential address, or a change in close associates. The regulations may also make provision for other relevant particulars.

To ensure that a business cannot employ unlicensed tattooists in a body art tattoo business, and that all employees are subject to proper scrutiny, it will be a condition of an operator licence that the operator informs the Commissioner of Fair Trading within 20 business days of any change in staff member employment at the licensed premises. A change in staff member employment includes a new staff member commencing employment, or a staff member ceasing employment at the licensed premises. The definition of "staff member" is not limited to licensed tattooists, but to any staff member employed at the licensed premises. Without this definition, there is a risk that, in an attempt to avoid scrutiny by the regulators, the real operator of the premises may be employed there in another capacity, for example, as a bookkeeper or receptionist.

Licensed operators will also be required to conspicuously display a copy of their licence at the licensed premises and it will be required that the licence number be included in any advertising. The bill also provides for suspension and cancellation of licences in certain circumstances. The Commissioner for Fair Trading may suspend licences for a period of no more than 60 days by serving the licensee with a written notice advising of the reasons for suspension and requesting that the licensee provide, within 14 business days, reasons that the licence should not be suspended. The Commissioner for Fair Trading is to cancel a licence if he receives a report from the Commissioner of Police that the licensee is not a fit and proper person or that it would be contrary to the public interest for the licensee to continue to hold the licence.

As noted earlier, the Commissioner of Police can undertake inquiries into licensees at any time and make a determination regarding the licensee's fitness to retain a licence. The Commissioner for Fair Trading may also cancel a licence where a licensee has: provided false or misleading information in the licence application; contravened any provision of the Act or regulations; or contravened a condition of the licence. The regulations may also provide for other circumstances. The Commissioner for Fair Trading may cancel a licence by serving the licensee with a written notice. The cancellation takes effect when the notice is served, or at a later date specified on the notice.

Except in cases where a licence is cancelled on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police on fit and proper person or public interest grounds, the licence will first be suspended and the licensee will have an opportunity to provide reasons as to why the licence should not be cancelled, and the Commissioner for Fair Trading will need to consider those reasons. The bill provides that applicants and licensees, other than a controlled member of a declared organisation, have a right of appeal to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. The following decisions are appealable: refusal or failure to grant a licence; imposition of licence conditions; and suspension or cancellation of a licence.

The bill provides for the protection of criminal information and intelligence in appeals of licensing decisions made on fit and proper person or public interest grounds. In such appeals, the Administrative Decisions Tribunal is to ensure that it does not disclose the existence or content of any criminal intelligence report or other criminal information without the approval of the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner for Fair Trading are also to be party to any such appeal proceedings. To help police keep illicit activity out of tattoo businesses, the bill provides for them to enter licensed tattoo parlours, or premises that a police officer reasonably suspects are being used to perform body art tattooing procedures, and use drug and firearm and explosive detection dogs within the premises. Police know that illicit drugs and firearms have been kept at tattoo parlours in the past. In 2010 police seized more than 250 ecstasy tablets, a quantity of other drugs, a loaded .45 calibre pistol and a push dagger knife from an inner west tattoo parlour.

The bill also provides that the Commissioner of Police can direct that a tattoo parlour close for a period of 72 hours if it is operating unlicensed, or if he suspects serious criminal activity is occurring there. The Commissioner of Police may also apply to the Local Court for a long-term closure order on the same grounds. These provisions are similar to those in the Liquor Act. To carry on business contrary to a closure order will carry a penalty of 100 penalty units for corporations and 50 penalty units in every other case, as will working as a body art tattooist at such premises. The bill also provides for penalties to continue every day that a person keeps operating in closed premises. The bill also provides for authorised officers—police officers and officers of NSW Fair Trading—to issue penalty notices for prescribed offences. Importantly, most provisions of the bill will commence on assent, meaning that the police can use detection dogs as soon as the Act commences.

The bill provides for a transitional period before offences relating to the regulatory scheme commence. This will provide the necessary time for the NSW Police Force, NSW Fair Trading and other relevant agencies to put the nuts and bolts of the scheme in place. It will also allow current business owners and tattooists to apply for and, where appropriate, to be issued with licences under the new regulatory scheme. The bill also provides for a ministerial review of the bill after five years from the date of assent, with the report to be tabled in Parliament within 12 months of the five-year period. This is an important piece of legislation and a bold step for New South Wales. The Government urges other jurisdictions to follow our lead. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Miss Tania Mihailuk and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

CO-OPERATIVES (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 May 2012.

Mr TONY ISSA (Granville) [3.42 p.m.]: I support of the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012 and I support the Minister in this reform. The bill will enable people to work together to provide the services they need. In Australia, there are approximately 1,700 cooperatives and about 680 of them are registered in New South Wales. Cooperatives in New South Wales have a total turnover of about \$2.9 million, total assets of around \$2 billion, approximately 10,000 employees and around 1.8 million individual members. The reforms in the Co-operatives National Law will assist people in New South Wales and other jurisdictions who choose to use the cooperative organisational structure to provide the services they need. The new legislation will not increase additional costs under the proposed legislative scheme. All cooperatives should benefit from the improved referencing of Corporations Act provisions in the law, as this will assist both the cooperative's office-bearers and their professional advisers to determine the legal requirements more quickly.

Making it simpler for cooperatives to operate across borders will save a cooperative that has not yet registered for such business arrangements under the existing scheme about \$1,250 in fees. The reduction of financial reporting requirements for small cooperatives may save \$1,000-plus per year per cooperative in auditing fees, depending on the operational complexity of the cooperative. The Co-operatives National Law will introduce the following key reforms that will benefit cooperatives in New South Wales and the other States and Territories: simplification of financial reporting requirements for small cooperatives; mutual recognition and automatic authorisation; alignment of the duties of directors and officers; and reduction in a former member's rights from five to two years duration. Enforceable undertakings processes will be introduced to enable cost-effective means of ensuring compliance with the new law.

Consultation has taken place before the reform could be brought forward. The main stakeholder groups have been consulted during preparation of the bill, including cooperatives, cooperatives representative bodies, cooperatives professional advisers and other interested bodies. New South Wales—as the host jurisdiction—set up a national web page on its NSW Fair Trading website, to assist with consultation on the Co-operatives National Law. The regulator in each State or Territory made the consultation arrangements for their jurisdiction. Stakeholders' responses during the consultation included more than 1,000 unique visitors to the national web page during the formal consultation period from December 2009 to February 2010. More than 24 written submissions were received, including a submission from the national cooperatives body and five State-based cooperative federations, together with six online survey responses.

The cooperatives legislation needed reform because a number of problems had been identified with the current legislation. Confusing or inconsistent provisions existed in the cooperatives legislation. The legislation uses certain provisions from the Corporations Act 2001 and needed to be revised and updated. For example, the legal duties and liabilities of the directors and officers of the cooperative needed to be revised in line with those for directors and officers under the Corporations legislation. Efficiency needed to be improved for cooperatives and governments by providing an option for all States and Territories to apply national cooperatives uniform template legislation in their jurisdiction, rather than maintaining separate legislation.

The main function of the bill is to apply the Co-operatives National Law and national regulations in New South Wales. The legislation will be the co-operatives national uniform template legislative scheme provided for in the Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement. The preparation of the uniform template legislation has been a big task. It has involved the review and comparison of the provisions of the cooperatives

laws in all States and Territories. Each Act has about 450 sections—3,600 sections in all. All States and Territories are working towards the commencement of the Co-operatives National Laws in 2012. The United Nations has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Co-operatives.

Commencement of the Co-operatives National Law in 2012 will contribute to the three main objectives of the International Year of Co-operatives that have been set by the United Nations. These are: increasing public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socioeconomic development; promoting the formation and growth of cooperatives; and encouraging governments to establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives. I look forward to seeing the implementation of this great new reform that will enable people to work together to provide the services they need. I commend the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012 to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [3.48 p.m.]: I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. The Greens support the bill. We believe that it is an important part of the reforms necessary to promote and develop cooperatives. Before I speak on the specifics of the bill I will digress for a few moments. Last night I attended an interesting discussion that is germane to this point. I was delighted to attend a function with Lord Michael Hastings, who is representing KPMG. It was an interesting function. The Treasurer was there and it was a great opportunity for discussion about the good work of KPMG, in terms of its corporate responsibility. It was a useful opportunity to hear views on the current discussion on capitalism.

Cooperatives have a part to play in the current discussion on our understanding of capitalism. Indeed, there has been a lot of discussion about this in the United Kingdom. David Cameron has been talking about moral capitalism in his attempt to ensure that the excesses we have seen in recent times, as well as crashes in the global financial crisis, are dealt with by parties such as the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom to ensure confidence in and the maintenance of the system. A whole range of groups has signed on to this responsible capitalism charter, which is designed to keep the system intact and to ensure that the type of Anglo-Saxon capitalism that Australia subscribes to is maintained. We know that we need to assess things such as triple-bottom line, profiteering and exportation.

For example, Keynes talked a lot about the moral problems with capitalism in particular when it comes to profiteering. This is a worthwhile point for discussion when it comes to cooperatives. While we talk about responsible moral capitalism and so on, it is the undemocratic nature of the economic system in existing capitalism that is challenged by cooperatives. Cooperatives embody the democratic tradition that we in politics delight in. We support, fight and advocate for democracy in politics but not in the business sector, where oligarchy and corporate autocracy can rule. Democracy is okay here but it is not okay in business. In cooperatives it is different. It is said that cooperatives are prefiguring a future society, where responsibility is not up to the board or the chief executive officer but to that part of the structure of the organisation or cooperative that has a majority—in particular, workers' cooperatives where the workers manage the approach and direction of the cooperative.

Cooperatives are important, as many members in this place have commented. A recent article in the *Guardian* stated that cooperatives in Germany represent more than 7 per cent of gross domestic product, in the United States it is about 5 per cent, and the think tank Policy Network describes 15 per cent of the Swedish economy as "mutualised". There is a big difference between "mutual" and "cooperative". A lot of people have criticised the Cameron agenda because it has been using the word "mutual" to disguise what is in fact privatisation. But the cooperative approach being discussed in this bill is important, and this is where the Minister has a role to play. The bill proposes important technical and bureaucratic changes, which are welcomed, but vision is also important. People are driven by passion, and passion comes from vision. The vision we have seen in other countries around the world to support and nourish cooperatives is an important one. I encourage the Minister to take this important step of reducing bureaucratic hurdles but in so doing he should look at ways to support the cooperative movement.

I note some cooperatives in my local community, including Associazione Puglia, constituted in 2003, which built a social centre in Renwick Street, Leichhardt, that has become the focus for the Pugliese community—the southern Italian community in my area; Aid Migrants of Spanish Speaking (Amigos) Co-operative Limited, Glebe; Broadway Food Co-operative Limited at the University of Technology, Sydney; Co-operative for Aborigines Limited in Mansfield Street, Glebe, which has been around for a significant period of time in support of Indigenous Australians; the Inner City Clayworkers Gallery Co-operative Ltd, on the corner of St Johns Road and Darghan Street, Glebe; Radio for the Print Handicapped of NSW Co-operative

Limited; and RPH Australia Co-operative Limited, which does a fantastic job for those in our community who are vision impaired and have difficulty reading: they listen to newspaper articles through the radio read out by broadcasters.

We have heard a lot about the background of this bill. Although it is not often discussed, we know that cooperatives play an important part in the New South Wales economy. In New South Wales cooperatives have a total turnover of approximately \$2.9 billion and total assets of approximately \$2 billion. They employ more than 10,000 people and have a membership of about 1.8 million people. Interestingly, the Legislation Review Committee has expressed concern about a clause in the bill relating to regulation-making powers and matters that ought to be in the legislation. For example, there is provision for the winding up of a cooperative to be determined by the regulations. The committee was of the view that the circumstances in which an unelected or non-traditional officer can wind up a cooperative is a matter for governing legislation, not regulation. I ask the Minister to address that issue in reply.

The Legislation Review Committee was also concerned that the creation of offences and imposition of penalties—notwithstanding the \$2,000 limit—can be done by regulation rather than be locked in by legislation. I note that in a submission to the draft national law the Co-operative Federation of New South Wales—an excellent organisation—wrote that while welcoming the introduction of uniform laws the "tight time frame" of the consultation period "meant that it was not possible to study every section in detail". This is of some concern considering that the Co-operative Federation of New South Wales is the peak representative body for cooperatives in New South Wales, but I recognise that it is broadly supportive. I ask the Minister to respond to those issues in his reply.

I also encourage the Minister to spread his wings and have a look at the issues around cooperatives. He should look at the important role that cooperatives can play, as well as at the different and innovative types of cooperatives. We know that the Owenite inspiration for cooperatives was very much in the past, but the Minister should look at the reasons why that Owenite transformation took place in the United Kingdom and, indeed, took root around the world. He should also look at the incredibly successful structure of Mondragon in the Basque region. I refer him to the fantastic book titled *We Build the Road as We Travel* that outlines the success of the cooperative movement. We know that cooperatives have a fantastic role to play in rural and regional communities. We also know that those cooperatives seek to bring control to growers and farmers to ensure that to a large extent they can control their future.

The Greens welcome the bill. I acknowledge the hard work of the Minister and his staff in preparing it. Finally, the important role of this legislation should be seen as one of many steps. The Government should examine closely how cooperatives can be encouraged to grow and prosper, and how the cooperative model can be used in the future not only for responsible and moral capitalism but also as a way to involve and engage people in local business. Interestingly, cooperatives have been outperforming both the public and private sector in the United Kingdom where cooperatives have been more widely discussed recently. It is a fantastic model for our future and we should be investigating it and more vehemently supporting it.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [3.58 p.m.]: I support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. Cooperatives are very important in the electorate of Myall Lakes, which is located on the mid North Coast where the sun always shines, the sky and the water are always blue and the dolphins pass by at one's call. People want to live in my electorate or enjoy their holidays there because it is the number one destination in New South Wales. My electorate has several fishing cooperatives, and it goes without saying that it also has the best seafood on the mid North Coast, indeed the best seafood in New South Wales. The large cooperative at Tuncurry deals with seafood from the lake and from deep-sea fishing.

There is a fishing cooperative at Taree and there is another at wonderful Crowdy Head, just outside my electorate. My electorate also has dairy farmers who are members of and have shares in cooperatives. When I first went to Taree as a constable—I note that the member for Mount Druitt, an old senior constable, is present in the Chamber—there were more than 500 dairy farms in the Manning Valley alone. Between Gloucester and Kempsey there are now only 177 dairy farms. When once there were many milk cooperatives, today there are a lot fewer. I listened with interest to the member for Balmain, who is a member of that subversive organisation called The Greens. His comments about the economy were interesting.

One would think that "green" and "economy" were a contradiction in terms. We must remember that until recently the Federal leader of The Greens spoke about extraterrestrial beings; he could not understand why there was no intergalactic communication between him and those extraterrestrial beings. Then when the member

of The Greens in the other place, Dr Kaye, was in Manning Valley recently he said that people do not need electricity because they could put solar panels on the roof. Now the member for Balmain is talking about the economy, capitalism and those sorts of things. Let us think about The Greens.

We reject The Greens' values, which are centred on prioritising environmental action over the economy, raising taxes, increasing government controls, introducing permissive borders, severing the United States alliance, curtailing overseas military deployments, and social progressivism in sexual lifestyle choices and assertive secularism that breaks from the religious traditions still underpinning western institutions. That is The Greens for you. Although the Minister said that New South Wales is leading Australia in terms of cooperatives and cooperatives law, including the introduction of the Co-operatives National Law, the member for Balmain told the Minister that he should spread his wings. That is *Kumbaya* sort of stuff: spread your wings and fly to heaven. We totally reject whatever the member for Balmain has to say on virtually anything in this House.

The purpose of the bill is to enact cooperatives legislation applying in this State. It does so as part of a proposed uniform scheme of legislation applying the Co-operatives National Law in State and Territory jurisdictions. The member for Balmain asked a question about the Legislation Review Committee highlighting issues with the legislation. In a sense, this bill is not the Minister's legislation or the New South Wales Government's legislation. We are adopting national legislation that was drafted as a result of an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and others to adopt national legislation. The Legislation Review Committee has simply highlighted certain clauses in the national legislation and suggested that they be examined. If that happens, the clauses will be examined not only in New South Wales but in all the States and Territories.

Legislation review committees in the other States may highlight the same issues, and amendments may be made to the legislation once our committee report and the reports of other jurisdictions have been considered. The Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill contains the Co-operatives National Law, set out in the appendix, which operates as a template for all jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction has agreed to enact legislation applying the national law in its jurisdiction or to enact consistent legislation. The intention is that a uniform scheme for cooperatives, based on the national law, will apply in all jurisdictions. In addition to applying the Co-operatives National Law, the bill and the application of legislation of other jurisdictions will specify local administration details such as the appointment of a registrar of cooperatives and which courts deal with various matters, and outline how official notices are published.

National regulations supporting the Co-operatives National Law will be made by the Governor of New South Wales. Each jurisdiction has agreed to adopt or make regulations consistent with the national regulations. The existing cooperatives legislation in all jurisdictions is based on core consistent provisions developed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. The proposed Co-operatives National Law continues the major features of the existing legislation while also removing variations between the jurisdictions and updating some provisions, particularly provisions that apply parts of the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001. Cooperatives enable people to work together to provide the services they need. It is the members of a cooperative who own, control and use its services. The running of a cooperative is guided by cooperative principles that have been developed by the International Co-operative Alliance, which is a worldwide representative body for cooperatives.

As other speakers have said, this year is the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives. The cooperative principles developed by the International Co-operative Alliance have been adopted nationally within this legislation. These principles distil the best practice for cooperative operations from around the world and are reproduced in the current and proposed cooperative laws. In New South Wales there are about 680 cooperatives owned by 1.8 million members, which generate approximately \$2.9 billion in revenue per year. Australia-wide, there are some 1,700 cooperatives providing members with a diverse range of services, such as child care, housing, health care, groceries and petrol supply, education and training, sporting clubs, taxis, tourism and agricultural marketing. State and Territory legislation enabling a cooperative to become incorporated as a legal entity is similar across jurisdictions as it is based on a set of core consistent provisions developed in 1996 by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

However, these provisions have been implemented inconsistently by jurisdictions and true consistency across Australia has not been achieved at any stage. The existing regulatory regime imposes restrictions and compliance costs on the cooperatives sector, resulting in a competitive disadvantage when compared to other entities. Existing cooperatives legislation imposes additional burdens on cooperatives through outdated

corporate governance provisions and financial reporting requirements; imposes additional compliance costs on cooperatives that wish to trade across State and Territory borders; and makes inconsistent provision for access to capital markets to enable expansion through external funding. In 2007 the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs agreed to implement nationally uniform legislation for cooperatives to address inconsistent State and Territory legislation and competitive disadvantages that exist in comparison to entities operating under the Corporations Act 2001.

As a result, a draft Co-operatives National Law and consultation regulatory impact statement was released for public consultation in December 2009. The objectives of the proposed law are to ensure that there are no competitive disadvantages for cooperatives compared to corporations by providing freedom to operate on a national basis and better access to external capital funding and an accessible, modern legislative environment. I note that the member for Mount Druitt is in the Chamber. One could ask: Why did Labor not do this in the past 16 years? I will not detail the 16 years of problems with Labor. The Co-operatives National Law scheme makes no conceptual changes to the nature of a cooperative; rather, it remakes existing cooperatives legislation as laws of each State and Territory in a uniform manner. The terms of the supporting intergovernmental agreement permits a jurisdiction to make consistent legislation, as well as apply the Co-operatives National Law as a template. I commend the bill to the House.

[Business interrupted.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [4.08 p.m.]: By leave, I give notice that tomorrow I shall move:

That this House acknowledge the contribution of James Oswald "Jimmy" Little, AO, to music, the community and Australia.

Today several members attended the memorial service for James Oswald Little, AO, otherwise known as Jimmy Little, at which his life and his contribution to Australia were acknowledged by the community. After a discussion with several members, there is a feeling that we would like to have a formal acknowledgement of the life and contribution of Jimmy Little in this place. My intention, subject to being able to deal with all other Government business next week, is to give members an opportunity to speak to this significant motion next week. Members should consider what they may like to say about a gentleman who was an icon of the Australian community.

CO-OPERATIVES (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

Second Reading

[Business resumed.]

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [4.10 p.m.]: I join the member for Myall Lakes in spreading my wings to support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. There is no doubt about those wacky Greens; we certainly got a look at their red hearts this afternoon. That look is not going to be lost on New South Wales farmers, who really see them for what they are. As I was sitting here, my ears were burning about what was going on in the other place. The dissertation by the member for Balmain reminded me of another long cry for relevance—the former member for Monaro, second chance Steve Whan. We will not go there this afternoon. However, I put The Greens and Mr Whan in the same basket as one long cry for relevance. It is a sad day indeed.

I support this important bill, which enacts the Co-operatives National Law. It will strengthen the operation of cooperatives across New South Wales and will bring many benefits to them. For example, it will simplify the reporting and audit requirements for small cooperatives. As Minister Roberts highlighted in the House, cooperatives play a very important role in the life of our regional communities. He noted also that cooperatives in New South Wales have a total turnover of \$2.96 billion, employ 10,000 people and have a vast membership of approximately 1.8 million. I draw the attention of the House to some of the cooperatives that operate in my electorate and that have been very successful over the years.

First, I refer to the Appledale Processors Co-operative at Orange. Local orchardists belong to this cooperative. If they have any fruit that is not of a quality to be sold, it is sent to the Appledale co-operative,

which then makes apple juice from the fruit. The Woodward Road Rural Co-operative is another successful cooperative in the Orange electorate. This is a different type of cooperative; it is a buying cooperative. Its members are primary producers and together they unite in their buying power to secure better deals. Guy Gaeta, an orchardist who is a member of the Woodward Road Rural Co-operative, has spoken highly of this cooperative and indicated it is one of the most successful rural cooperatives of which he has been a member. Other cooperatives operate successfully in the area, including the Towac Fruit Export Co-operative.

Mr Jamie Parker: I am here now so you can have another go at me.

Mr ANDREW GEE: I am finished with you for the day, my friend; there will be other days.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for member for Balmain will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW GEE: Calm your beating red heart, my friend.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Orange will not incite the member for Balmain.

Mr ANDREW GEE: I am pleased to have him here, though.

Mr Jamie Parker: He is just upset about the farmers, that's all.

Mr ANDREW GEE: It is not easy being an orchardist in the Orange electorate, especially with the advent of the carbon tax, which the member for Balmain will be very familiar with. Orchardists have to deal with low prices, the high dollar, fruit bats and, worse still, bureaucrats and marauding packs of green politicians who seem to descend on Orange and surrounding orchardists every 1½ years or so. It can be difficult. In 1970 Orange had more than 400 orchards; in 1997 only 100 orchardists remain. The number has decreased but the cooperatives still play an important role in helping these orchardists get their products to market.

The Towac Fruit Export Co-operative is a successful cooperative in Orange. I place on record some of the cooperative's members because they play an important role in the economic life of the Orange electorate and they have succeeded despite the efforts of fringe groups like The Greens trying to impact upon their businesses. One of the orchardists is Peter McClymont, who operates his business from "Coilsfield" on Forest Road, Springside. He is a fourth generation orchardist. Graham Rollin, a first generation orchardist from "Clearview" on the Pinnacle Road, grows cherries as his main crop. Tim and Peter West from "Balmoral" on Canobolas Road are fifth generation orchardists—their family has made a fine commitment to primary production in the Orange electorate. Tim was recently one of a group of parents who lobbied my office for an improved bus run and flashing lights outside Canobolas Public School.

It was a wonderful experience to be present a week ago with the Minister for Roads when those flashing lights were installed and to learn a couple of months earlier that the new bus run commenced, making life easier for children in the electorate. Ian Pearce, an orchardist just up the road from where I live, is a third generation orchardist. He is married to Pru Pearce, daughter of one of the lions of The Nationals, David Brownhill. I acknowledge their efforts. I commend Ross Pearce, brother of Ian, who works out at "Mirrabooka" orchard on the Ophir Road. He is a third generation orchardist and attended St Andrew's College; he has moved beyond that now, so we no longer hold his past against him. I mention Tim Hall and also Bernard and Fiona Hall of "Carnaervon" on Canobolas Road. They are second generation orchardists. I visited that orchard a month or so ago with the Deputy Premier to announce the resumption of cherry exports to Taiwan following the cessation of trade for a number of years.

We were pleased to announce new biosecurity arrangements whereby cherries will be placed in cold storage—storage that will be subject to carbon tax, which will add thousands of dollars to the operating costs of hardworking orchardists throughout the Central West. They will all be slugged by this tax. We were there to celebrate the recommencement of trade in cherries to Taiwan. As part of the new process cherries must be put into cold storage for 18 days. During that time the coolroom cannot be opened to store more cherries for a different shipment. This opens up a wonderful opportunity for orchardists in the Central West. The Greens, instead of coming to Orange on healing tours with their *Kumbaya* CDs, incense and crystals, should apologise for the impost they will put on these hardworking people.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Orange should not direct his remarks across the table but through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW GEE: I pay tribute to the cooperatives for their community input. Not only does the Towac Fruit Export Co-operative have its own brand of apples called Orange Apples, it is a dragon boat race team of great repute. The team from Orange Apples has competed on Lake Canobolas at two regattas, in which I have been involved. It is certainly one of the greatest dragon boat racing teams going around the Central West. The team comprises good, hardworking people and I put their success down to a steady diet of Orange apples. They are not all orchardists. I acknowledge that two parents of students from Canobolas Public School, Sue and Whim Starr, are part of the Orange Apples team. They cannot be beaten on the water. I am happy to bring some Orange apples to this place, in the hope that that may lift the parliamentary performance of members on the opposite side of the Chamber—heaven knows they need it. It is with tremendous pleasure that I support the bill. All I can say to the Balmain bandicoot is: Get out west and apologise.

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [4.20 p.m.]: I support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012, which was introduced in this place by the hardworking Minister for Fair Trading, my colleague the Hon. Anthony Roberts. The Co-operatives National Law is the proposed template legislation for regulating cooperatives in all States and Territories of Australia, as provided for in the Australian Uniform Co-operative Law Agreement. The main purpose of the bill is to facilitate the operation of national law and regulation in New South Wales from the date of commencement of the Act. In this regard, it should be noted that banking cooperatives or financial cooperatives, along with cooperative housing societies, will continue to be regulated under separate legislation administered by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, or APRA as it is commonly known.

This bill will apply to all other non-banking cooperatives, known as general cooperatives. But what are cooperatives? They are people-centred businesses and organisations and they are a significant part of the New South Wales, Australian and indeed world economies. Australia has about 1,700 registered cooperatives. As at 30 June 2010, some 680 of those—or 40 per cent of the Australian total—were registered in New South Wales. Around 75 per cent of all cooperatives have been established as not-for-profit in that they have rules that prohibit the distribution of surplus to their members. However, they may provide other crucial services to their members such as health and medical care, training, housing and child care, to name but a few. These cooperatives operate across a diverse range of businesses: plumbing, property, tourism, petrol supply, dairy produce and book sales are some examples. The total turnover of New South Wales cooperatives is close to \$3 billion, with total assets of almost \$2 billion. Cooperatives employ about 10,000 people and have a membership base of close to 1.8 million people, making cooperatives a significant player in the economy of New South Wales.

Additionally, the cooperatives provide an organisational structure for small businesses and indeed individuals through which they can acquire goods and services in economies that are increasingly dominated by large corporate organisations. Larger corporations, which are driven by maximisation of profits for investors, can relocate from rural communities in pursuit of bigger profits elsewhere; and this is where cooperatives can be of great benefit to rural communities. While they have a role to play in our society and a modern balanced economy, member-orientated cooperatives give more control to localised and rural communities. Currently, State and Territory cooperatives legislation provides an interpretation of those laws in such a way that would promote the cooperative principles. These principles, of which there are seven, were developed by the International Co-operative Alliance, the worldwide representative body for the cooperatives.

The new national law will continue with that approach and include enabling the formation, registration and operation of cooperatives. These include the promotion of cooperative principles and the protection of the interests of cooperatives, their members and the public in the operation and activities of cooperatives. This bill will make for consistency of laws in relation to cooperatives, including consistency of content and administration of laws across all States and Territories. This will be achieved by cooperatives either directly applying the uniform template Co-operatives National Law or making their own legislation consistent with the new law. This improvement in consistency and administration will provide greater certainty to all parties with rights, duties, and powers in relation to cooperatives and assist in lowering costs and red tape with cross-border operations.

Once registered in one jurisdiction, there will be automatic mutual recognition by the other jurisdictions; that will facilitate cooperatives conducting operations across all State and Territory borders. At

present a cooperative needs to apply separately to each jurisdiction in which it wants to operate. The cost to operate across the eight jurisdictions would average about \$1,700 in registration and compliance fees; whereas, for a company registered under the Corporations Act the cost would average about \$450. Under the Co-operatives National Law costs will be lowered and paperwork will be simplified. If small cooperatives utilise a risk assessment-based system, that not only will reduce costs and red tape but will result in simplified financial reporting and auditing requirements.

Responsibilities and duties for directors of cooperatives will be made consistent with those under the Corporations Act, and this means in essence that directors of cooperatives will be treated similarly to company directors in similar circumstances. The adoption of this bill will create more flexibility for cooperatives to raise funds from both their members and the public by introducing the option to use cooperative capital units in all jurisdictions. In 2012, which is the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives, it would be fitting if the commencement of the Co-operatives National Law would in fact achieve one of the three goals set by the United Nations: to have governments establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [4.26 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. The main purpose of the bill is to apply the uniform Co-operatives National Law in New South Wales, as the host jurisdiction, in line with arrangements in the Australian Uniform Laws Agreement. As was briefly mentioned by the Minister for Fair Trading, a cooperative is a form of business organisation which is member owned, but it must have five or more members. The fact that they are member owned means that cooperatives allow for a more democratic style of work, pooling of resources to be more competitive, and the sharing of skills. Cooperatives supply goods and services to their members or to the general public in areas such as retailing, manufacturing, labour hire, printing and agriculture. Cooperatives offer a different way of providing services to people than do investor-oriented firms. The main purpose of a cooperative is to provide services to its members, who are the same group of people who own, control and use the cooperative. On the other hand, the main purpose of the investor-oriented firm is usually to maximise profit for the shareholders.

Allow me to share some key figures with members. In Australia there are approximately 1,700 cooperatives, with 680 of them registered in New South Wales. In the 2009-10 financial year New South Wales cooperatives had a total turnover of about \$2.9 billion, total assets of around \$2 billion, employee numbers of approximately 10,000, and around 1.8 million individual members. More specifically, in the Newcastle electorate there are 20 registered cooperatives offering a wide range of services, from Awabakal Aboriginal Services to popular local bowling clubs and a significant local theatre, as well as the fishing cooperative. That being said, the New South Wales Government recognises the importance of cooperatives and their contribution to our communities. Currently, State and Territory cooperatives legislation provides for those laws to be interpreted in a way that would promote the cooperative principle. Furthermore, few key issues have been identified with current legislation.

Confusing or inconsistent provisions exist in current cooperatives legislation, which uses certain provisions from the Corporations Act 2001 and need to be revised and updated. In order to improve efficiency for cooperatives and governments, the New South Wales Government is introducing an option for States and Territories to apply national cooperatives uniform template legislation in their jurisdiction, rather than maintain their separate legislation. I note that the preparation of the proposed uniform template legislation, in the form of the Co-operatives National Law, has been a big task. I also note that the main stakeholder groups have been consulted during the preparation of the bill, including cooperatives, cooperatives representative bodies, cooperatives professional advisers, regulators and other interested bodies.

New South Wales, as the host jurisdiction, set up a national web page on its Fair Trading website to assist with the consultation on the Co-operatives National Law. The regulator in each State or Territory made the consultation arrangements for their jurisdiction. The reforms in the Co-operatives National Law will assist people in New South Wales and other jurisdictions who choose to use the co-operative organisational structure to provide the services they need. Co-operatives have the potential to foster economic growth at the community and regional level, which is extremely important, especially for electorates such as mine. As such, I strongly recommend that all State and Territory governments remain committed to the implementation and ongoing uniform administration of the national template cooperatives legislation that we have introduced. I commend the bill to the House.

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

ARMIDALE RURAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL UPGRADE**Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [4.30 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to lead in the discussion to acknowledge the petition of more than 10,000 signatures concerning the staged redevelopment of Armidale Hospital. I thank, firstly and very importantly, those people who signed the petition and acknowledge the dedication of those who collected the names and who have triggered this discussion in the House today. I acknowledge the Minister for Health, who is in the Chamber, the shadow Minister for Health and other interested members, including the member for Tamworth, who is from the New England region. They have watched the debate on this issue in the community over time.

Members will be aware that I moved a motion that was debated in this place on 14 October 2011, which called on the House to support major capital upgrades at Armidale, Inverell, Glen Innes and Tenterfield hospitals. That motion was passed by the House without opposition. I also remind the House of something the Premier said in a debate on palliative care in this place on 10 August 2011. It certainly struck a chord with me. He was referring to the petition from residents on the North Shore who felt that their needs were not being met by the previous Government. The Premier said:

They were punished apparently because they lived in a Liberal voting territory. We need to end that sort of political apartheid. We need to understand that the role of government is to provide services, regardless of the way people vote. We need to understand that we provide services according to need.

I commend the Premier for that comment. The issue of Armidale Hospital redevelopment dates back some time and saw the establishment of the New England Health Alliance in our region. It consists of representatives of the Division of General Practice at the Hunter New England Local Health District, the University of New England and of course clinicians, nurses and allied healthcare workers and other community leaders. It has been a constructive approach that has signed off on the proposal for the staged redevelopment of Armidale Hospital. With the support of the previous Government, an application was made to the Federal Government's Health and Hospitals Fund, with the State promising to contribute \$10 million towards the \$50 million project. We were all disappointed to learn that the Commonwealth rejected that application. I acknowledge the announcement of support in the last round for Tamworth Hospital, which is well supported not only by me but by people throughout the New England region as it is a very important facility in the network of hospitals for the New England and north-west region.

I would like to see the debate couched in terms of a firm focus on the future given the support and priority for this redevelopment by the Hunter New England Local Health District. What can we do from here on for the Armidale Hospital redevelopment? I take the opportunity to invite Minister Skinner, who I acknowledge has inherited a significant backlog of serious health priorities throughout the State, to come to Armidale to meet stakeholders and see first-hand the significant local community support that is underlined by this petition with almost 11,000 signatures. Doctors, clinicians, business people and businesses came and grabbed the petitions and went around the community, motivated by the support for this redevelopment. I want the Minister not only to hear about it in this debate but to see for herself the local community being very constructive about what it is asking for. Local people recognise the massive priorities for health services around New South Wales.

This is not just an issue about capital; there are workforce issues right across the State. We acknowledge that regional and rural areas are part of that. Of course, the rural medical school based at the University of New England sees Armidale Hospital, along with Tamworth, as a major and important facility in the network of hospitals delivering education to our medical students. It is clear that Armidale Hospital does not meet modern hospital standards for efficiency and patient care and needs redevelopment. We are happy to work with the Minister and the Government because we want to see more specialist doctors, nurses and other health professionals attracted to the area. I welcome the opportunity to discuss with not only the Minister but anyone in the State Government how we can progress the redevelopment and reinforce the need for this important program. I commend the petition and the support for this redevelopment to the House.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) [4.36 p.m.]: I acknowledge the petition and the contribution of the member for Northern Tablelands. I have visited the beautiful city of Armidale, and indeed the hospital, in times past and I am very happy to accept his invitation to visit again. The New South Wales Government recognises the need for redevelopment of the facilities at Armidale as part of its overall asset strategic planning, which also has support from staff clinicians, the University of New England and the community. I acknowledge that.

The Armidale Hospital expansion project was included in a small group of applications submitted by NSW Health in late 2010 under the former Labor Government for consideration in round three of the Health and Hospitals Fund, as the member mentioned. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing wrote to the New South Wales Department of Health on 6 April 2011, and I have sent the member a copy of the letter. That letter advised that the application for the Armidale Hospital expansion project did not satisfy the Health and Hospitals Fund criteria. While Armidale Hospital is one of Hunter New England Local Health District's high priorities for enhancement, NSW Health was advised by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing that the application did not satisfy the evaluation criteria for round three and therefore the application did not receive funding.

The guidelines prepared by the Commonwealth dictated that they would contact relevant applicants in this regard and while it is understood that some applicants were contacted Armidale was not, and therefore did not receive advice from the Commonwealth to re-submit that application in round four. The projects included in the New South Wales Government's application for round four were based on clinical need and NSW Health priorities. I assure the member for Northern Tablelands that because this is a high priority for Hunter New England it would be given high priority in any future rounds. Hunter New England Health and the Ministry are continuing to look at ways to improve health services and outcomes for the people of Armidale and surrounding districts. It recommended that a site master plan be completed to determine current and future capacity for the site.

This master plan has identified priorities for the future, which is in line with recommendations from the health services plan. Consultation during planning included representatives from all key clinical services, including primary and community health, mental health and hospital staff. The planning already undertaken identified opportunities for a stage 3 development of the site and will be used to inform future funding opportunities and submissions. As I have said, the redevelopment of the campus remains a high priority. I can confirm for the petitioners and the member for Northern Tablelands that we will continue to pursue this activity. I can also announce—and I know the member for Northern Tablelands is aware of this because we sent him a copy of our press release—that today tenders are being called for the construction of Armidale Hospital's new \$5.9 million combined ambulatory care and chemotherapy building. It is a great move.

The co-location of a range of ambulatory and care services will enable community members to access multidisciplinary services, including specialist paediatric clinics, specialist physician clinics and maternity clinics. The building will also house expanded chemotherapy services. These are being built at a cost of \$985,000 and will provide improved facilities for the important service and two additional chemotherapy chairs. These facilities are scheduled for completion by mid 2013 and will offer significantly improved services for members of the community who require chemotherapy.

I am happy to say that the expanded chemotherapy service forms part of the North West Regional Cancer Centre, currently under construction in Tamworth, which was successful in gaining funding previously. I could say more but I have run out of time. I assure the petitioners and the member for Northern Tablelands that I very much sympathise with their need for future development of this hospital. As the member for Northern Tablelands said, we inherited a great backlog of infrastructure needed across New South Wales, and we are getting on with the job.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [4.41 p.m.]: I thank the Minister and the good member for Northern Tablelands for the opportunity to make a contribution this afternoon in the discussion on the petition for the redevelopment of the Armidale Rural Referral Hospital. Armidale Hospital was established on its present site in 1853 and has undergone many improvements, changes and renovations since that time. It has grown to serve the community of Armidale and surrounding towns and is now a 110-bed rural district hospital within the Hunter New England Local Health District and a referral centre for Northern Tablelands for non-tertiary care. The hospital provides acute healthcare services to residents of Armidale and the surrounding towns of Uralla, Kentucky and Hillgrove. The hospital is also a referral centre for health services in Guyra, Glen Innes, Inverell, Emmaville and Tenterfield to the north and Walcha to the south. The nearest major rural referral hospital is Tamworth Hospital, 110 kilometres south.

A number of enhancements are currently being planned for Armidale Hospital, including the ambulatory care building at Armidale, funded by NSW Health. This building will also house expanded chemotherapy services, funded as part of round two of the Health and Hospitals Fund. These facilities are scheduled for completion in early 2013 and will provide a significant improvement for community members

who require chemotherapy treatment. The purpose-built and expanded chemotherapy services will be located on the ground floor of the new building, with significantly improved privacy, increased space for patients and relatives, as well as office and consulting spaces for staff and clinicians.

The University of New England has received Commonwealth funding for a clinical skills building. I note with great interest that the member for Northern Tablelands is also the Chancellor of the University of New England. He is not only the chancellor of the university but also a great champion of that fine establishment and facility. The clinical skills building will provide teaching and clinical spaces for the joint medical program of the University of New England and the University of Newcastle. The building is being constructed on the Armidale Hospital site, demonstrating the close and supportive relationship between Hunter New England Health, local health services and the university.

Hospitals are only as good as the dedicated people who work within their walls, as the good member for Northern Tablelands knows only too well, being a strong and loyal champion advocating long and hard for his community as we see here today. Armidale Hospital employs 205 full-time equivalent staff. Hunter New England Local Health District and the New South Wales Department of Health are continuing to look at ways to improve services and health outcomes for the people of Armidale and surrounding regions. I congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands, the people of the Northern Tablelands and their communities on bringing this petition to the House.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [4.44 p.m.]: As a rough guesstimate, the population catchment for Armidale Rural Referral Hospital is about 70,000 people. The fact that 11,000 of them have signed this important petition says it all about the need for a \$50 million upgrade of the hospital. Tonight we have heard some good news about the \$5.9 million ambulatory care and chemotherapy building and the expansion of the clinical school. But all of those 11,000 people know that what is needed is a full \$50 million upgrade. Armidale Rural Referral Hospital is probably the most important teaching unit for the future of rural health in New South Wales because the overwhelming majority of the hospital's medical students will become the rural practitioners that we need so much.

The hospital is unique in that it has so many students and an enormous amount of potential to enhance its ability to teach, but that requires political will on the part of this Government. We have heard fine words from those opposite but what we have not heard is a commitment. We have heard a commitment to try harder but we have not heard a financial commitment for the \$50 million that we need to provide health care for New England for the foreseeable future. This can be done, but it needs political will from governments of all persuasions and on all sides, and that has been lacking. To intimate that the sole reason for the refusal of the previous application was that it was outside the criteria tends to make it sound as though there was a problem with the application signed by the bureaucrats who made it.

But the reality is that, with political will, these obstacles are eminently able to be overcome. In the absence of political will obstacles such as this will always stand in the way and the people of Armidale will be the poorer for it. I am very pleased that the Minister is going to Armidale because my experience of Armidale—this is probably the Minister's experience also—is that the clinicians are first rate. I first travelled there as a retrieval doctor nearly 30 years ago and I was struck by how committed and how skilled the clinicians in Armidale were; they still leave many of us in awe of their skills and commitment. We need to see political will, which has been lacking. If the Government is serious about fixing Armidale Hospital, we need a commitment.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MS VIDOSAVA KRAGIC TOLL INFRINGEMENT NOTICES

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.48 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a quite extraordinary situation involving Vidosava Kragic, who is a constituent of mine. My constituent is in the position of having received 31 infringement notices relating to allegedly travelling on the M5 without paying the toll. These 31 notices relate only to the period 7 April 2011 to 23 September 2011. She has travelled on the M5 regularly outside that period without provoking a blizzard of infringement notices. The current fee per trip on the M5, one way, is \$4.40. At the time the infringement notices were issued the relevant fee was \$3.80. Of course, once an infringement notice is issued the amount concerned rises exponentially to either \$152 or \$156, depending upon

the precise offence alleged. The fines now total more than \$4,700 from these 31 notices. The total amount of tolls that are alleged not to have been paid is something less than \$120. Ms Kragic does not work; her only income is from a Centrelink Newstart allowance. Her financial situation is already so severe that she recently had to arrange to move from her modest flat to even cheaper premises because of financial pressures.

Ms Kragic strikes me as a fundamentally good person doing the best she can, but she is about to be overwhelmed by a blizzard of enforcement orders resulting from her use of the M5. She does not understand how the avalanche of infringement notices has been created. She has tried to discuss this with Interlink, admittedly with only limited success. Ms Kragic came to Australia 15 years ago from the former Yugoslavia. She was a victim of personal violence and a survivor of war. She worked in Yugoslavia and in Australia. Although she is currently out of work, she is looking for work. She has raised two daughters in Australia, both of whom got to university.

When Ms Kragic first received infringement notices she attempted to pay them and arranged a time-to-pay order with the State Debt Recovery Office. As I understand it, she has already paid more than \$2,000 including some non-motorway related notices. She is not someone who simply ignores problems or categorically refuses to pay. However, she does not understand how so many infringement notices have arisen. The explanation she obtained from the authorities was that the infringements resulted from occasions when there was not enough money in her savings account for it to be transferred to her e-tag account. That does not make sense to Ms Kragic. She does not think it is fair; neither do I. On previous occasions when this occurred, the tag company would warn her of the fact and she would take steps to resolve the problem.

Ms Kragic believed that that had occurred in 2011. If it did not that might explain the avalanche of infringement notices. But it hardly stems from any conscious effort by my constituent to break the law or to avoid tolls. Moreover, it strikes me that something is fundamentally wrong. It is wrong for two reasons. First, the issuing of fines is simply treating each trip as an isolated incident rather than as one item on an ongoing account. If there was no money in the savings account the \$3.80 should have been debited to the e-tag account until such time as the money came in. That is hardly rocket science and it is not unreasonable in the circumstances of this case.

The second reason it is unfair is the entirely disproportionate nature of the money and the fines that are involved. The M5 toll fee is \$3.80, which seems to generate a fine of more than \$150 which, frankly, is disproportionate. In a case such as this where Ms Kragic clearly wants to do the right thing it is inappropriate to proceed in this manner. Also, arguably it is a waste of public resources to go through the whole panoply of infringement notice, enforcement order and application to pay by instalment. Ms Kragic concedes that she uses the M5. However, she is not convinced that all the trips it is alleged she made were made by her vehicle. When she raised this issue she was told that some images of the car were not available. If that is the case it is a fairly serious matter.

Infringement notices should not be pursued if it cannot be established that Ms Kragic's car was involved in those events. At most, this rather tragic case might reflect a misunderstanding or confusion on the part of Ms Kragic. It certainly does not reflect the degree of antisocial behaviour or criminality that would justify the thousands of dollars of fines that are now outstanding against her. The scale of these fines is almost overwhelming my constituent; they are just so massive. As she says, the notices just keep coming and it is beginning to take a toll on her.

The other point she quite reasonably makes is that presumably this is not just an issue that applies to her: other people might equally be harmed by the disproportionate response and some of them might be in difficult financial positions as they are raising a family and trying to keep a roof over their heads. I ask the relevant Minister or Ministers to review what has happened in the case of Ms Kragic and more generally. Have all the trips been properly claimed against her car? Are there images of her car? If not, how can these infringement notices be pursued? Is there a more sensible course to be followed other than pursuing the full amount of each infringement notice? What can be done sensibly to ensure that this does not occur again?

WYONG DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyang) [4.53 p.m.]: I have great pleasure in acknowledging the Wyong District Cricket Club, which celebrates its centenary of cricket in the 2012-13 cricket season. The celebrations will mark 100 years since the formation of the Wyong Cricket Association in the local area. It is also appropriate to highlight the fact that the O'Farrell Government is supporting the efforts of the club with a

\$32,000 grant under this Government's Community Building Partnership Program. Recently I joined the club's president, Mr Doug Trigg, and a number of the club's talented junior cricketers to inspect the club's facilities to see how this money will improve training facilities for seniors, juniors and the general public.

The money will go towards extending and upgrading the bowling run-ups and pitches at the practice nets located at Baker Park in Wyong. Currently these talented young players are forced to practice on badly eroded and uneven surfaces, which does nothing to assist in their training. To celebrate their 100th anniversary the club will hold a centenary dinner at Wyong Leagues Club on 17 November, followed by a golden oldies match the following day at Baker Park. The club's centenary committee is working hard to research and compile the district's rich cricket history and is hoping to have its work published so that everyone throughout the Wyong community enjoys and recognises its rich history.

The 1912 cricket season saw the first professional cricket association formed on the Central Coast. The Wyong District Cricket Association brought together teams from Wyong, Wyong Creek, Jiliby, Yarramalong, Tuggerah, Wyee and Ourimbah. In 1968 the Gosford and Wyong district associations amalgamated and the Wyong Cricket Club became the Wyong District Cricket Club. The Wyong District Cricket Club currently fields 11 senior and six junior teams in the Central Coast Cricket Association competitions, and has more than 200 registered players. The club has a rich history of producing an array of talented and successful cricketers over the past 100 years. The club has won numerous premierships since joining with the Gosford Cricket Association to form Central Coast Cricket in the 1968-69 season and most recently it won first grade in the 2009-10 season.

Sporting organisations such as the Wyong District Cricket Club owe much to the tireless work of volunteers, many of whom are parents, who give a substantial amount of their time not just on Saturday mornings but also at weekends and in the evenings for training or other matches. Many of these dedicated parents drive hundreds of miles each year to take their children to representative matches throughout New South Wales. Through this hard work and commitment sporting clubs are able to give so much back to the community. I am pleased that the O'Farrell Government has recognised the importance of sporting organisations through the Community Building Partnership Program. Wyong District Cricket Club was not the only club that received funding in the Wyong electorate this round; Toukley District Club also received funding for similar building programs. As a rugby league man it is great to see this cricket resurgence on the Central Coast, in particular, as a result of the Twenty20 competition with many people supporting either Sydney Thunder or the Sydney Sixers. I wish the Wyong District Cricket Club all the best in the coming season and I look forward to its centenary anniversary dinner.

COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.57 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I speak about this Government's valuable Community Building Partnership Program. Every member of this House had the pleasure of calling community groups across their electorates to inform them that they had received funding. This program is not only important but also delivers much-needed social, recreational and environmental outcomes. When I rang community groups in my electorate and told them that they had received funding I heard their cheering on the phone. As many organisations are manned by hardworking volunteers any assistance is much appreciated. Some not-for-profit organisations look after the needs of many members in their groups.

Last year, when community groups were asked to apply for a grant, the Bathurst electorate was no different from any other electorate in New South Wales. Community groups applied for more than \$1.5 million for much-needed infrastructure projects. In the Bathurst electorate I announced that 24 projects to the value of \$400,000 were successful in receiving funding from the New South Wales Government. The projects ranged in value from \$4,200 to \$50,000 and that expenditure will have an impact on people in my community. This is yet another election commitment being delivered by the Liberal-Nationals Government to renovate infrastructure across this State. These important building, refurbishment or facility enhancing programs will provide opportunities for local construction companies, involve local businesses and create jobs in the region.

Local councils that made applications through the funding program had to match the State Government's contribution dollar for dollar. A number of programs will now be brought forward because of the worthwhile contribution of the New South Wales Government to this program. I will inform the House of some of the wonderful projects in my electorate that received funding. There were 24 worthwhile projects which

I have broken up into local government areas. The organisations that were not successful in receiving funding also put in great applications. I hope that there will be another opportunity for them to receive the necessary funding for their projects.

In the Bathurst regional council area, Riding for the Disabled received money to install a watering system. The Carillion City Tennis Club received money to carpet the clubhouse. The Bathurst Goldfields received money for signage. Bathurst Regional Council received money to upgrade the Scallywags preschool and to build a new pistol club. The Eglinton Tennis Club received a contribution for new courts and lights. The Miss Trails House received money for repairs to its guttering. The Kennerson Park greyhound racing track also received a contribution, as did the Bathurst Information and Neighbourhood Centre to install insulation. Moving to Blayney, the shire council received money to upgrade the showground pavilion. The Carcoar Hospital Museum and the Millthorpe Tennis Courts also received contributions. In the mid-western council area, funding was provided to Kandos Rylstone Men's Shed, Kandos Rylstone Netball Association for new courts and to the Rylstone Kandos preschool for a sensory garden and play equipment.

In the Oberon council area, Oberon Camp Draft Club and the Oberon Show Society received funding. Oberon council received a contribution to resurface Cunninghame Oval. In Lithgow the Hartley Recreation Reserve received money for signage and the Lake Wallace Community Boating Centre received money to build a pontoon for people with disabilities. Lithgow City Council received funding assistance for the Union Theatre. Lithgow City Rangers Soccer Club received funding to resurface the soccer fields. The Lithgow Police and Community Youth Club received funding for painting the outside of the building, and the Portland Bowling Club received \$30,000 to install footpaths around the building. This is a great program and it is great to be the local member to deliver it for my electorate.

ANZAC DAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [5.02 p.m.]: Today I honour and commemorate some of the men and women who left the electorate of Heathcote never to return. We live our lives day by day rarely giving these brave men and women a thought, so I will indulge the House with a couple of stories from my electorate. Let us consider the hole left in our local communities since World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam War and, more recently, the war in Afghanistan. Husbands, sons, brothers, uncles, sisters and aunts left our coastal communities never to return. I will single out now a couple of the heroes from my electorate of Heathcote.

Helensburgh mourned one of its finest young men when Robert Gladstone Fenwick, after a long and distressing delay in news of his fate, became one of those who would be known as the Lost Diggers of Fromelles. James and Barbara were the parents of this hardworking young miner who was born in Bulli. They had three sons fighting in the Great War and would experience a double tragedy within days of each other. On 23 December 1915 Private Robert Gladstone Fenwick embarked with the 18th Reinforcement from Sydney aboard HMAT *Demosthenes*. On arrival Robert was transferred to the 30th Battalion and was reported missing in action at Fromelles, France on 21 July 1916.

In March 1917 the family back home in Bulga Road, Helensburgh received the distressing news that Robert's identification disc was received from Germany's death list. Australian Imperial Force headquarters officially reported that he had been killed in action on 20 July 1916. Just days earlier, Robert's brother James had been killed in action. A firsthand report given by a Sergeant Edgar Shipp of Goulbourn, who had also been wounded in the attack, gave the last-known account of Robert Fenwick. He said, "I knew Fenwick well. He was dazed and was last seen between the first and second line of the German trenches. We had to fall back, we just had to fall back." In 2008 a mass grave was located at Pheasant Wood, France containing 96 of our boys. Robert Gladstone Fenwick was one of them. At the time of the dedication of the new Fromelles Cemetery on 19 July 2010, with the use of DNA, Robert's remains were identified. He has now been laid to rest in the Fromelles Cemetery. On Anzac Day I met Robert's relative who gave her DNA information for his identification.

During the Vietnam War, on the nights of 16 to 17 August 1966, Viet Cong forces fired a barrage of shells into Nui Dat, wounding 24 Australians. On 18 August D Company, 6 RAR, was patrolling in the Long Tan rubber plantation. At about 3.15 p.m. the lead platoon, 11 Platoon, commanded by Second Lieutenant Gordon Sharp, a 21-year-old national serviceman, encountered a small group of Viet Cong forces who fled. The patrolling continued until about 4.08 p.m. when the main body of Viet Cong forces attacked vigorously with mortars, rifles and machine guns. It was pouring with rain, but the Australians returned fire with platoon

weapons and artillery fired from the Nui Dat base some five kilometres away. When the smoke cleared the next morning the Viet Cong forces had sustained a reported 245 deaths. Eighteen Australians lost their lives and 24 were wounded.

Several Vietnam veterans live in my electorate. Their names are Len Vine, Merv Nain and Dave White. These gentlemen typify the selfless courage and sense of duty that is the Aussie Anzac spirit. We owe a great debt to all those who served to protect our way of life and each of us should remember those who gave up so much so that we could have so much more. These are just a couple of examples of the Anzac spirit. These people showed brave selflessness and are remembered and honoured in my community of Heathcote. I am proud of the Anzac Day turnout this year in the electorate of Heathcote. There was a huge increase in the number of people coming to pay their respects to the fallen. As we commemorate the ninety-eighth year since that battle at Gallipoli it warms my heart that as a community we are recognising the sacrifice that our forebears made so that we can live in the best country in the world, bar none.

DAPTO HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [5.07 p.m.]: In 1952 a 32-acre block of land in the south of the Illawarra was acquired and deemed to be a suitable site for the new public school for the area. It seems ridiculous now, but such prime real estate was bought for a mere \$2,200. Six years later, in 1958, Dapto High School first opened its doors to public enrolment. A total of 186 students were present that first year and that number has steadily increased to 950 students who attend the school today. Numerous expansions and renovations throughout the 1960s to the 1990s led to the establishment of the school's current grounds and buildings. The opening of the dedicated arts hall, the maths block, the library, the fitness centre and the tennis courts round out what we now know as Dapto High School, and it is quite impressive.

I was amazed by the calibre of the students at the school when I attended a school assembly; they were so warm and welcoming. Each of them had a different talent or skill and it was truly an amazing morning. The school has a history of encouragement and a passion for innovative and extracurricular activities for its students. An early adopter of the Duke of Edinburgh Award in the 1960s, the school has continued this scheme which not only showcases the physical and mental abilities of the participating students but also gives them a chance to give back to the community in a plethora of volunteering opportunities. It says much about the strengths of Dapto High School teachers and staff that they still run this program for students.

Sporting prowess has always been a source of pride in the Illawarra, and Dapto High School is no exception. From the 1960s onwards, the school seemed to be destined for sporting greatness. State champions in both hockey and rugby league in the 1960s led to 1970s softball finals and later more league success with a finals place in the football University Shield in 1976. More recently, Dapto High has produced Olympic canoeing silver medallists in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. Given the school's proud tradition of rugby league greatness, it is of little surprise that Dapto High School was the proving ground for St George Illawarra captain and Steeler's legend Paul McGregor, who grew up in Dapto, and saw the school grow with him. More recently, Dapto High School can be proud to call current St George Illawarra forward and 2010 NRL premiership winner Dean Young a member of its alumni.

Sporting success is not the only achievement of which the school can be proud. In 2002 the school was the subject of a case study for its innovative school-to-work program. The study revealed that Dapto High School's unique approach to integrated resume building and work skill development in the classroom led not only to greater enthusiasm from the students but also to a higher level of post-school employment for graduates. The report deemed the program a great success and recommended Dapto High School be used as a model for other schools. We are truly proud of that in the Illawarra. Dapto High School also supports the recently established and successful program HeadSpace, a service designed to offer help, guidance and support to students who may be the victims of bullying and peer pressure, as well as those who may suffer more long-term mental illnesses such as depression. The pilot program for this service, Natural Helpers, was first introduced and trialled at Dapto High, with such success that the volunteer-run peer assistance service was expanded into the wider Illawarra.

Dapto High School has much of which to be proud. This is in no small part due to guidance and leadership of its staff and teachers. Mr Andrew FitzSimons, the principal since 2004, can be thanked for much of the modern successes of the school. His deputy principals, Mrs Lynette Lanham and Mr Darcy Moore, have done much for which they can be appreciated. With laptops being rolled out to students, National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN], School Certificate and Higher School Certificate test scores on

the rise, extra-curricular activities continuing at an enviable rate and more sporting accomplishments surely on the way, Dapto High School has much to celebrate. Now in its fifty-fifth year, the school may be nearly unrecognisable by those who established it in the late 1950s. Yet the ideals remain the same. They are ideals for which everyone should strive: excellence and acceptance in whichever field one chooses. As Dapto High School's motto rings, "Strive for higher things."

DEATH OF MIJIN SHIN

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [5.12 p.m.]: Yesterday was a devastating day for the Beecroft Public School community. Mijin Shin, a Korean-Australian woman—who would have been looking forward to seeing her daughter after a three-day camp in the Nelson Bay area—is now dead after falling under the wheels of a chartered bus carrying schoolchildren, including her 11-year-old daughter back to Beecroft Public School. The teachers and staff of Beecroft Public School, Department of Education officials and friends of the school are to be commended for the sensitivity with which they handled this awful incident. The local Korean-Australian community should be commended for establishing a foundation for the young girl on the bus and her little sister, who was being held by her mother at the time of the collision but who miraculously survived. The fund will provide vital support in the days ahead. I ask the House to remember the mother and her daughters in their prayers.

NORTH COAST TIMBER INDUSTRY

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [5.13 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to an issue that is having an impact not only on the electorate of Coffs Harbour but also throughout the North Coast. I refer to the harvesting of timber in State forests. In 1995 the Carr Government came to office having promised to enter into long-term wood supply agreements. Those agreements operated in a haphazard manner until 2003 because of pressure from and preference deals done with The Greens. As a result, the vast majority of New South Wales forests became national parks and a large number of millers left the industry, some with payouts and some not. Other mills were upgraded with government assistance to handle guaranteed wood supplies.

We are now witnessing the collapse of the timber industry on the North Coast. That is happening for a number of reasons. First, the downturn in the housing market is causing problems across Australia, let alone the North Coast. Second, we have had a very wet year on the North Coast and forests are virtually inaccessible and logging cannot take place; and, third, Boral Timber, which has been taking mill waste from the mills, has now advised the industry that the majority of the chip it was taking is no longer required. I understand that only one small mill in my electorate will be supplying Boral with chips. That decision has been made because of the high value of the Australian dollar and the subsidies paid by foreign companies to their milling operations to provide chips to those who need it. Boral's decision will result in huge job losses on the North Coast.

Mills such as Hurfords Hardwood at Lismore, Notaras and Sons Pty Limited, Big River Timbers and Solar Timbers at Kempsey rely on supplying chips to subsidise their milling operations. In fact, one miller told me that he is making \$75,000 net each year from chips—which is mill waste—and that money assists him to pay his power bill. With the predicted increase in the cost of electricity that will result from the introduction of the carbon tax by the Federal Government that miller will be unable to operate profitably. He told me that he keeps milling because of his love of the industry and because he wants to provide employment in Grafton. The return on his investment in his mill is miniscule compared to what he would get in bank interest if he were to sell it and invest the money. We as a government and a community must examine ways in which we can assist the industry through this crisis. It has been suggested to me that we should redirect supply from Forests NSW and consider the type of timber we take and its use.

We must also examine government contracts and ensure that Australian hardwoods are utilised to the greatest possible extent. For example, some years ago we moved away from using timber railway sleepers and used concrete sleepers instead. Those sleepers are now failing and must be replaced. I suggest that we replace them with hardwood sleepers, which were used successfully for many years throughout the country. If we were to do that we would save some jobs. Logging contractors have already walked away from the industry because they cannot harvest timber and they have not been able to access the volumes that were promised by Forests NSW in the past. This industry is in a mess. Although a committee is investigating the situation, we must take a more proactive approach and buy timber from the mills that are in danger of failing. If we do not, regional economies on the North Coast will suffer the consequences.

SUTHERLAND TO CRONULLA CYCLEWAY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [5.18 p.m.]: Last week the member for Miranda, the member for Heathcote and I made several submissions regarding the New South Wales Long Term Transport Master Plan. One of those submissions supported a Sutherland to Cronulla off-road cycleway using, at least in part, the railway corridor. That would create an east-west link between the Sutherland and Cronulla railway stations. At the moment there are very few options for cyclists travelling that route, other than congested and dangerous arterial roads. The route would connect significant town centres, including Sutherland, which is an administrative and commercial hub, Miranda, which is a retail centre, and Cronulla, which is the locus of leisure and entertainment facilities.

The cycleway is especially important as the Sutherland Shire Council proposes to allow greater residential densities around some town centres, and new dwellings are likely to be designed in a way that limit the use of cars. It is also important because of the number of short journeys that people undertake. The transport data centre for the Sutherland shire has showed that in 2008 on an average weekday in the shire 39 per cent of trips are less than two kilometres and 24 per cent are between two and five kilometres. In 2010 the previous Labor Government left out of its New South Wales Bike Plan a Sutherland to Cronulla off-road cycleway using the railway corridor. It also failed to incorporate the cycleway into the railway corridor when the Sutherland to Cronulla train line was duplicated. It would have been far easier and cheaper to build the cycleway at that time. But there is still room for the cycleway to be built.

Sutherland Shire Council and the former Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] commissioned a study by GTA Consultants, which produced its final report in February 2010. The GTA report identified four main corridors for the cycleway and concluded that the preferred route for the implementation of a cycleway between Sutherland and Cronulla stations was what it refers to as the "railway corridor route", but with a link between President Avenue in Sutherland to Avery Avenue in Kirrawee. The preferred route is the easiest route from a planning perspective. It utilises existing road and rail corridors. No land acquisition would be required. There would be no significant construction activities close to areas of natural bushland.

RailCorp was consulted about the proposed cycleway. Its position was that only two short sections in Miranda and Caringbah were suitable. But the GTA report concluded that beyond those two short sections, there were other sections where RailCorp's concern about the "separation of pedestrians, cyclists and rail operations" could be addressed. This is so for various reasons. First, appropriate safety management measures, such as the inclusion of fences, would be possible. Secondly, the topography at the base and top of embankments physically separates rail activity from pedestrians and cyclists. Thirdly, the shared path is generally outside the safety zone for rail operations. Fourthly, the embankments appear not to be used, or are used very infrequently, for track and corridor maintenance. Fifthly, there are alternative routes available, if ever a section needs to be temporarily closed while track works are undertaken.

The route preferred by the GTA report is 11 kilometres in length, of which 3.7 kilometres is situated within the rail corridor. The proposal for a cycleway is consistent with government policy at all levels. At the national level, the Australian National Cycling Strategy 2005-2010 recommends that all levels of government adopt cycling as a significant transport option. At the State level, the New South Wales Bike Plan states that the Government should establish a series of bicycle networks across the State and attempt to make cycling a viable transport alternative. New South Wales 2021 states that the Government will work with local councils to complete local cycle networks as a part of an integrated transport network.

Finally at the local level, the Sutherland Shire Council's strategic plan states that one key direction is "improved transport options that include well integrated cycling paths". GTA estimates the cost of the cycleway at roughly \$16.3 million. It is not cheap. New South Wales faces a tough budget outlook. Sutherland Shire Council may have to contribute to meeting the cost of the cycleway. It will not be constructed overnight, and I do not want to create unrealistic expectations. But I am convinced that the cycleway must be part of a holistic long-term transport plan for southern Sydney.

FOOTBALL FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA WESTERN SYDNEY A-LEAGUE TEAM

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [5.23 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to express my support for the Football Federation of Australia and commend it for planning, locating and establishing an A-League team in western Sydney. For various reasons that I will briefly outline, I also support the team's home ground being located in Parramatta. As we know, Parramatta is the capital of western Sydney. I am sure the member for Hawkesbury and Parliamentary Secretary, who is at the table, would agree with that. I see he is nodding profusely.

Mr Ray Williams: I offer full endorsement.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I acknowledge his full endorsement of the Football Federation of Australia locating its A-League team in Parramatta. Parramatta is a transport hub. It is the fourth-busiest train station on the rail network and is the junction of eight major arterial bus routes. Parramatta has fantastic sporting facilities that are not limited to the Parramatta Stadium, which has a capacity of approximately 20,000 people and would be a perfect venue for off-season games played by the almighty Eels. My electorate is home to Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, which is especially important because it is the pre-eminent racecourse in western Sydney. There is also Parramatta Park, and this would be an opportune time to convert some of its open fields to areas for soccer training. It is a dream of mine to see thousands of people and their little kids playing soccer every Saturday and Sunday.

Parramatta provides wonderful proximity to all areas of western Sydney. From just about anywhere in western Sydney, Parramatta is only 20 minutes drive away. Certainly it is accessible by residents of western Sydney. But for the reasons I have stated, I welcome the Football Federation of Australia's A-League soccer team being located in Parramatta, especially as the team will need a clubhouse. Parramatta can provide an ideal site for the club that is adjacent to Parramatta Stadium. Parramatta football teams are governed by the Granville and District Soccer Football Association, and 1,300 players, both boys and girls, enjoy competing in regular football competitions in teams that range from the under 6s to the under 45s. The association's team members include the Parramatta Eagles, the Granville Waratahs, Rydalmere Football Club, Dundas United, Granville Kewpie and the Wentworth Waratahs.

It is great to see that out of the 1,300 players in the Granville and District clubs more than 700 are female. In other words, more than half the participants are female. Football promotes equality among men and women, and the move to Parramatta would demonstrate the benefit of equality in the game. My constituents are especially proud of the Parramatta Eagles, or the former Melita Eagles, who won the New South Wales Super League competition in 2010, 1987 and 1989—achievements of which they should be immensely proud. In 2009-10, of the 1.2 million people aged 15 and older who played one form of football 33 per cent played outdoor soccer—the largest group. In 2009, outdoor soccer was the second highest most organised sport for the littlies, accounting for 13 per cent of participation, and second only to swimming at 19 per cent.

As a result of the federation moving to western Sydney, and Parramatta in particular, where there is already a strong participation rate in the sport, I believe football participation rates will increase in the area. Because football is a family sport, establishment of an A-League team in Parramatta will encourage people to increase engagement with their community as well as family recreational time. Moving the A-League team to Parramatta will promote tourism for my electorate and for surrounding areas of western Sydney. Parramatta offers high levels of accessibility to areas throughout western Sydney, sufficient seating capacity in the stadium and increased utilisation of the Parramatta Stadium, which hosts the almighty Eels. While the Eels may not be doing as well as we would like at this point, the people of my electorate are certainly right behind them. In Parramatta we do not give up; we keep fighting as hard as we can. I commend the Football Federation of Australia and I support any decision it may make to locate its A-League team in Parramatta and have the Parramatta Stadium as the team's home ground.

AUSTRALIAN SIKH GAMES

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [5.28 p.m.]: On Friday 6 April, I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremony of the twenty-fifth Australian Sikh Games held at the Crest Sports Complex at Bankstown. I also had the honour of representing the Hon. Graham Annesley, Minister for Sport and Recreation, who was unable to attend due to other commitments. The twenty-fifth Australian Sikh Games were hosted by the Sydney Sikh Sports Club. I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations and to thank the president, Mr Avtar Singh Sidhu, and the secretary, Mr Ranbir Singh Atwal. These two men worked tirelessly for several months to make sure that the Games were such a great success. My thanks and congratulations are also extended to all members of the organising committee on the achievement of a significant sporting and community milestone—the Silver Jubilee of the Australian Sikh Games.

A number of dignitaries were in attendance at the opening ceremony of this important event. I would like to acknowledge those people: the Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; the Hon. Charlie Lynn, MLC; the Hon Andrew Robb, Federal shadow Minister for Finance, Deregulation and Debt Reduction; Mr Luke Hartsuyker, Federal shadow Minister for Youth and Sport; Mr Geoff Lee, the member for Parramatta; councillor Glen Waud and councillor Michael Tadros from

Bankstown City Council; Ms Kate Lundy, Federal Minister for Sport and Multicultural Affairs, representing the Prime Minister; Mr John Robertson, Leader of the Opposition; and Mr Allan Winterbottom, deputy mayor of Bankstown City Council, representing the mayor.

The Australian Sikh Games has been an annual sports fixture in this country since 1987. In 2012 the Australian Sikh Games provided an opportunity within the Bankstown local government area for Sydney's citizens and their friends to join together to learn, understand and appreciate an ancient culture that has had a presence in Australia for more than a century. More importantly, the Games brought together competitors and spectators from all over Australia and internationally and highlighted the best that the Sikh community has to offer. On Sunday 8 April I also had the pleasure of attending the closing of the Games and in the evening of the same day I attended the Games gala dinner. On all occasions, the hospitality I received was second to none. I again extend my congratulations to the Sydney Sikh Sports Club, the organising committee of the Games and the Sikh community in general, on bringing this significant sporting and cultural event to us. I am sure everyone would agree with me when I say that the twenty-fifth Sikh Games were the best Sikh Games ever held. I look forward to attending the thirtieth Australian Sikh Games, when the event again returns to Sydney.

ST MARYS METHADONE CLINIC

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [5.32 p.m.]: A report in this week's edition of the *Mt Druitt Standard* relates to an issue of concern to me and to the people in my electorate. That issue is a methadone clinic at St Marys. It is an issue that has concerned the member for Mulgoa and previous members for St Marys and Londonderry. I have not been involved previously in this issue. My electorate has enough problems with drugs to deal with—as I am sure other electorates have—without worrying about what is going on in Queen Street, St Marys. However, I have been given information to suggest that the Mount Druitt electorate will be used as a solution to a problem in another member's electorate. A feasibility study is to be carried out and my advice is that it will simply rubberstamp a transfer of the methadone clinic at St Marys into the grounds of Mount Druitt Hospital. I ask the Minister to ensure that this does not occur.

This transfer must not take place for a number of reasons. First, the St Marys clinic is a privately owned and operated clinic that operates in the main street. Residents, business people and politicians from all sides of politics have been concerned about it for many years. My view is that it should not be placed in a public hospital that provides public drug services and other drug-related and drug treatment programs. The suggestion that a public hospital can be used as a venue for a private methadone clinic is something that should be of concern to all members and all public hospitals. The St Marys clinic is in the Penrith local government area and closer to the catchment of Nepean Hospital.

The St Marys clinic was raised as an election issue by the member for Mulgoa. I fear that the promise she made to close the clinic to give her a political victory will force a private methadone clinic on the Mount Druitt community and Mount Druitt Hospital by way of a public-private partnership. I base this statement on the advice given to me. I ask the Minister to rule out this move. The Blacktown local government area has a comprehensive methadone program, especially through its two hospitals and local pharmacies. I am sure all members have similar programs operating in their constituencies. Mount Druitt should not become a dumping ground for a methadone program just because it is to be moved from the electorate of or close to a Government member.

The newspaper article referred to a suggestion that the clinic should be transferred to a hospital. In fact, the member for Mulgoa said that the clinic "was not the best model of care"—I cannot disagree there—"and there would be benefits for patients and the community if it was relocated to a health precinct such as a hospital"—no hospital named. I do not think the clinic should be placed in any public hospital. However, if the Government wants to proceed down that path, perhaps the clinic should be transferred to a public hospital that is in the member's electorate. In this case, a hospital in the electorate of the member for Penrith—the Nepean Hospital—would be suitable. I do not necessarily agree with that either because many people want this clinic closed, not transferred. The member for Mulgoa wanted it closed and promised to have it closed. If the member is successful in having the clinic closed altogether, I will give her my wholehearted congratulations.

However, any stunt to transfer her problems—the methadone clinic at St Marys—to the grounds of Mount Druitt Hospital will be strongly resisted, and not just by me. The Mount Druitt Hospital has a proud link to its community. Any rumour that goes up the corridors of the Mount Druitt Hospital generally finds its way into the community within days. I have no doubt that once this particular project is a reality—it comes not just from me and the newspaper but also from people within the Health Department—many people working in

Mount Druitt Hospital and in the community served by Mount Druitt Hospital will be alarmed. Again, I ask the Minister for Health to rule out that any inquiry will recommend simply a transfer, rather than a closure, of St Marys private methadone clinic.

LIFELINE HARBOUR TO HAWKESBURY CENTRE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [5.37 p.m.]: For many people the Lifeline organisation is just that—a lifeline. In recognition of the organisation's outstanding work the first budget of the O'Farrell Government committed an additional \$2 million a year for four years in support of suicide prevention and counselling services, a total of \$8 million. It is a sad reflection on previous governments that this is the first time all 15 New South Wales Lifeline centres have received State government funding. The Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Centre, or H2H as it is sometimes known, operates from Gordon in my electorate of Davidson and provides services to the community in a corridor that extends from North Sydney through to the Hawkesbury River. It provides a 24-hour telephone crisis support service for people in need and a range of related face-to-face services.

These services include personal and financial counselling, Lifeline bulk billing for psychological services, problem gambling counselling, suicide prevention programs, a suicide bereavement support group, a men's anger management course, a Reassurance for Each [REACH] depression support group and Partners in Depression group, as well as emergency relief for Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai residents. These services help rebuild and save lives and assist clients to find ways forward. As issues are faced and worked through, clients often re-enter the workforce and/or join voluntary or community groups. Lifeline also actively supports and empowers clients to access recreational activities within the community.

In particular, Lifeline at Gordon supports a high percentage of people with mental illness. These clients often fall through the gaps in society and miss out on accessing government services. Some Lifeline H2H services are by telephone while others are face to face, requiring counselling facilities. The Gordon centre currently has only six face-to-face counselling rooms, limiting the number of counselling sessions that can be held each week. I am pleased that in the most recent allocation of Community Building Partnership Program funding my recommended allocation of \$42,901 for new counselling rooms at the Lifeline Gordon centre was approved.

The funding will assist with the cost of removing current workstations and fixed bookshelves, constructing three acoustically appropriate counselling rooms and a hallway, installing new electrical work and a security or alarm system for counsellors, building new fixtures and fittings, and replacing the air conditioning. It is important that those who provide vital services to our society are able to do so in relative comfort and with security. Tomorrow I will visit the Lifeline facilities at Gordon again to see the current working facilities and receive an on-site briefing regarding the planned works.

I pay special tribute to the many volunteers within Lifeline, especially at Gordon. In particular, I acknowledge the work of the current Chief Executive Officer, Wendy Carver, who began working as a Lifeline volunteer 25 years ago. Special mention also should be made of Denny Woodburn, who received a 2012 International Women's Day, Ku-ring-gai Council Gems of Ku-ring-gai award for her 19 years as a telephone crisis supporter. Gail Hinchcliffe and Brenda Barber have shared the same shift at Lifeline H2H for approximately 20 years and individually have volunteered for 21 years and 26 years respectively.

Others who have served Lifeline or worked in the Lifeline shop include Eileen Field, 31 years; Betty Sharp, 30 years; Patrick Rougan, 26 years; Ted Ranft, 25 years; Nita Brooks and Agnes Klein-Jaeger, both 24 years; and Cherie Donaldson, 23 years. Lifeline workers make a wonderful contribution to their local community, to society in general and especially to the many individuals seeking support to rebuild their lives. I wish Lifeline H2H at Gordon well as it aims to meet demand for its counselling and support services and to provide a quicker response to people in crisis. I am pleased it will be assisted through improved facilities funded under the State Government's Community Building Partnership Program.

RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [5.42 p.m.]: I advise the House about the new bus routes and extra buses that have been rolled out recently to serve the electorate of Riverstone. By way of context, Riverstone is an electorate that contains the lion's share of the North West Growth Centre of Sydney. Over

recent years many new suburbs have emerged and over the coming decades there will be many more. I have spoken previously about the rail corridor options that are on exhibition and which this Government has proposed as possible extensions to the North West Rail Link, which the Government has committed to as far as Schofields. Both rail corridor extension options will run through the electorate of Riverstone.

These new suburbs have grown up without a rail service, even though one was promised to be completed to the north-west by 2010. So the area has become very heavily dependent on road transport and, in particular, on buses to the city for those who commute to the city. Many residents have told me of the need for extra buses and extended bus routes and, indeed, new bus routes to serve the population of this area as it has developed. Today I am happy to congratulate and welcome the Government's response to the needs of residents in the north-west, and in particular in my electorate of Riverstone, as evidenced by the rollout of additional bus services.

On Monday I had the pleasure of seeing off one of the first of the new 607X route buses as it departed from the Rouse Hill town centre on its way to the city. I was joined by the member for Baulkham Hills, David Elliott, and we congratulated the bus driver as he started his route. I had been asked by commuters at Samantha Riley T-way bus stop just weeks before, as we were commemorating the one-year anniversary of the election of the Government, for exactly this service. It was a delight to be able to say it is on its way. It was planned and budgeted for by this Government, and we are delivering. The 607X route provides a new seven-day route with an additional seven buses operating from Rouse Hill town centre, along the north-west T-way, the M2 and then into the city. I am especially delighted about the provision of an additional three buses for route 616X, a local bus service to the city servicing the suburbs of Kellyville Ridge, Stanhope Gardens and Glenwood.

The additional buses for this route take effect from Monday 14 May 2012. I have received representations from local residents about the need for additional buses on this 616X route, as it is frequently patronised by locals of these suburbs on their way to the city. I am proud to be part of a Government which listens to the concerns of residents and responds by delivering real outcomes. These additional services follow on from an additional bus for route T63, which travels from Kellyville Ridge to Parramatta, as well as the commencement in March of new route 602, an express weekday service operating along the M2 to North Sydney. This was the focus of many requests received during the election campaign and since, and it is a particular source of pride to be able to deliver that new express service.

In October of last year route T74 received an additional six buses to enable an extension of the route between Riverstone and Blacktown through The Ponds, to serve the new community of The Ponds and the new Schofields railway station. Transport needs for residents in the north-west were ignored by those opposite for far too long. That is why this Government is committed to delivering the North West Rail Link and providing necessary bus services in the meantime. These additional bus runs will improve services in the North West Growth Centre and beyond. Local residents will be delighted to see these services on the ground. I commend the Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, and the Government for responding to real local needs.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.47 p.m.]: To commemorate Anzac Day 2012, to date I have had the pleasure of taking part in three local services in my electorate of Vaucluse, with another to come next Friday. Anzac Day is a time for all of us to pause and reflect on the sacrifice and courage of our men and women who served—and those who are still serving—our nation in times of war and in times of peace. We mark this important day, the anniversary of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps first landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915, for that purpose. This was a really significant episode in our history, a baptism of fire for our proud young country and also for our New Zealand brothers and sisters.

At each of the local services I attended for Anzac Day 2012 members of our community of all ages and backgrounds joined together in large numbers to honour our proud Anzac tradition. Within our local community I observed that the Anzac tradition and spirit are as strong as ever amongst both those who are old enough to remember and those who have only read or heard about the brave sacrifices. Like other members of our community gathered at the services across New South Wales, I was proud to be amongst our veterans, serving members of the Australian Defence Force, their families and other members of the community to remember their service to our country and to pay tribute to their sacrifice on our behalf.

On Sunday 22 April I attended the annual Anzac Sunday commemorative march at the Rose Bay RSL Sub-Branch in my electorate. The march began outside the club in Vickery Avenue and was followed by a

commemoration at Rose Bay cenotaph. It was a beautiful day. The weather was superb, the sun was out, and I was joined at the event by my Federal counterpart, the member for Wentworth, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP, and Woollahra Mayor, Councillor Susan Wynne. I congratulate Rose Bay RSL Sub-Branch Honorary Secretary Rosemary Stockley on her dedicated organisation of this important event. The Scots College Pipes and Drums added a wonderfully stirring dimension to the commemoration. Later that same Sunday I attended the Waverley Council's Anzac Day commemorative service at the cenotaph in Waverley Park with my counterpart the member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith, MP.

On Anzac Day I joined around 1,500 people—a record number—gathered at the new North Bondi War Memorial, at the base of the Returned and Services League of Australia, North Bondi Sub-Branch, for the dawn service. This was the first year the club had commemorated Anzac Day with their fitting new memorial in place. On that picture-perfect autumn morning the crowd turned out in force to take part in the moving dawn service, just steps from the shoreline of Bondi Beach, with many standing on the sand. It was a fitting symbol for all those gathered of the first landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula 97 years ago. That record crowd gathered on the beach to remember our brothers and sisters who made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us. I was again joined by my Federal counterpart, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP and the Mayor of Waverley, Councillor John Wakefield. The service was ably led by David Sims, the club's vice-president, and Father Neil Brown read the blessings. Guest speaker Air Vice Marshal Bob Treloar made a stirring address to all of those gathered that morning. The Royal Australian Navy catafalque party from HMAS *Watson*, located in my electorate of Vaucluse, was mounted during the service.

It was an honour and very stirring being among the crowd that morning to remember those who have served, and those who continue to serve, in the defence of our country and allies. I thank the North Bondi RSL Sub-Branch, Waverley Council, and the Rose Bay RSL Sub-Branch for extending invitations to me, and for organising such fitting commemorations for our local community. We had cause to remember so much that day, including the brave sacrifices that were made for our broader community and allies. Finally, I look forward to attending the Russian Branch of the New South Wales Association of Jewish Ex-Service Men and Women Memorial Service for Victory Day to be held on Wednesday 9 May to commemorate the sixty-seventh anniversary of the victory in World War II. This service is to be jointly hosted by the Russian Branch, Waverley Council, the Russian-speaking Association and the Russian weekly newspaper *Horizon*. Lest we forget. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

GRAFTON RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [5.52 p.m.]: Tonight I acknowledge the wonderful contribution that the Grafton Relay for Life has made to the New South Wales Cancer Council since the early 2000s, in particular the contribution it made on 31 March last. On the last Saturday in March I was astounded by the turnout at McKittrick Park in South Grafton, especially when it had been raining through the week and the weather on the day was threatening. But that did not deter 107 teams from nominating and 1,408 Graftonians from participating. To put it into perspective, Grafton has a population of about 18,500 people and the total of those participating in that event was 7.5 per cent of the city's population. In any circumstances that is a remarkable turnout and a testament to the dedication and generosity of the Grafton community.

It was a day to remember loved ones who had lost their battle with cancer, celebrate with those who had cheated cancer, and provide support for those who are battling the disease. Whilst the day started out with rain clouds, it turned out to be a hot afternoon. The mood at McKittrick Park complemented the weather: it was joyful and charged with excitement. Teams were dressed in all manner of weird and wonderful costumes and they had a marvellous time as they chatted and joked around the course. But the serious side of the Relay for Life is the reason behind it. Every five minutes another Australian is diagnosed with cancer. While survival rates are improving every day, cancer remains a leading cause of death. That is why it is so important that we raise funds to fight cancer.

Every dollar raised at Relay For Life helps the Cancer Council to help the people living on the far North Coast who are suffering from cancer. Cancer Council NSW is 96 per cent community funded. This year in the far North Coast region more than 1,930 people will be diagnosed with cancer and more than 660 people will die from the disease. Last year 143 cancer patients in the region were provided with financial assistance to relieve them of the high costs associated with treatment and care. This year 590 cancer patients were taken almost 60,000 kilometres to hospital appointments in the region using Cancer Council NSW transport and home support services. Last year 525 people affected by cancer across the region received free, confidential information and support from cancer health professionals through the Cancer Council Helpline.

I sincerely commend the Grafton Relay For Life committee for running such a successful event, which raised \$132,178—over double the amount raised in 2010 and with double the number of teams participating. Volunteering and community participation are alive and well in Grafton. Grafton Relay for Life has been so successful because of the hard work of its committee. Rosemary Munro is the chair of the committee and Debbie Brooks, Graeme Hicks, Kay Strong, Brenda Howe, Judy O'Keeffe, Leila Thompson, Kathy Smidt, Narelle Redhouse, Michael Sexton, Elaine Stevenson, Denise and Cec Hyde, Denise Barnier, Vorna Cooper, Roger Green and Gail Brotherson are the other dedicated committee members who have made the Grafton Relay for Life such a success over a long period. I commend them for the work they have done for the local community and the Cancer Council of NSW.

FREE-RANGE EGG PROTECTION

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [5.56 p.m.]: Tonight I speak on an important issue to my electorate and New South Wales. Currently no legislated definition of "free-range" egg production systems exists in New South Wales. Standards vary drastically and it is difficult for consumers to know what standard they are buying when they purchase "free-range". It is not good for consumers, free-range farmers or animal welfare. This is increasingly important as the demand for free-range eggs grows. In 2010-11 free-range eggs made up 28.4 per cent of the national market in volume and 40.7 per cent in value. Last year the free-range egg industry made nearly \$200 million in retail sales.

The main industry body is the Australian Egg Corporation Ltd, which represents a significant number of egg producers. The Greens are concerned that the board is stacked with representatives from the large industrial producers—namely, Pace, Sunny Queen and Farm Pride—that have a commercial interest in intensive farm operations and in using the term "free-range" as a marketing tool. I have been contacted by a number of constituents who are appalled that the Australian Egg Corporation plans to allow "free-range" eggs to be produced by hens living in conditions of two birds per square metre. The Australian Egg Corporation is seeking a model code of practice to allow for 20,000 laying hens per hectare. Increasing free-range stocking densities from 1,500 to 20,000 birds per hectare completely strips the term "free-range" of any meaning. I note that Liberal Michael Pingelly has introduced a bill into the South Australian lower House to allow stocking levels of 1,500 chickens per hectare, and The Greens are moving a similar bill in the upper House.

In pushing for these increases the Australian Egg Corporation is turning its back on consumers and free-range farmers in favour of boosting profits for large-scale producers. Cramming 20,000 birds into one hectare is not free-range. Ethical consumers who choose "free-range" are shocked to learn that the term can be used to describe eggs produced in such conditions. Self-regulation of free-range eggs has failed. We need a legislated definition that protects the rights of ethical consumers and genuine free-range farmers. The Greens introduced the Truth in Labelling (Free-range Eggs) Bill 2011 into the New South Wales upper House to address these issues. That bill has passed the upper House and I have now introduced it into this House.

The bill aims to end the large-scale deception of ethical consumers who choose to buy free-range with the understanding that it means the hens have been treated humanely. The bill asserts the rights of consumers to say that they do not want to be part of the caged bird industry and that intense producers do not have the right to mislead consumers or to unfairly compete with genuine free-range producers. Importantly, the bill protects genuine free-range producers, allowing them to market their products without the unfair competition currently being seen from producers who misleadingly label their products as "free-range" while producing them more cheaply due to highly intensive production and lower animal welfare standards.

The bill will encourage the growth of a genuine free-range egg industry that will meet the expectations of ethical consumers and protect producers. The proposed legislation will achieve these objectives by creating a legislative definition of free-range egg production systems that facilitate the natural behaviour patterns of hens, including the number of hens allowed to be kept in a certain area, surgical procedures and housing conditions. The legislation will enforce labelling requirements for free-range, barn-laid and cage eggs. The bill stipulates that for their eggs to fall within the definition of "free-range" producers must ensure that their laying fowls have certain requirements, including access to a range area; density of hens per hectare; available shade, shelter and vegetation in a range area; stocking density within a shed; exposure to natural sunlight and/or artificial light; availability of natural food; and treatment. A genuine free-range egg industry can be achieved only with a legislated labelling regime.

On Monday 7 May I will host a public meeting on this issue at Leichhardt Town Hall. I will be joined by Lee McCosker of Human Choice, my Greens colleague Dr John Kaye and Jodie Stewart, a local retailer and President of the Balmain-Rozelle Chamber of Commerce. I recognise and thank upper House Greens member

Dr John Kaye, Animals Australia, Animal Liberation, the Humane Society International and *Choice* for defending consumers and supporting the efforts surrounding the truth-in-labelling campaign. This issue goes to the heart of what many consumers face when they go to the supermarket and want to choose free-range eggs. Consumers are being misled. The South Australian Liberals, coalition parties around the country, The Greens, *Choice* and animal welfare organisations have been saying that 20,000 hens per hectare is not free range. I encourage the Government to support the bill when it reaches this House. I look forward to working with the Government and the Minister to make sure that this critical measure for a humane and effective free-range egg industry that protects consumers and genuine producers is passed into law in this State.

THE JUNCTION WORKS

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [6.01 p.m.]: Recently I had the opportunity to meet with Chris Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, and Marilyn Soulsby, General Manager Services, of The Junction Works, which is a wonderful organisation that offers many projects and opportunities in the Macquarie Fields electorate. This not-for-profit community-based organisation has served south-west Sydney for 25 years. Its mission statement, "Creating new possibilities in people's lives", helps it to focus on delivering creative and enriching community services and programs designed to reduce the disadvantaged in marginalised communities. The Junction Works supports various groups: people with disability, young people at risk, the Aboriginal community, and people suffering distress and hardship. The Junction Works operates from the Glenquarie Neighbourhood Centre in the electorate and provides a magnificent service to the local people.

The Junction Works has about 120 staff working across disability services and youth services and in community engagement. Its main target group is young adults who have left school. The Junction Works has a magnificent understanding of the maze of available disability services that it passes on to families of young school leavers. I first came across The Junction Works a few years ago and regularly attend its monthly community lunches held at the Macquarie Fields Community Centre. Many people provide assistance to ensure the success of those lunches, including local residents, businesses, students from James Meehan High School and many Junction Works clients, such as those with a disability. I thank the Rotary Club of Ingleburn for providing financial support over the past two years to ensure the continuation of these vital community services.

From 1987 the Junction Works operated out of the Leppington caravan, park providing youth services and programs for young people at risk. Today The Junction Works operates 14 sites across south-west Sydney providing disability, community, youth and children's services. It is the largest provider of disability day programs in the Macquarie Fields electorate. Demand for its services has required The Junction Works to plan the construction of a new community service centre at Austral. This new \$3 million centre will result in a significant increase in disability services and programs for existing and new clients, including the expansion of its Sensory Cooking and Catering Program and the SPARK experience, which I shall talk more about shortly. The land was purchased in September 2011.

The Junction Works is now searching for a builder. SPARK is a leading industry initiative developed by The Junction Works that utilises a collection of programs, mediums and community partnerships to enhance participation and access to creative, community-based activities for adults with intellectual or complex disabilities. Many adults with intellectual disability experience exclusion from cultural and arts-based experiences, either as audience members or performers, due to limitations in their abilities. In 2004 the SPARK festival commenced as a three-day creative arts festival for adults with intellectual disability. It is open to people living in New South Wales aged over 16 years who have a disability and who are accompanied by a carer. The extraordinary success of the festival, in conjunction with changes to service delivery, means that SPARK needs to be broadened beyond the confines of a festival.

Today SPARK incorporates not only its annual festival but also a comprehensive program for adults with intellectual disability to be involved in the arts as performers, artists or workers. Arts-based opportunities under the SPARK experience include Flamenco and hip-hop dancing, visual arts, comic performance, a signing choir and the Junction All Stars Choir. A critical aspect of SPARK is its public exhibition through performances, concerts, art exhibitions and catering events, which help enormously in engaging people with disability in the community. This year funding is being sought from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care to ensure the festival continues. I urge my Government colleagues to ensure the ongoing viability of the SPARK festival by providing the supplementary funding that The Junction Works seeks. This will enable over 800 people with disabilities to benefit from SPARK. I congratulate The Junction Works on its silver anniversary and on its great work.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): I have The Junction Works art in my office. It is a great organisation.

YOUTH SOLUTIONS CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [6.07 p.m.], by leave: On Thursday 19 April 2012 I attended the launch of the Youth Solutions "Give Us a Hand—WRECKreational drug project ... don't let them wreck your night!" This project, created by the Youth Advisory Committee, is an innovative online campaign designed to educate and enlist support. The campaign is kindly funded by the IMB Community Foundation. The slogan "WRECKreactional drugs ... don't let them wreck your night!" was selected to highlight the harm caused to young people by misnamed recreational drugs. The Youth Advisory Group identified that recreational drugs are a problem for youth that needed to be addressed. One has only to read the mass media to see the adverse impact of these drugs on our community.

The Youth Advisory Group designed a campaign to speak and engage with youth where youth like to talk: on Facebook. I am sure some members of Parliament know about Facebook. The "Give Us a Hand—WRECKreational drugs ... don't let them wreck your night!" campaign, invites everyone, youth and those a bit older but still young at heart, to help spread this message by creating a virtual hand and posting it to Facebook or emailing it to friends. This can be done by logging onto the website *giveusahand.org.au* or *youthsolutions.com.au*. On the website people will have the opportunity to select a virtual hand and decorate it with symbols, rings, colour and patterns. The supporter then posts their hand onto Facebook. They can share the hand and the site with others.

More than 150 people have already joined the Give us a Hand campaign. I know the team is hoping to reach 500 by the end of this month. The Give us a Hand site contains important information relating to the harmful impacts of "WRECKreational" drugs and links to other support services. I have posted a hand. I have given a hand to the "WRECKreational Drugs...don't let them wreck your night!" campaign. I have posted it on Facebook. I invite members to look up Bryan Doyle, MP, on Facebook. I know members can do it. Well done to the Youth Advisory Group, some of the best of the opals of the south-west—Robert Barrie, Francis McAleese, Callum Cherrett, Shayley Venn, Stephanie Blaker, Tamika Briggs, Aaron Ellis, Tegan Hudson, Casey Green, Emily Elliott and Monique Favelle.

This is just one of the many great works in Macarthur by Youth Solutions. Its vision is to support young people to make safer life choices to achieve their full potential. It achieves this by creating solutions with young people, families and the community to promote positive life outcomes and to prevent harmful drug use. Its underlying philosophies include harm minimisation; strategies that promote no drug use, or prevent or delay transition to further use; youth participation, which acknowledges that young people must be directly involved in the identification of the drug-related concern and strategies to address it; and a whole-of-community approach, recognising that we all have a responsibility to support our community.

The board and staff contain some of the best of the opals of the south-west, including Tony Ross, the President; Jodie Dench, Vice President; Peter Campbell, Treasurer; Geraldine Dean, the hardworking chief executive officer; and board members Robert Elliott, Aaron Ellis, Geoff Ellis, Marty Farrar, JP, Kylie Powell, Emma Macfarlane and Damon May, and staff members Dan Lea, Kate Angelucci, Corin Boughton, Sue Willoughby, Shannon McEwan and Brooke Manzoine. I invite everyone to support this worthy cause by Youth Solutions: "Give us a Hand—WRECKreational Drugs...don't let them wreck your night!" Go onto the website, give it a hand and show that you also support it.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.12 p.m. until
Tuesday 8 May 2012 at 12 noon.**
