

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 8 May 2012

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12 noon.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JOHN JAMES MUIR

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [12.05 p.m.]: Last week many members of this House spoke of the Anzac Day services they attended in their electorates. Today I will focus my statement on one man. I draw the attention of the House to the lifelong contribution of John James Muir to the Australian Armed Forces based in the Penrith electorate and surrounding areas. Mr Muir's career began in 1936 at the age of 18 when at the earliest available opportunity he enrolled with the Citizens Military Force, 5th Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers. He supported his efforts with the Citizens Military Force as an apprentice ship's plumber at Mort's Dock and Engineering Company in Balmain. In 1942 he expanded his commitment to Australia's defence by transferring to the 2nd Australian Imperial Force at a time during World War II when Australia's military engagements in the Pacific were at their most tense.

John worked his way through the ranks to become staff sergeant in charge of transport in Papua New Guinea in 1943. He later served in Bougainville and continued his wartime service until he was demobilised in 1946. At the conclusion of his active service he became heavily involved in the Returned and Services League, the National Servicemen's Association, or Nashos, and a number of local organisations that support people involved in the Australian Armed Forces. John will be remembered most fondly in the Penrith region for his contribution to the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment, the oldest continually operating engineer unit in the Australian Army, and the unit in which John served prior to and during World War II.

John is described by those who engaged with him as someone who had a passion for the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment. John Muir researched and compiled a history of the unit for the benefit of incoming commanding officers and regimental sergeant majors. Mr Muir spent his time mentoring and supporting soldiers and was always able to provide an invaluable level of insight into and context about the operations of the regiment. Harry Morfoot, current President of Penrith City National Servicemen's Association, said, "I don't think there's anyone who knows him who can speak highly enough of him." On Anzac Day members of the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment said to me that Mr Muir was always available to provide support to new soldiers of the regiment. It was said that he had passion and a commitment to service, and that he epitomised the ideals of mateship, loyalty and patriotism.

John demonstrated those ideals to every new soldier who came through the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment unit based in Penrith. John recently passed away and the members of the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment unit shared the deep emotion of the family during this Anzac Day, given his involvement with them over such a long time. John is survived by his loving family—his wife, June, his brother, Jean, his children, John and Karen, and his grandchildren, Shane, James and David. He will be sorely missed by those who knew him as a friendly and hardworking family member, a soldier and a supporter of the Australian Armed Forces. He will be missed by the many people who love him and most definitely by the Penrith community.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.10 p.m.]: I thank the member for Penrith for drawing to the attention of the House the contribution of John

James Muir in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force during the Second World War and his support for the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment unit at Penrith. On behalf of the Government I acknowledge John Muir's service to our country and I wish his family well.

TRIBUTE TO CONSTABLE DAVID ANDREW CARTY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.11 p.m.]: On 18 April 2012 Fairfield police station held a 15-year memorial service for the late Constable David Carty. The memorial was to be held at David Carty Reserve but due to the torrential rain it was held at Fairfield police station. Besides the Fairfield memorial, a memorial was held also at the Carty family property in Parkes where Lachlan Local Area Commander Robert Ryan and local police officers paid their respects, together with the Carty family. The memorial at Fairfield was attended by the police commissioner, assistant commissioners, police Minister and local and State government representatives. Local fire, ambulance and State Emergency Service representatives paid their respects on this solemn occasion. Also present were the emergency response officers who, in the words of Superintendent Peter Lennon, moved heaven and earth to save this officer's life.

Inspector Brendan McMahon was the official master of ceremonies, with Commissioner Andrew Scipione offering kind and comforting words to the entire community. Superintendent Peter Lennon brought home the message of the loss to the community of David Carty and how to this day, so many years later, people in Fairfield still feel the pain. Father Paul O'Donoghue offered blessings and prayers to the gathering. Following the prayers a wreath-laying ceremony took place. It was at that point that emotion set in and not a dry eye could be seen in the gathering. Many of those who were present did not know David but they had grieved his loss for years. I recall that David's death in 1997 was a shock to the entire community. So brutal was his death that churches around Fairfield held masses and services in his memory. At that time I was teaching at Patrician Brothers College, Fairfield, and I remember witnessing the grief that beset the community. Students and teachers held prayer services following David's death. Sitting at the memorial service gave me the empty feeling that Fairfield experienced in 1997. I can only imagine what it was like for David's work colleagues and especially for his family.

David Carty was a country boy who came to Sydney to fulfil his dream of becoming a police officer. He joined the NSW Police Force on 20 February 1994, was sworn in as a probationary constable in August 1994 and began working at Liverpool. On 20 November 1994 Constable Carty was transferred to Fairfield and quickly established himself in the Fairfield Local Area Command and in the community as a hardworking police officer. On 17 April 1997, whilst on a daily foot patrol, David and other police officers had reason to speak to a number of people on a local Fairfield street. Later that evening, whilst off duty, Constable Carty and his colleagues attended the Cambridge Tavern. At about 2.10 a.m., as he was leaving the tavern, David was set upon by a number of offenders, including some of those he had spoken to earlier that day. Constable David Carty was stabbed to death by his attackers. Senior Constable Michelle Auld also was seriously assaulted whilst giving David assistance.

Early that morning a piece of Fairfield was taken away. We will never forget David Carty. As a community we keep his memory alive by having a reserve named in his honour—the David Carty Reserve. There are plans in the Fairfield community to include a memorial garden in the reserve, to create a place where the community can offer prayers and thanks to the late Constable David Carty and reflect on the many sacrifices that he ultimately made as a result of his vocation as a police officer. David was never given a chance to marry, to have children and to experience what so many of us take for granted. What we as legislators can do is to ensure that our police are given the powers and support they need not only to keep the community safe but also to keep uniformed officers safe in the line of duty. Constable David Carty will never be forgotten by Fairfield.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.15 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to thank the member for Fairfield for reminding us of the terrible murder of David Carty. I am sure that all members and the people of New South Wales remember the despicable murder that took place late at night in a car park outside licensed premises when David Carty was off duty. David Carty's father, John Carty, is a constituent of the member for Dubbo who is in the Chamber. I was interested to hear the member for Fairfield mention the David Carty memorial that is to be established in the Fairfield reserve—a nice tribute to a man whose life was cut short by a most heinous crime.

TRUNDLE

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.16 p.m.]: Today I recognise and pay special tribute to Trundle, one of the communities in my electorate of Dubbo, which has been the subject of a

recent documentary because of its tree-change project. I am not alone in being proud of my electorate. Andrew Denton and his production team included this initiative in an ABC six-part series entitled *Country Town Rescue* which demonstrated to a wide national audience that many communities throughout regional New South Wales have population, demographic and agricultural statistics that are similar to those in Trundle. Trundle has a community of over 300 people, relies heavily on agriculture and on the nearby Northparkes mine as a key employer, and as such is required to be resilient.

In my former role as a police officer I served throughout New South Wales and worked in many fine local communities but I believe Trundle has an outstanding community that epitomises what the Liberal-Nationals Coalition pledged at the last State election—to give communities in New South Wales a hand up rather than a handout. This Government has as its goals electorate ownership, decision-making at the local level and other meritorious initiatives. I am proud to be part of a Government that has started its long journey towards achieving those goals. The Trundle community, even with its small population, celebrates its successes and, despite adversity such as bad weather or economic downturn, picks itself up by the bootstraps.

Recently I had the pleasure of attending Trundle Hotel's 100th Year celebration. This is not just about the hotel as I acknowledge that many hotels throughout the State are of a similar age; it is also about community involvement. The hotel is an important institution as there is only one hotel in town and it is an important meeting and gathering place for community members. It supports the recently re-formed Trundle rugby league team, affectionately known as the Sunflowers, although this year it has taken on the nickname of the Boomers following a hiatus when there were insufficient men to play the game. Recently my wife, Toni, and I celebrated one of the most enjoyable nights in a long time. We were surrounded by people with great aspirations and with amazing resilience—a wonderful example to the community's younger generation which I am pleased to say is growing, which is a positive sign for the future.

Young people in the community are seeing their parents actively engaged in many things, like the Trundle 100th Year celebrations on Saturday night. Also in the tree-change program, which was so well documented by Andrew Denton and his team, is a move by the community to pick itself up by the bootstraps and introduce the Abba Festival, which will take place in July. Trundle sits within the local government area of Parkes. As I have spoken about in the House, and as everyone well knows, Parkes has the Elvis Festival. Trundle, not to be outdone, is having its inaugural Abba Festival in July. I cannot wait: my wife is a tragic Abba fan so no doubt I will be accompanied by my wife. I am sure many members of this House have sung along to some of the wonderful Abba tunes.

Mr Bryan Doyle: You look a bit like Björn.

Mr TROY GRANT: I note that interjection of the member for Campbelltown about my likeness to an Abba member. However, nobody would be in favour of seeing me in a jumpsuit, I am sure. I have brought to the attention of the House previous other initiatives, such as the Bush Tucker Day, which occurs in September, and the Trundle Light Horse Troop. Trundle is just a great community. I urge everybody to get out to the area and show their appreciation of the efforts being made by small communities to look after themselves and contribute to the wider economies of the regions and our State. I take my hat off to the Trundle community as a whole.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.21 p.m.]: It is very uplifting to hear the member for Dubbo talk about the community of Trundle and the Trundle 100th Year celebrations that he recently attended. Being a keen Elvis fan, and to a lesser extent an Abba fan, I am quite interested to hear that in July Trundle will commence its Abba Festival. I hope that it is just as successful for Trundle as the Elvis Festival has been for Parkes. The resilience of these communities is identified in these initiatives; that is true right across New South Wales. It is heart-warming to see so many, whatever the circumstances—flood, fire or whatever—banding together to make sure they do the best they can for their communities.

NOWRA FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [12.22 p.m.]: Talk about great communities: it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the efforts of a wonderful group of people in my electorate of South Coast, the Nowra Family Support Service. I acknowledge the extraordinary service that the workers of that Family Support Service provide for a community of people, many of whom are in great need and really appreciate the efforts of the Nowra Family Support Service. This service has been operating for a long time under the stewardship and leadership of Pam Arnold, a former councillor of Shoalhaven City Council.

It provides a variety of services, including playgroups, family support workers, parenting education group programs, and home visitations in towns and villages up and down the South Coast electorate. It also offers an excellent outreach service in Ulladulla.

Through the support service's Milton Ulladulla coordinator, Laurece Keith, residents of the southern Shoalhaven region are able to seek support through the Family Support team. In fact Laurece Keith, who I know very well, recently has been co-facilitating a men's group at Milton Ulladulla Family Support with Kevin Percival from Anglicare called Managing Strong Emotions, which I understand is going extremely well. The Support Service team has been overwhelmed with demand for its services over a long period. Client outcomes achieved in the past have been impressive indeed.

The reason I speak today is that recently I received correspondence from Family Support clients who recently have been assisted and counselled by Laurece Keith and her team in Milton Ulladulla. The stories of these clients highlight not only the desperate situation that the families found themselves in but also the wonderful support that they received from the Family Support team. I take this opportunity to share with the House the stories of some of those clients, all of whom have acknowledged the hardworking efforts of the Family Support team. I will be conveying this correspondence to the Family Support Service. I quote from the correspondence from one of the clients:

My husband and I live in Narrawallee and have two children. Up until about 12 months ago we had a very happy and healthy household.

During last year [my son] and I started on a downward spiral of actions and reactions, until we had reached a point of consistent emotional turmoil. [My son's] behaviour and my reaction to his behaviour had slowly deteriorated until neither of us was getting what we wanted and were continually butting heads in lengthy time-wasting stand-offs.

After a particularly upsetting morning (of trying to get out the door dressed with homework done) I rang Laurece Keith, desperately seeking some advice on how to fix this recurring situation.

Laurece immediately booked me into the 1-2-3 Magic sessions which had just started at the Green Street premises. A couple of days after my initial phone call I attended the first session and found the video to be extremely relevant and helpful. I was also offered a one-on-one counselling session immediately afterward to discuss the particulars of our situation and the specific application of 1-2-3 Magic in our family.

I really feel like Laurece helped me solve the problems of the world that day! I arrived a blubbing mess—harbouring feelings of failure as a mother, guilt about my constant nagging and yelling, resentment towards [my son] for spoiling the harmony of our house and feeling like I had been worn down to a point where I had no control.

I can't speak highly enough of the service that is offered by Laurece at Ulladulla Family Support. She provided an open door, a kindly ear and offers endless practical suggestions and strategies on how to best solve the family problems.

Another Family Support client notes the outcomes the family achieved through services that Family Support provides at the local TAFE:

On Tuesdays at TAFE I am learning "interpersonal community skills – conduct a project with a mentor" along with other lessons on other days. WOW. Words fail me to explain how this course changed my life in 2011 and part of 2012. I met people that I haven't met in my lifetime; you will all be friends for life.

Please enjoy the course like I did and I promise you will not regret the time here with Sharon and Jody and feedback from you all is important.

I have been to so many courses in my life and found this one was of extreme value to me for the rest of my life.

I again wish to congratulate Pam Arnold and Laurece Keith for the work that they have done over a very long time for families, many in circumstances of desperate need. I particularly acknowledge the work of Laurece Keith and her two family caseworkers Jody Quinell and Sharon Rowen for the tremendous job they do. I had great pleasure in writing to the Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Pru Goward, to convey these two pieces of correspondence that I received. I would like to acknowledge generally that these groups provide wonderful services in all our electorates. Often, these services are undervalued. We should all acknowledge the work that these people do. Often, they are quietly committed to their work; I know that in my electorate they are quietly committed to the work they do every day, without a great deal done to highlight their efforts, as I have done today. I thank you, Mr Acting-Speaker, for listening to my contributions on the Nowra Family Support Service.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for South Coast, and the Speaker of the House.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.27 p.m.]: It is not so common to hear a speech like the one just made by the member for South Coast: the realities of relations within families and the disputation and disruption that can occur. It is therefore important to recognise the Nowra Family Support Service and the wonderful work that it is doing. I was very interested to hear the member for South Coast talk about 1-2-3 Magic. As it turns out, the fellow in charge of 1-2-3 Magic is a constituent of mine. He is very keen to ensure that 1-2-3 Magic comes more within the perspective of State government. I am sure Minister Pru Goward will take on board the correspondence that the member read to the House today.

ILLAWARRA MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [12.28 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about recent activities staged in the Illawarra region in conjunction with May Day celebrations, which many unionists from the electorate of Shellharbour attended. On Friday 4 March 2012 approximately 200 unionists and activists celebrated yet another May Day toast at the Hellenic Club in Figtree. And what a great night it was. The recent win of the Australian Services Union on pay equity was recognised; it was a great win for the labour movement as a whole, and we are very happy about that. We heard four songs from the Illawarra Union Singers, the first called *Let's Pretend*, followed by other great songs such as *Imagine*, *The Internationale*, and my personal favourite, *Solidarity Forever*.

May Day is a day when thousands of workers and unionists gather together to mark International Workers Day. May Day is now in its 118th year. It is a day when the workers' wins, struggles and efforts to achieve better deals for workers are highlighted. It is a day to pay tribute to those who struggled for working conditions to be improved. It is a day on which we remember our forefathers who lost their lives to ensure that we have today better working conditions, respect and dignity in the workplace. May Day celebrations are about commemorating these many victories but are now also about bringing people much closer together for the fights that are coming.

The theme this year was the workers' right to strike, which is a basic human right. We have seen the O'Farrell Government's grossly unfair industrial relations changes. We have seen 40,000 public sector workers, many from my electorate of Shellharbour, and other unions protest against this extreme right-wing, ideologically driven Government, which ripped away the independent umpire—the conciliation and arbitration process—leaving workers with nowhere to go. We heard on Friday night stories from some of the people in my electorate and in the electorate of Wollongong about how these moves have affected them and their families. We have seen an eleven-fold increase in fines from, \$10,000 to \$110,000 per day, in an attempt to crush unions. Now the Government wants to change the Industrial Relations Act to allow employees to "choose" which union they join. This is an outrageous attack on unions and workers.

We had much to talk about on May Day Toast, particularly Barry O'Farrell and his Government, who should stand condemned for their gutless attack on families and their conditions of employment. I highlight that a recent poll commissioned by Unions NSW found that 78.65 per cent of respondents do not believe the O'Farrell Government has a mandate to remove the rights of nurses, ambulance officers, teachers, firefighters and prison officers. For many, May Day is a day of celebration, tradition and pride. It is a day of solidarity. For the benefit of members opposite, solidarity means a community of interests and responsibility and circumstantial adhesion to another's cause. I conclude with a short verse from *Solidarity Forever* written by Ralph Chaplin in 1914; it took him until 1915 to complete it. I will not go into the history of the verse—as much as I would like to because maybe those opposite might learn something. It states:

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite,
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might?
Is there anything left to us but to organise and fight?
For the union makes us strong.

This is the very reason those people attended May Day celebrations and the reason that so many people in New South Wales still march every May Day. It is the very reason they marched to protest against the O'Farrell Government and its right-wing conservative opposition to workers.

WERRIS CREEK

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [12.33 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to inform the House and update my parliamentary colleagues about a great town in the Tamworth electorate, the prosperous town of

Werris Creek, the first railway town in Australia. The wonderful town of Werris Creek has a population of nearly 1,500 and is famous for its railways and the Werris Creek Magpies in group 4 of the New South Wales Country Rugby League competition. It is a sensational town and it produces some pretty good footballers. The Werris Creek station building was designed by the famed New South Wales railway engineer John Whitton, and a major feature is the Australian Railway Monument, which is located at the station.

Part of the station building has been opened as a railway museum. The display depicts the history of Werris Creek as the first railway town in Australia from the age of steam to the modern-day diesel. It is still served by daily CountryLink Xplorer services from Sydney to all points north and west. The Australian Railway Monument and Rail Journeys Museum is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation and is a memorial to those who lost their lives on the railway. This museum displays the untold story of the people of the railway. This theme is believed to be unique in the Australian context and is based on the fact that Werris Creek is the first and last railway town in New South Wales.

The monument is a memorial for family and friends alike of deceased workers; others can remember and honour the contribution by those railway men and women who lost their lives in the course of their work. It doubles as an amphitheatre capable of seating 300. The wonderful volunteers are ex-railway workers, spouses of ex-railway workers and community members. They are happy to share their knowledge of the history of the railways, allowing visitors to truly embark upon a journey through the past days of rail as seen through the eyes of those who lived them. I recently went to the museum and can thoroughly recommend it. As members can imagine, with the unrivalled knowledge of the volunteers the guided tours are unique and something visitors will never forget.

To complement and authenticate this attraction, the museum and the monument are located at the original 1880s railway station. The museum is housed in what used to be the railway refreshment room while the monument is situated on the adjacent grounds. Recently there was some great news for Werris Creek and the station—funding of \$20,000 from the Community Building Partnership Program, which will go towards the purchase and construction of a lift for the disabled. The Australian railway museum in Werris Creek will benefit from this project as it will allow further exhibition space to be utilised upstairs on the second level and also enable aged and disabled persons to access this space, which they were previously unable to do. Currently there is no disabled access to the upstairs section of the railway museum, which is used for offices, storage and exhibition space.

Many of the volunteers at the museum are retired railway workers and their partners are senior citizens. They find it increasingly difficult to climb the stairs each day. The lift for the disabled will be most welcome. Werris Creek is indeed a fantastic town with a thriving spirit. It lies within the Liverpool Plains Shire Council local government area and the council has undertaken many building infrastructure projects in the past, including construction of the Werris Creek library, the Royal cinema, the works depot and the visitor information centre. Work on a brand-new Werris Creek multipurpose health service is currently under construction with State and Federal Government funding. This is a thriving community that is going ahead in leaps and bounds. I look forward to continuing to help and support the great people of Werris Creek. I congratulate the enthusiastic volunteers at the Australian railway museum and look forward to commissioning the lift for the disabled at this wonderful facility.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.38 p.m.]: I thank the member for Tamworth for drawing our attention to Werris Creek, a famous railway town, and to the museum there. The project to improve access to the upper floor of the museum using Community Building Partnership Program funding is very worthwhile. It seems we are all connected in this place because the member for Campbelltown just told me that his grandfather, Jack Doyle, owned Doyle's Railway Hotel in Werris Creek all those years ago. I thank the member for Tamworth for again drawing attention to one of the towns in his electorate. I think he has done that three times recently and we appreciate his contribution.

URBAN RENEWAL

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [12.39 p.m.]: Urban renewal is vital to meet Sydney's housing needs in the face of rapid population growth. By 2031, Sydney will need to provide an extra 1.1 million dwellings. In 2010 a Department of Planning report found that increasing development in greenfield areas in preference to city urban renewal will have a net cost to government of \$5 billion. Development on the city fringe also impacts on our food basin through loss of arable land and on native vegetation and biodiversity. The New South Wales

Government target for the City of Sydney is 61,000 new homes by 2036. In 2008 the City of Sydney endorsed a housing target as part of our Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan, and our new city-wide planning controls will provide about 85 per cent of the floor space needed to meet our target over its five- to 10-year life. The City of Sydney council is meeting these housing targets by focusing responsible development in former industrial sites such as Ashmore, Green Square, Harold Park and the Carlton United Brewery site, while protecting historic suburbs such as Chippendale, Surry Hills, Redfern, Glebe, Erskineville and Alexandria. Mr Acting-Speaker, perhaps members could hold their conversations outside the Chamber.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Sydney has the call.

Ms CLOVER MOORE: Done well, with good design and essential infrastructure—especially transport, community facilities and open space—urban renewal can provide for liveable and sustainable communities. Recently demolition began on the Royal South Sydney Hospital to allow development of the Green Square urban renewal site, which will provide 22,000 jobs and new homes for more than 40,000 residents. The City of Sydney council is planning to provide vital community infrastructure at Green Square, including a community hall, a theatre, a community centre, a library, public meeting rooms, artists' studios and a park. Trigeneration will enable Green Square to be a low-carbon precinct and filtered stormwater will flush toilets and water parks and gardens. Waste and recycling will be sent to a central collection depot through a network of pipes. But the regional road network will not be able to accommodate increased traffic from the urban renewal project because the project is located between the global city, the airport and the port. There is an urgent need to connect Green Square to the planned city light rail network.

The Ashmore precinct in Erskineville is a 17-hectare site that is changing from a light industrial zone to residential. Its urban renewal will provide 3,200 new homes, public open space and local services for the inner city. In 2010 the Department of Planning directed the City of Sydney to dramatically increase the height and density of the development from a planned nine storeys to 19 storeys. Outraged by this direction and after consulting with an equally angry community, the council undertook technical studies, which recommended that the height limits be scaled back from 19 storeys to the previous maximum of nine storeys. The City of Sydney council recently put on exhibition a development control plan that reflects our preferred height and density limits—limits that I am very pleased to say are supported by the new Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. The development control plan will deliver new local streets, a small supermarket, a mix of new housing, bicycle lanes and 15,000 square metres of open space, including a central park of 7,400 square metres.

The City of Sydney worked with the community to prepare controls for Harold Park, which balances the need for new sustainable housing with significant public benefits. The redevelopment will include community facilities, affordable housing and restoration of the historic tram sheds. Thirty-five per cent of the site, or 3.8 hectares, will be converted from private open space to public open space—seven times the size of Glebe's Foley Park. The proposal will create 1,250 homes, about 500 jobs and almost two kilometres of cycleways. New units will meet higher energy and water efficiency targets. The Ashmore and Harold Park sites have access to public transport, but residents say buses and trains are already full during peak periods and local road networks are at capacity. The New South Wales Government sets housing targets and is responsible for transport infrastructure; it has a responsibility to ensure increased capacity on public transport in redevelopment areas.

In its recent submission to the NSW Planning System Review, the City of Sydney council advocated for better integration between land use and transport planning, and the need for firm commitments to transport where population density is increased. Urban renewal areas provide the State Government with high revenue through stamp duty, part of which should be reinvested back into areas to provide fast, efficient and reliable mass transit for new and existing residents, as well as open space and other community benefits. On behalf of the people of Glebe and Erskineville, I welcome the response to my request by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that he will work with the Minister for Transport to address the transport needs of the Harold Park and Ashmore developments. I call on the Government to provide a similar commitment for the 40,000 residents and 22,000 workers coming to Green Square and to urgently improve integration between land use and transport planning, particularly where population density is to increase and particularly in light of the failures of the previous Government.

GOING OFF AT THE SWAMP FAMILY FESTIVAL

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [12.44 p.m.]: Today I speak about the Going Off At The Swamp—more commonly referred to locally as "GOATS"—Family Festival. The festival is an initiative of the

San Remo Neighbourhood Centre and is the brainchild of Jillian Hogan, better known throughout the community as "Mother Goat". The aim of the festival is to celebrate the talents of young people and to bring together youth and families for an enjoyable day out. The decision to combine young people and families was integral from the very first event. Young people are sometimes perceived as being separate from families and community rather than being part of a family and integral to community life. The three aspects of supporting young people's talents—a drug- and alcohol-free environment that includes families and the community in the mix—are the foundations that have been built upon and have led to the growth and success of the GOATS Family Festival over 14 years.

This year my team and I experienced our first GOATS festival. We set up a mobile office and were pleased to see a huge crowd of more than 12,000 visitors enjoying entertainment from 45 bands and performers spread across three stages, covering every genre of music. Some 36 community organisations also attended the event and there were 21 local market stalls, art and literacy competitions, rides, animals and roaming entertainers. Although the event has put San Remo on the map, and certainly on the calendar for many Central Coast residents, it is the festival's achievements in other areas that have encouraged me to speak about it today in the Chamber. The San Remo Neighbourhood Centre staff first conceived the idea of a festival that promotes the positive behaviour of young people rather than an event that reinforces the negative perception of young people at youth events where alcohol and illicit drugs are involved.

The first GOATS festival was held at Lake Munmorah and featured two bands playing on the back of a truck. Only 200 people attended that first event, but today the festival is a major regional event that attracts visitors from other cities and States. Visitors from as far as Canberra and even Queensland came along to this year's event. I am told by the neighbourhood centre that there was not one incident of violence on the day, which is a testament not just to the organisers but to the community and to families. I congratulate the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre and the volunteers—too many to mention individually—on organising and coordinating such a successful event. There are also widespread benefits for the young people who get involved in organising the event. The planning phase of the festival involves the collaborative efforts of more than 100 volunteers of all ages. Those volunteers learn valuable life skills such as event management, marketing, publicity, public speaking, sound engineering and production in the lead-up to the event.

Volunteers are directly involved in stage management, emceeing, sponsorship drives, risk assessments, creating ground plans, script writing and crowd control. This level of input in such a major event is a fantastic learning experience for the many young people involved. Stallholders are able to sell their locally made merchandise, show bags and food, while groups, including the Lions Club, scouts, Girl Guides and Torchbearers, can attend with stalls to raise funds for their own community projects. Performers and musicians featured at GOATS can not only entertain a sizeable crowd but also gain widespread exposure for their work. Many bands and artists who have performed at the festival have gone on to enjoy far greater success. GOATS is more than an event; it is a training ground for young people, a social connector, a mentoring project, a motivational tool, a total support network, a community creativity pool and a most successful example of community collaboration. I ask the House to join me today in congratulating "Mother Goat" Jillian Hogan and all those involved with the Going Off At The Swamp Family Festival.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.48 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Swansea and the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre on drawing attention to the wonderful Going Off At The Swamp [GOATS] Family Festival held recently. The objectives of the festival are admirable: bringing young people together to make them feel part of a family and of the community. It is encouraging to see that 36 community organisations attended the event. I commend the people involved in organising the GOATS Family Festival. It is obviously good for boosting a sense of inclusion in the community and good for the local economy.

MARY MAC'S PLACE

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [12.49 p.m.]: Today I am delighted to recognise and pay tribute to the Mary Mac's Place project. The Mary Mac's Place project is based on the peninsula, in the heart of Woy Woy in my electorate. It was named in honour of Mary MacKillop. Mary Mac's Place is a joint venture project between St John the Baptist parish, Centacare Broken Bay and the St Vincent de Paul Society. Those organisations provide hot, nutritious meals Monday to Friday inclusive. They make some great meals—no whipped-up frozen meals cooked in the microwave but the food that nanna used to make, meat and three veg—that they provide to the homeless every day. They do a great job serving meals not only to the homeless but to

the transient, to low-income and socially disadvantaged families—mothers, fathers and children—and to individuals in my electorate who have financial worries, substance abuse problems or mental health issues. Mary Mac's Place turns nobody away: Everybody is welcome, no matter what their circumstances.

Mary Mac's Place provides not just meals but referrals to advocacy services for disadvantaged people, with the aim of breaking the cycle of dependence. The provision of those services is assisted by many generous supporters within our community, including the local club industry—the Rotary clubs, the Lions clubs, the service clubs—and organisations such as the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation. As part of its Food Rescue Program, local supermarkets, takeaway shops and bakers save food that would possibly end up in the bin. It is brought back to Mary Mac's Place and used to make nutritious meals for the disadvantaged. Mary Mac's is not a big operation; it occupies a small hall that until recently could hold only about 39 people. Fortunately, the facility has been upgraded and the service can now meet the increased need and look after about 90 people a day. The centre's attendances have quadrupled, and they continue to grow every day.

The steering committee comprises Father John Hill, parish priest of St John the Baptist parish, Pat Casey from St Vincent de Paul, Francis Rix; Bill Raper, the incomparable Mary Scarf—who belongs to a famous family known for its charitable donations to many communities in this State—great coordinator Christine Burge, competent treasurer Louise Degeling, and secretary Maureen Kable. I must make special mention of two ladies who from my time in local government got me involved in the project many years ago. Pat Slattery and Kath Player have volunteered their time since the commencement of Mary Mac's to make it a wonderful organisation. The board has good bipartisan representation, with me, Councillor Jeff Strickson, former member for Gosford Marie Andrews as the parish representative, and local Federal member Deb O'Neill, who takes the time when she can to serve on the steering committee. The committee works well, with the one goal of providing for our local community.

I express my gratitude to the absolutely tremendous volunteers. Spike Milligan said of Woy Woy that it was the world's only aboveground cemetery because people go there to retire. But I argue that people do not go there for that reason. Many people who work in the kitchen at Mary Mac's might be over 55 years, and every day they spend their time making somebody's life a little better. They have not retired; they are still working—but now they are paid a lot less. They give their time and effort to providing a service at Mary Mac's Place for local people in need. Mary Mac's is an ideal organisation that is hard working, tireless and dedicated to needy people within our community, the homeless and the transients. I thank all involved, and acknowledge their efforts.

TAREE RURAL FIRE SERVICE MEDAL PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.54 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to the NSW Rural Fire Service. On 21 April I attended the 2012 Greater Taree District Rural Fire Service medal presentation ceremony. Also in attendance was the hardworking, excellent member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams, and conspicuous in his absence was Robert Oakeshott, the Independent member for Lyne. Also present was Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers, Mayor Paul Hogan and councillors Mave Richardson and Kathryn Bell from Greater Taree City Council. Medal ceremonies are important as they acknowledge the work not only of employees of the NSW Rural Fire Service but also of its many volunteers. Too often we do not thank them or acknowledge their efforts without which regional and rural communities could not survive. The workers of the NSW Rural Fire Service attend not only bushfires but also many other emergencies on behalf of the State Emergency Service and other organisations. In March 2011, just prior to the State election, the Rural Fire Service assisted on the night of my accident.

Jim Blackmore received an award for 28 years service. Jim joined the bushfire service in March 1984 as a member of the Gundry brigade in the Mulwaree shire and held the positions of senior deputy captain, training officer and deputy shire training coordinator. In the early 1990s he was the first person in New South Wales to map fires and transmit the data from an aircraft to the ground. In 1997 Jim was appointed fire control officer in the Parkes shire. In 1998 Jim was appointed deputy fire control officer in the Greater Taree district. He received the National Medal, National Medal 1st clasp, Long Service Medal and Long Service Medal 1st clasp.

Kam Baker received an award for 32 years service. Kam has been a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1979. He first joined the Patonga Beach brigade in the Gosford district and moved through the ranks. In 1993 he was successful in obtaining the position of fire control officer for the Gloucester Rural Fire Service district and has since managed a number of mid North Coast districts. Kam has been heavily involved in specialist air operations, dating back to the early 1990s when he completed his air observer training. Today he is regarded as one of the most experienced air operations managers in the State. Kam has worked on numerous air

operations but most notable were the 1997 Coonabarabran fires, the 2001 Christmas fires at Hawkesbury and the 2002 Canberra and Snowy Mountain fires. He was awarded his National Medal in 2001 and received an Australia Fire Service Medal in 2007. At this ceremony he received his National Medal 1st Clasp, Long Service Medal, and Long Service Medal 1st and 2nd clasps.

Alfred "Bill" Snowden received an award for 40 years service. Bill commenced service with the Tinonee Rural Fire Brigade in May 1971, and has been an active firefighter and field officer ever since. Bill was elected as the Tinonee Rural Fire Brigade captain and group captain in 1985. In 2009 Bill attended the Victorian bushfires and was recently made a life member of Tinonee brigade. Bill has made a significant contribution to the Greater Taree district, the NSW Rural Fire Service and the community of New South Wales. On the day he received the Long Service Medal, and Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd and 3rd clasps.

Bruce Weller received an award for 49 years service. Bruce was a founding member of the Nabiac brigade in 1960, along with his father. At this time the brigade equipment consisted of a leaky 100 gallon galvanised tank, two knapsacks, a Terrier pump, some hose and several leather beaters. Obviously equipment has improved since then. Bruce has occupied many positions within the brigade, including captain, deputy captain and maintenance officer. Bruce was also deputy group captain of Group 2 from 1992 to 2001. On the day he received the Long Service Medal, and Long Service Medal 1st, 2nd and 3rd clasps.

Terence Kitching was given an award for 37 years service. Terry's vast service is spread over three of the emergency services. He was a member of the State Emergency Service from 1975 to 1989 and again from 1994 to 1999. He has held boat crew, captain, division communications officer/instructor, division liaison officer, deputy sub-local controller and unit controller positions. Terry joined the St John Ambulance in 1983, and remains a member today. He was awarded life membership in 1994. He was chairman of St John Ambulance north-west region from 1998 to 2009, and in 2009 was made a Member of the Order of St John. In 1997 Terry started with the Rural Fire Service and has held too many positions to mention. He is now with the Greater Taree City division. Terry has implemented a number of school education programs and re-established the Rural Fire Service Association branch in Greater Taree. On the day he received the National Medal and National Medal 1st and 2nd clasps.

Further recipients of a Long Service Medal were: Timothy Buxton, for 11 years service with Lansdowne brigade; James Fowler, for 11 years service with Lansdowne brigade; Daniel Gaul, for 11 years service with Kundle/Moto and Lansdowne brigades; Edward Tubnor, for 11 years service with Mount George brigade; Peta Styles, for 12 years service with Nabiac brigade; Michael Cleland, for 14 years service with Plumpton and Harrington brigades; Kylie Styles, for 14 years service with Nabiac brigade; Cathie Amos, for 16 years service with Krumbach brigade; John Wright, for 16 years service with Lansdowne brigade; William Ashe, for 17 years service with Plumpton and Harrington brigades; John Hawkins, for 18 years service with Kurrajong and Lansdowne brigades; Brian Styles, for 18 years service with Nabiac brigade; Mark Styles, for 20 years service with Nabiac brigade; and Martin Hamilton, for 27 years service with Lansdowne brigade. Martin also received a Long Service Medal 1st clasp.

HAWKESBURY RACE CLUB

TRIBUTE TO JACK PATON

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.59 p.m.]: Last Saturday the historic Hawkesbury Race Club held its standalone Saturday race meeting. It was an amazing day. The weather was beautiful and sunny and the track turned out in superb condition. I congratulate the Chief Executive Officer of Hawkesbury Race Club, Brian Fletcher, the Chairman, John Hiatt, OAM, and all the committee for putting on what can only be described as a fantastic meeting. As the only Saturday racing event held by Hawkesbury Race Club it must stack up in size and quality to race meetings held at Rosehill, Randwick and Warwick Farm. Everyone who works at Hawkesbury racecourse ensured that it did in superb style. As I said, the track raced in perfect order. When Nash Rawiller was presented with a trophy for winning one of the day's feature races on More Strawberries, on behalf of trainer Gai Waterhouse, he complimented the condition of the track. I give full credit to everyone involved. Some 12,000 people attended the meeting, a record attendance that any Sydney racetrack would be ecstatic about.

Sadly, one of Hawkesbury's favourite sons was not present on the day. I speak of none other than Jack Paton, a great Hawkesbury identity and trainer who passed away on 11 April 2012. His funeral service was held at St Monica's Catholic Church in Richmond. I pay tribute to Jack and his family, including his wife, Gladys, his

daughter, Jane, his son, Paul, and his daughter-in-law, Nellie. The Paton family are good friends and associates of my family. My father, Allen Williams, was certainly a great mate of Jack Paton. As a young fellow Jack started his racing career in the central western district. He trained at Orange alongside my uncle Trevor Dolman and trained hundreds of winners. Prior to the 1960s records were not kept of many of the minor horse events across the central western district.

Jack's son, Paul, once told me it would be hard to know how many thousands of winners he believed his father had trained around the country circuit—the number 9s as they were called in those days—prior to coming to Hawkesbury racecourse. Jack moved his family to Hawkesbury in the mid-1960s and immediately struck up a great association with my family. Jack joins the likes of other former great trainers and characters from the area, such as Billy Chafe, Jim "Snappy" Carter and my father, Allen Williams. Those characters of Hawkesbury racecourse will be sharing a beer now.

In relation to the horses Jack trained and the races he won, in the 1970s Jack was one of the chosen trainers for Hyperion Thoroughbreds, an organisation that provided many thousands of people with the opportunity to enjoy the thrill of owning racehorses through a syndicate. It had no less than 250 syndicates and 3,500 owners, who were fortunate to win races with trainers such as Jack. Of course, Jack did not receive horses of the same quality that went to some of the other Hyperion trainers such as Bart Cummings, Colin Hayes or T. J. Smith. Jack had to settle for some lesser lights, but he was always a capable trainer. He made a real mark on the racing industry with Targlish—probably the best horse he ever trained. Targlish reached great heights and won Group 1 races, not the least of which was the Hallmark Stakes.

Other notable horses Jack trained were Storm the Fort, Cavalier Prince, Clarendon Princess and Prince Vanquish—a horse I particularly remember because he bit me one day at Rosehill, for which I never forgave him. Jack was a good bloke and a gentleman. His son, Paul, and I grew up together in Hawkesbury. We both attained our racing licences and permits to train in 1985. We both broke our maidens and won our first races not long after we received our training licences. Jack Paton was the first one to congratulate me, stating how glad he was that his son and I had made our mark on the racing industry. Paul and I will never go on to emulate the career of my father and certainly not that of Jack Paton, who was a character of the game, a gentleman and a good bloke. Vale Jack Paton.

MCDONALD COLLEGE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [1.04 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful work done by the McDonald College and, in particular, the immense contribution made by its founding emeritus principal, Mrs Margaret Markham. Margaret is currently the chairman of the McDonald Foundation and the McDonald Foundation Cultural Trust and has been a resident in the Lane Cove electorate for over 40 years. She and her husband, Geoff, have been long-time contributors to the community in my electorate and have raised their children in the area. The college, located just across the harbour from Lane Cove in North Strathfield, is a unique primary and secondary coeducational institution. It is the only learning centre in the Southern Hemisphere that educates children from kindergarten to year 12 in addition to providing dedicated performing arts education and training on a daily basis.

The McDonald College is the principal outlet for students who have a love of performing and a talent that sometimes is not identified and nurtured in a normal school curriculum. It counts among its alumni the likes of Sarah Murdoch and Nikki Webster. Because of my interest in the performing arts, I visited the college in 2010 and witnessed the creative professional training being undertaken by the college's gifted and talented students. The college employs specialist and highly qualified performing arts teachers alongside its academic staff. In the primary school, 1½ hours are spent every day on performing arts training, which increases to 2½ hours every day in secondary school.

The McDonald College evolved from the Ann McDonald College of Dancing, which was started by Ann McDonald in 1926. Ann McDonald and her husband, John Butt, had a major impact on the dance world right up until their retirement in 1970. Ann was president of the Federal Association of Teachers of Dancing for 15 years and John was honorary treasurer. Their daughter Margaret Markham nee Butt, who had been managing the Ann McDonald College for her parents, took over the name and business in 1970 and in 1973 brought in two partners, Maxine Kohler and Ann Fraser. Maxine Kohler is now the current principal of the McDonald College. In 1983, Margaret expressed her concerns for the way young classical ballet dancers, sometimes as young as 13 or 14 years old, were being talked into leaving school early by their dance teachers without having received even a basic academic education.

Margaret suggested that if there were a dedicated performing arts school these students could receive a rigorous academic education as well as the hours of training they needed each day. It then was decided to start the McDonald College of the Performing Arts, which in 1999 moved to its current premises in North Strathfield. The college has evolved since its foundation into a modern and innovative educational institution, with dance studios with sprung floors, mirrors and bars operating side by side with science laboratories and art rooms. I note that the college has recently received correspondence from the New South Wales Minister for Education confirming funding so that it may continue its programs and valuable work for the arts community. I applaud the Minister for this clear show of confidence in the exceptional work of the college. I commend the Markham family for their nurturing of the McDonald College during its formative years and their ongoing work to enhance the cultural life of our community by continuing to foster young talent.

HUNTER PROSTATE CANCER ALLIANCE

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [1.08 p.m.]: I inform the House about the fantastic work of the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance. The alliance is made up of a group of local citizens, most of whom have had some experience with prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men, after skin cancer. The risk of developing prostate cancer increases with age. The risk of a man in his forties developing prostate cancer is less than one in 1,000; however, young men are more likely to have more aggressive tumours. For a man of 50 the average lifetime risk is one in eight. The alliance aims to encourage more men to have a simple prostate specific antigen [PSA] blood test which may, with further testing, enable an early diagnosis of prostate cancer.

The alliance had considerable success in raising awareness of prostate cancer in the Hunter and the benefits of early diagnosis with its "My wife made me get a little prick" campaign. Early diagnosis of prostate cancer increases the likelihood of a full cure. The alliance first targeted men over the age of 50 because of that one-in-eight statistic. Men with a family history of prostate cancer have a three times greater chance of developing the disease than those with no such history. The Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance is all about getting the message out there that all men should have regular PSA tests in order to enjoy peace of mind and to ensure an early diagnosis of prostate cancer.

The alliance's purpose is to provide individuals and groups, men and women, with information about prostate cancer, to promote rational testing for men and to encourage the development of intellectual and emotional support systems for men diagnosed with prostate cancer and those supporting them. The alliance advocates a strong awareness within the region of the necessity for immediate initial testing and regular testing thereafter. It assists newly diagnosed men and their partners to understand and come to terms with the complexity of the disease and the variety of treatment options available. It also encourages the development of services that will promote a positive mental outlook in those affected by the disease and those supporting them and emphasises the importance of continued education to recognise and deal with the many far-reaching effects of prostate cancer, including the fact that many low-grade cancers may be safely monitored without treatment.

To further its aims, the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance decided to establish a centre that would support research into prostate cancer and provide free public access to prostate cancer information and support. That facility is the Hunter Prostate Cancer Centre. The centre will comprise two facilities: the research facility and the public facility. The research facility houses the prostate cancer trial group, which is running two large-scale research trials on prostate cancer funded through National Health and Medical Research Council grants and administered by the University of Newcastle under the guidance of Professor Jim Denham, the principal investigator for both trials. The public facility, which is run by the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance, is a free walk-in resource centre that offers written material and advice from trained counsellors and volunteers to prostate cancer sufferers and their relatives and carers.

Fully trained counsellors and the volunteer information provider group they coordinate will assist with the information needs of four groups of men: men at high risk of developing prostate cancer; men with a new diagnosis of prostate cancer; men experiencing treatment side effects; and men with advanced prostate cancer. Last Saturday night the alliance held a successful fundraising evening with an Arabian nights themed ball. I congratulate the chairman, Nick Sovechles, management committee members Garry Leon and Keith Stewart, the chief executive officer Cary Lee, the executive marketing manager Leigh Maughan, senior counsellor Jennifer Richards, counsellor Aaron Elliott, marketing manager Erica Graham, and fundraising coordinator Jo Heard. Well done to all concerned at the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance. I commend to the House the wonderful work that this organisation does for my community.

ROCKDALE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [1.13 p.m.]: I will provide the House with an update about the important work performed by the volunteers of the Rockdale State Emergency Service. I recently was privileged to visit the unit at its premises at Bexley and to meet with the dedicated volunteers, who give so much of their time to protect the Rockdale and St George communities when they are subjected to destructive storms and natural disasters. The Rockdale State Emergency Service unit is highly regarded within our local community, and local controller Sam Zorbas, who has been in that position for more than three decades, is particularly well regarded. Serving the community in that capacity for such a long time is a great achievement. In 2006, Mr Zorbas was acknowledged for his role in the community by being made the Rockdale City Council's Citizen of the Year.

I recently attended a Rockdale State Emergency Service unit meeting and prior to the meeting I toured the facility and was able to see its rescue vessel, trailers and two emergency response trucks. However, the greatest pleasure was meeting the volunteers. These are ordinary people who do extraordinary things and they are all friends. Across New South Wales there are more than 10,000 volunteers who assist their communities in times of sudden hardship and in emergency situations. I strongly encourage the residents of Rockdale to become involved in their local State Emergency Service unit. There is no such thing as too many volunteers. It was encouraging to see on the night of my visit the number of new volunteers attending for the first time.

The New South Wales State Emergency Service is a registered training organisation and its volunteers are provided with the opportunity to partake in nationally accredited training. The skills they develop through that training can lead to their obtaining certificate, associate diploma and diploma-level qualifications. Many describe the State Emergency Service as a large family rather than a group of volunteers. It was evident on the night of my visit that their work and their regular social events have made them very close. Working together for the community most certainly forges strong friendships. A local State Emergency Service unit engages in general rescue procedures and storm and flood preparation and response procedures. That is a particularly important role in the electorate of Rockdale given that we have the flood-prone Cooks River, Wolli Creek and Bardwell Creek, and flash floods are not uncommon in Sans Souci, which is further south in the electorate. Units also engage in media and community education.

Education is vital for the local community, especially for those living near creeks or large trees. The State Emergency Service has supplied my office with multiple brochures and pamphlets, including storm action guides, a home emergency kit checklist and the Stormasaurus bookmark for children. The service also provides training coordination, operational support, logistics management and emergency service liaison. In Rockdale we value the tireless work of our local volunteers. They are selfless individuals who are well trained and who work to keep our community safe during emergencies. As further demonstration of its commitment, the Rockdale State Emergency Service unit also responds to out-of-area assistance requests. I encourage members of my community to meet their local State Emergency Service units and, if they can, to get involved. The services provided by Sam Zorbas, Julianne Eccleston and the team at Rockdale State Emergency Service are greatly valued and their community supports and thanks them.

HILLS DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [1.18 p.m.]: The importance of history cannot be underestimated. Looking back and reflecting on, learning about and understanding history can provide a glimpse of the future and create different perspectives on the world around us. In the electorate of Castle Hill we have a rich and vibrant history. The Hills District Historical Society is committed to ensuring that our history is remembered and celebrated by future generations by collecting artefacts and objects of history that would interest the most unconcerned student of history.

Whilst the Hills area is a thriving and ever-growing area of Sydney that will continue to thrive, particularly with the upcoming North West Rail Link—which is proceeding without any help from the Opposition's Labor mates in Canberra—it is easy to forget about our roots and how the Hills area was founded. Shortly after the foundation of the colony of New South Wales an expedition left Rosehill in April 1791 under the leadership of Governor Arthur Phillip. The expeditioners travelled north and then northwest, but it was not until 10 years later that a farm and stock station was established in the locality of Castle Hill. Convicts and livestock were transferred there and the construction of a stone barrack for convicts at Castle Hill commenced in 1803. Much like the modern day residents of Castle Hill, the convicts stationed there were hard working, beginning work at sunrise and finishing late in the afternoon. Settlement of the Hills began on what is now Old Windsor Road, with the first land grant being issued in 1794 to William Joyce.

In 1810 the staple industry of the district was wheat but crops frequently were ruined by attacks of blight and rust. The planting of orange trees was a popular occurrence among early settlers, with families such as the McDougalls, Pyes and Bests starting orchards that would provide a striking feature of the landscape of Castle Hill. Indeed, to this day we celebrate the Orange Blossom Festival each year. It is the great work of the Hills District Historical Society that this knowledge is kept alive, and assists in making me look like I have a sound knowledge of the history of Castle Hill. Recently I attended the society's museum open day, and I was impressed with their attention to detail and passion for our communities' great history.

The museum houses a wonderful collection of artefacts that are displayed thematically to convey what early life was like for people living in the Hills district. The museum is a stark reminder of how far technology and design have come, yet in many ways the furnishings on display were better than those of my early days living out of home as a student. The museum's resources include an extensive photographic collection, library books and facilities for research. At the most recent exhibition Tony Pettitt had his Howard Rotavator collection on show. I was able to jump on board one of the tractors—a tractor I previously knew nothing about. Mr Tony Pettitt, an avid collector who has approximately 30 Rotavators for exhibition and approximately 50 in various stages of repair, was generous enough to show some of his machines to those of us who live in the Hills district. I still do not know where he finds the space to keep them all.

The Hills District Historical Society has its own history. It was founded in July 1967 by president and councillor, Fred Caterson, and secretary, Bob Martin. The society was concerned with the loss of historical buildings and the need to preserve the built and written heritage of the local area. In 1974 the museum was established in the basement of the former Castle Hill RSL Club in Arthur Whitling Park, which is the location for the Castle Hill train station. The information resources of the society were added to the catalogue of the Hills Shire Library in 2001. In 2009 The Hills shire councillors voted unanimously for a new home for the society in Baulkham Hills. Our history as a community, State and nation are important, as it forms part of our identity. The Hills District Historical Society taught me so much about our local area. To know where we are going, we need to understand and appreciate where we have come from. With groups like the Hills District Historical Society I feel sure that our history will be kept safe for our children to learn, so they too can pass the knowledge onto their children. I commend the work of the president of the society, Julie Graham, and all those who are involved in the great work of the Hills District Historical Society.

GALLIPOLI SCHOLARSHIP

Mr TONY ISSA (Granville) [1.23 p.m.]: I acknowledge and support the Gallipoli Scholarship awards luncheon, which took place this year on 13 April 2012. I was honoured to be invited to this important event, which was held in my electorate and was organised by the Merrylands RSL Club. The scholarship is recognised by many people as an important stepping stone for young people who wish to enrol at a university. The Gallipoli Scholarship has its origins in the First World War Veterans Association of New South Wales, of which Bill Hall was the founder and patron. The Gallipoli Scholarship's first aim is to provide significant financial assistance to the most deserving and praiseworthy Australian applicants, who are resident in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory, to commence their first year of their first degree at a New South Wales or Australian Capital Territory university. The second aim of the scholarship is to achieve among Australians an understanding of those continuing traditions of determination, courage and self-sacrifice that were established so permanently in the cause for world peace at Gallipoli and thereafter on other battlefields after World War I.

In World War II our soldiers at Milne Bay were the first to halt the advance on land of the Japanese Army. Bill Hall, OAM, BEM, who is the founder of the Gallipoli Scholarship, served in the battle of Milne Bay. A second component of the fund's activities is to provide a scholarship for descendants of World War II veterans. In 1997, the age of members of the association led the President, Mr Charles Mance—a life member of the Merrylands RSL Club—to propose that the accumulated fund of nearly \$5,000 be donated to the newly formed Gallipoli Scholarship Fund Incorporated. The first two Gallipoli Scholarships were awarded in 1998. The value was then \$2,000. Now, in 2012, the figure has escalated to \$5,000 each, thanks to the dedicated work of the committee.

The New South Wales branch of the RSL, RSL sub-branches, RSL and Services clubs, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, companies and private citizens have supported the scholarship. The Merrylands RSL Sub Branch, the City of Sydney RSL Sub Branch, the Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Sub Branch and the Gallipoli Memorial Club have been major sponsors. The Bill Hall Memorial Scholarship was borne out of a need to acknowledge the lifetime of work that Bill gave to the ex-services and veterans community. The tradition was continued at the Merrylands RSL Anzac luncheon to pay tribute to the World War I and World War II veterans. I wish to honour the achievements of the scholarship winners for 2012 and wish them well for the future.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [1.28 p.m.]: I commend the contributions made by members in their statements. The member for Terrigal honoured Mary Macs Place, which is named after St Mary of the Cross, Saint Mary MacKillop. We heard that the centre provides beautifully cooked meals for disadvantaged people and offers other support services, including meals for the poor provided by local shopkeepers and merchants. The member for Myall Lakes honoured the work of the Taree branch of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and the important work carried out by the Rural Fire Service throughout the State, particularly the good work in the Taree area.

The member for Hawkesbury entertained us with his story of the Hawkesbury race meeting, the superb condition of the track and the more than 12,000 attendees at the recent meeting. He honoured a great horse trainer from the Hawkesbury area, Jack Paton, who recently died. It is wonderful to remember the people who make such a great contribution to their local area. The member for Lane Cove honoured the Markham family and its association with McDonald College—Mrs Margaret Markham is chairman of the McDonald Foundation—and commended their good work in promoting the arts, particularly for young people. The member for Charlestown reminded us of the important issue of prostate cancer. He commended the work of the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance and pointed out the increasing risks with age of prostate cancer and the need for older men to be tested. He commended the alliance for its good work in raising awareness of the need for testing.

The member for Rockdale referred to another iconic group in our community, the State Emergency Service, and its volunteers, particularly those in Rockdale. He encouraged all members of Parliament to support the State Emergency Service volunteers in their electorates. The member for Castle Hill waxed lyrical on the virtues of the Hills District Historical Society and how it has spread knowledge of pioneers in that important part of Sydney. He pointed out that the society is well resourced with artefacts, papers, books and old machinery as well as other things that help to preserve history and teach young people particularly of passing and past generations and the written heritage of the area, which is so important. The member for Granville commended the Gallipoli Scholarship, which was awarded this year at a luncheon organised by Merrylands RSL, to encourage university students and honour the memories of those who suffered or died at Gallipoli, other campaigns in World War I and campaigns in World War II. All the statements honoured groups and people who are very worthy. It was a good exposition on the part of my colleagues.

[The Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.29 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

ASSENT TO BILL

Assent to the following bill was reported:

Road Transport (General) Amendment (Vehicle Sanctions) Bill 2012

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Federal Government has put \$200 million in the budget today for major city motorways, when will the Premier stop bickering and start building the M4 East and the M5 duplication?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. I could hardly hear the question and I would like to hear the answer. I call the member for Hawkesbury to order. I call the Minister for Education to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition because it gives me an opportunity to reflect on the economic approaches taken by those opposite: 16 years of promises—

and this is not bickering, this is history—and 16 years of inaction. If I had a truck I could have brought with me today the reports—starting with Action for Public Transport, which was released in September 1998—that list promise after promise made by those opposite to build road, rail and other infrastructure across New South Wales. They promised more rail lines in western Sydney than residents could ever use, and not a single one was delivered. Bus priority lanes across the extent of Sydney were promised and I think two were delivered. Promises were made to upgrade roads regularly. More lies were told to Sunday newspapers by those opposite in pursuit of their re-election efforts than by anyone ever before in this State.

The Coalition Government has a \$20 billion roads backlog because instead of getting on and building such projects those opposite simply announced them and did nothing. The only certainty is that the cost of those projects has gone up. I am happy to accept money from the Federal Government; I want New South Wales to get its fair share of infrastructure funding because to date this city and State has received less than 1 per cent of the funding put on the table by the Federal Government under its Infrastructure Australia programs. The nation's largest city in a State that is home to a third of the nation's population and represents a third of the nation's economy receives less than 1 per cent of Infrastructure Australia funding. And what did those opposite do about that? They simply sat mute.

Later in question time I may get a chance to elaborate on that aspect, but in response to the Leader of the Opposition I remind him of the words of a former transport Minister who said that if New South Wales were to receive the same per capita funding through Infrastructure Australia as other States and Territories received, it would be offered an additional half a billion dollars. Instead, as the Leader of the Opposition said, today we are offered \$200 million—allegedly—for a roads bill left to us by those opposite 100 times that amount. We have a \$20 billion roads backlog and we have received an offer of \$200 million. We will not take lectures from those opposite. We came to office committed to building infrastructure and in our first budget the Treasurer handed down \$60 billion in promised infrastructure projects, and \$60 billion worth of infrastructure products are being delivered.

Ms Linda Burney: Where?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Minister for Health is delivering \$1 billion alone.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: For the past couple of months the Minister for Health has been out visiting hospitals in Campbelltown, Blacktown, Hornsby and—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Minister has been to Tamworth hospital.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will stop bickering.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Forget Bob the Builder, we have Jillian the Builder when it comes to health infrastructure across the State. The transport Minister is getting on with delivering that north-west rail project with \$300 million being invested this year. There have been 22 tenders announced and 15 contracts let, an 1,100-page environmental impact statement prepared and a 70-page submission forwarded to Infrastructure Australia. The Minister has done more work in 12 months than those opposite did in 16 years, including their promise of a railway line to open in 2010. Additionally, in the last budget we put an additional \$468 million on the table for the Pacific Highway upgrade. We will not take lectures from those opposite, who failed to deliver. We will deliver.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STUART AYRES: My question is addressed to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the State's infrastructure needs?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: This is the second timely question I have been asked today about infrastructure—the day on which the Federal Government tried to hoodwink the residents of this State by

pretending that it cares about infrastructure. It is an utterly shameless government. First it thumbed its nose at the people of Sydney's north-west and told them to get on a bus instead of being able to use a rail line that has long been promised by those opposite and was supposed to open in 2010.

Ms Linda Burney: You promised it.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: And we are building it, which is something those opposite did not do.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. Opposition members will be placed on calls to order shortly if they do not improve their behaviour.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Federal Government balked at its responsibility for the Pacific Highway by walking away from the usual 80-20 funding split, thereby delaying completion of that dual carriageway project. Then it talked about putting a toll on the North Coast Pacific Highway. But today's announcement takes the cake: spruiking \$200 million for Sydney's road \$20 billion backlog left to us by those opposite, as I said a moment ago. The \$200 million offer is even lousier when we consider the remarkable similarities between that figure and funding announced previously by the Federal Government. Today the Prime Minister spruiks \$150 million to link the F3 and the M2, a program of interest to Central Coast members of Parliament, the member for Hornsby and other northern Sydney members of Parliament. Intriguingly, \$200 million is exactly the same figure that was in the Nation Building 1 Program covering the period 2008 to 2014. That figure is and has been listed as available for this project on the Federal Government's website. Today, everyone should be clear that the F3-M2 money talked about by Prime Minister Gillard is money that was first announced in the 2008 Federal budget. Not content with one lie, the Prime Minister, who, regrettably is getting a reputation for telling untruths to the people of Australia—

Ms Linda Burney: Mirror, mirror on the wall.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: If I were the member for Canterbury I would not look in a mirror. The Federal Government is not content with repeating the announcement of funding that was first set out four years ago in a Federal budget. The Prime Minister is also pretending that there is \$30 million available to plan the M4 East. Again the Prime Minister is talking about money previously announced. That \$30 million was in last year's Federal budget. Until last year's Federal budget it was not \$30 million that was set aside for the M4 East; \$300 million was set aside in the Federal budget for the M4 East—money that those opposite ignored and refused to put into that project.

Mr John Robertson: You were in government last year.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am talking about last year's Federal budget.

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting and arguing with the Premier.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Just so that the Leader of the Opposition is clear, because I would hate him to miss this, when the Leader of the Opposition was the transport Minister \$300 million was on the table for the M4 East. In the last Federal budget, delivered almost a year ago, that was reduced to \$30 million because the Federal Government was concerned that those opposite when in government had not done anything with the money. The other lie in today's announcement is that somehow or other the current Government had refused to use that money. The fact is that it was made clear in last year's Federal budget papers that the \$30 million would not be available until the 2013-14 financial year. [*Time expired.*]

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier's answer to my first question and the Premier's stated support for the North West Rail Link and the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link, will the Premier explain to the House why the Government does not take the \$2.1 billion on the table for western Sydney commuters and start building both projects?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked the question and the Premier will now answer it.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition. This Government must learn from history or it is likely to repeat mistakes previously made. Both of the projects listed by the Leader of the Opposition, a transport Minister in the former Government, were projects promised by the former Government during its 16 years in office. How many of those projects were delivered? Zip, zero, nil, nada—or whatever other expression you like—not a single one. The Coalition made clear in the lead-up to the last State election that the priorities of a Coalition government would be the south-west and north-west rail lines. It made the difficult but honest decision ahead of the election to say to people who clearly want the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link built that our priority was going to be completing the south-west rail line and building the North West Rail Link. Despite the attempts of those opposite—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —led by the member for Heffron, 2.1 million people voted for the members who now occupy three-quarters of the seats in this Chamber. Those plans were endorsed by the people of this State. The Government is getting on with the job. The Minister for Transport has done more work to date on the North West Rail Link than those opposite did in 10 years. The promise of a rail link was taken by those opposite to three different elections with a promised completion date of 2010. An environmental impact statement is finally being done on the route and that is a comfort to the people in Sydney's north-west. It provides a stark contrast to the charade played on them by the Federal Government yesterday. No-one should hold their breath when it comes to promises made by those opposite or the Federal Labor Government with regard to infrastructure funding. This Government does intend to build the North West Rail Link.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: It sounds like you are trying to convince yourself.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Unlike those opposite this Government delivers the projects it promises.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The two most frequent visitors to the Castle Hill information office are the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Mr Albanese—who has been seen coming and going from that place more often than the Federal member for Dobell was seen in other places—and the Leader of the Opposition. I am told the Leader of the Opposition goes in disguise. The Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to show his face publicly in a section of the city in which he lives and to which he failed to deliver that long-promised project. It is not just rail projects that this Government is interested in. It is interested in road projects also.

Our submission to Infrastructure Australia did not just list the North West Rail Link or the Pacific Highway; it also included what we described as the ports road projects: the M5 and M4. It is worth reminding the House, and the history students and teachers in the gallery today, that the M4 East was originally announced a decade ago by a bloke that will go down in history for all the wrong reasons—the Hon. Carl Scully. In 2002 Carl Scully said that the road would be built, that it was an exciting day for the people of western Sydney, and that the road would take thousands of cars and trucks off Victoria Road and end the Parramatta Road gridlock. Regrettably for the people of this State that Government remained in office for a further 10 years.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: That Government was in office for another 10 long years and the road was not delivered. The Hon. Carl Scully was reported in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 7 July 2002 saying that the road would start construction in 2005. Labor was in office for a further seven years but not a single piece of soil was turned to deliver those projects. The current Government is getting on with the job. I have a message for the Federal Government: Stop turning your back on the people of western Sydney; get on board the North West Rail Link and show the people of New South Wales that you are serious about doing something to overcome Sydney's congestion problems. The release of the Federal budget tonight will compete on television with the season finale of the *Biggest Loser*. Unless there is a change of heart by the Federal Government on infrastructure funding the real biggest losers will be the citizens of this State.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. What are the implications for motorists following Federal Labor's decision to short-change New South Wales to the tune of \$2.3 billion for the Pacific Highway upgrade?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Port Macquarie for a very good question. With the exception of the member for Toongabbie I am sure that all members in this place would acknowledge that the upgrade of the Pacific Highway, following the coroner's report into the Clybucca bus disaster, is one of the most pressing infrastructure needs of the nation. I mention the member for Toongabbie because of his notorious September 2008 mini budget, which took \$300 million away from that upgrade project. One can imagine the disappointment right across the State of New South Wales, and particularly the North Coast, when Saturday's media release from the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport—optimistically titled "Pacific Highway: Feds willing to honour their share"—stated the Federal Government's share. That is another story altogether.

The media release was a typical example of New South Wales Labor doublespeak. It was boldly trying to sell a multibillion dollar funding cut as a win for motorists. Simply put, the decision to cut back the Federal Government's contribution to the Pacific Highway upgrade from 80 per cent, under the current arrangement, to 50 per cent for future funding, will cost New South Wales, as the member for Port Macquarie said, \$2.3 billion and put at risk the Prime Minister's goal to complete the duplication by 2016. This savage cut will, sadly, see yet more lives lost unnecessarily, productivity gains forgone, and economic growth in New South Wales forestalled. But the greatest disappointment in all this is that Federal Labor has demonstrated its unwillingness to stick to the commitments made with the previous State Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Try as he might, Minister Albanese cannot walk away from his previously firm commitments to an 80:20 Federal-State funding split for the Pacific Highway.

Mr Robert Furolo: You cannot walk away from your commitment.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: The member for Lakemba ought to listen to this. I know that members are interested in history, and I am going to give the member for Lakemba a little bit of history about the member's Government.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: In March 2009, when the funding split was actually 83:17, Mr Albanese wrote to the then Minister for Roads, Michael Daley, along the following lines:

... I am pleased NSW has taken the decision to sign up to the agreement ...

It seems that in December of that same year the then Minister for Transport, David Campbell, wrote back to the Federal Minister saying:

... I will undertake to seek confirmation of a 20 per cent NSW Government commitment to the additional funding required. This would be consistent with the funding arrangement on many other National Land Transport Network projects in NSW, and our recent agreement for funding preconstruction for Frederickton to Eungai ...

This correspondence demonstrates clearly that the 80:20 split was a source of heated agreement between the two Labor governments. What has changed since then? The duplication of the Pacific Highway is still not complete, lives are still being lost, and one of the country's most vital transport links is still clogged. Of course, the only thing that has changed since that correspondence is that the people of New South Wales have spoken and have tossed out a decrepit New South Wales Labor Government in favour of this Liberal-Nationals Government, which is determined to get on with the job of rebuilding the State. Last year we put our money where our mouth is by increasing funding for the Pacific Highway by some \$468 million, more than making up for the cuts imposed by the member for Toongabbie. All we are asking now is that Federal Labor apply the same rules to our Government that it did when its Labor mates were in power in New South Wales. Until that happens, the Pacific Highway will continue to be a 600-kilometre symbol of Federal Labor's duplicity.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Given there is \$3.5 billion on the table today to upgrade the Pacific Highway, when will the Deputy Premier keep his promise, match the money and get to work on this vital project?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba has asked his question. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr Robert Furolo: Your promise.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Lakemba not to interject.

Mr ANDREW STONER: It seems the member for Lakemba is a little out of control on this issue. Clearly, he was not listening to the history lesson I gave him when responding to the earlier question; I will go back over some of the key dates for his benefit. In September 2008 Labor cut \$300 million from the Pacific Highway upgrade program. In March 2009, when the funding split was 83-17, Federal Minister Albanese wrote to the mediocre member for Maroubra, the minder of middle managers—

Mr Robert Furolo: Point of order—

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

Mr Robert Furolo: My point of order is relevance. The question was about the promise of the Deputy Premier to deliver on this funding—

The SPEAKER: Order! I understood the question. The member knows the rules. I cannot direct the Minister how to answer the question. I can merely ask the Minister to ensure his answer is relevant; and the Minister's response has been relevant.

Mr ANDREW STONER: In March 2009 the Federal Government wrote to the mediocre member for Maroubra, minder of middle managers, to confirm an agreement in relation to an 83-17 split. In December 2009 the then New South Wales Minister for Transport and Roads, David Campbell—one in eight of a revolving door of Roads and Transport Ministers at the time—wrote back to the Federal Government seeking confirmation of the 80-20 split, saying that it was consistent with the way in which National Land Transport Network projects, like the Pacific Highway upgrade, were being funded. That is a bit of context. Fast-forward to March 2011 and a change of government in this State after the people of New South Wales spoke out, sick and tired of the excuses, announcements and failures to deliver of those opposite. When this Government came to office it had a look at the books.

As the Treasurer has rightly said, there had been a couple of master chefs in there—perhaps master chef and master chef junior—cooking the books. Guess what this Government found on coming to government: a shortfall in revenue versus expenditure over the forward estimates in March 2011 of more than \$5 billion. This year, we find over the forward estimates from 2012 a shortfall in estimated GST revenue of \$5.4 billion—thanks to the Federal Government's instability and its carbon tax. Consequently, this State is in a serious financial position. And we have a Federal Government that is trying to take away \$2.3 billion in funding for the Pacific Highway. I put this question to the member for Lakemba: If you want to play the political games of your Federal colleagues, you tell me which hospitals to close down, which schools to close down, and which projects not to go ahead with.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: Which projects will we not go ahead with in the interests of what the member is calling for, so that he can line up with his Federal Labor colleagues and play this blame game, trying to shift responsibility for funding of the Pacific Highway upgrade onto the New South Wales Government? It is that sort of disgraceful tactic that saw this mob opposite kicked out of office in March 2011 and will see Federal Labor kicked out next year.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. What is the Government's response to Federal Labor's refusal to help fund the North West Rail Link?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Riverstone for his important question, which I am glad to be asked because today the New South Wales Government reaffirms its strong case to the Federal Government to support our bid to build the North West Rail Link. At the outset I state very clearly that the

North West Rail Link will be built by the New South Wales Government with or without Federal Government support. We were elected with a clear mandate to deliver it, and we will deliver it. But there are some questions that the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and Infrastructure Australia, must explain, such as: What is the basis of their funding for transport projects?

Let us look at a rail project that had no difficulty in attracting Federal Government funding: the Epping to Parramatta rail line—a project that Mr Albanese deemed was ready to support. In fact, Minister Albanese committed more than \$2 billion from 2014 for this project—on the back of a five-page submission. Who can forget the television images of the Prime Minister and the member for Heffron out there in the last Federal election making their desperate, last-minute bid to win the votes of the people of Bennelong. It is very interesting that just days earlier the State Minister for Transport, who happened to be one John Robertson, had written in a letter that the "Parramatta-Epping rail link is not a project on the 10-year horizon of the Metropolitan Transport Plan." At the time the Minister for Transport said that project was not a priority, a five-page submission got that Labor Government \$2 billion in funding.

Mr John Robertson: That shows we are better than you are. That's more than you can do.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will get to the Leader of the Opposition in a moment. Compare that to what the O'Farrell Government has undertaken in relation to the North West Rail Link. Remember, those five pages got that Government \$2 billion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that he is already on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Here we have a 279-page submission to Infrastructure Australia and the Federal Government on the North West Rail Link. But I also want to show everyone in the House our 2,200-page environmental impact statement on the North West Rail Link.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call and will be heard in silence.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the former Government got \$2 billion for five pages, on my calculation we should get about \$900 billion based on what we have put together. This is rubbing salt into the wounds of the people of north-west and western Sydney who were promised the North West Rail Link by Bob Carr back in 1998. I note also that in March 2002—and this is very relevant to the politics that went on yesterday—when Labor announced the preferred route for the North West Rail Link, the project was being led by a State department which, at the time, was headed by the current Infrastructure Australia national coordinator, Mr Deegan. That is the same Mr Deegan who yesterday talked down the project.

I note that a media release put out at that time made it clear that buses had been considered as an alternative to a rail line for the north-west but that "the heavy rail line will better service the transport needs of the area". If putting on more buses to solve north-west Sydney's transport problems was unacceptable to the Federal Labor Government and Mr Deegan back in 2002 why is it now okay? What an insult to the people of north-west and western Sydney. Mr Albanese, the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, should explain on what criteria Federal public transport projects are based. He has a responsibility to do that because, as I might immodestly say, we have done more in the past 12 months on this project than Labor managed in the past dozen years. As the Premier so kindly pointed out, we have awarded 25 contracts and let 15 tenders—*[Time expired.]*

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given the Government's submission to Infrastructure Australia lacked detail—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will find themselves on calls to order or out of the Chamber if they cannot control themselves.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: —how will the Government operate more than two trains an hour on the North West Rail Link into the city without cutting services from the Central Coast and on the western line?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am certainly not going to be lectured by the member for Canterbury or anybody else on the other side about the North West Rail Link. I cannot even believe the Opposition had the hide to ask this question, but it allows me to make some important points that I did not get a chance to make in my answer to the previous question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I note that the member for Canterbury's boss, the former Minister for Transport, never asks me questions on public transport. We know the kind of legacy he left the people of New South Wales in public transport. I hate to do this but I feel compelled—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. Can we not have the usual spiel—?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The Minister has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Opposition asked us about the North West Rail Link, and I enjoyed an interjection by the Leader of the Opposition in a previous question. While the Premier was answering that question the Leader of the Opposition said that we had a shiny office on the North West Rail Link in Rouse Hill Town Centre. In fact, it is in Castle Hill, which shows he does not even know his own council lot is to be on the North West Rail Link. Why will the Leader of the Opposition not support the North West Rail Link?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The question of the member for Canterbury compels me to reiterate the former Government's track record on the North West Rail Link.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will listen to the answer in silence and cease their interjections.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As we know, the former Government first announced this project back in 1998 and was supposed to have built it by 2010. The former Minister for Transport should have been there cutting the ribbon, but the former Government had nothing to show for that project. In 2005 the former Government delayed the project and said that it would be completed by 2017. The former Government axed the project in February 2008 in favour of the Rozelle Metro. It axed the North West Rail Link—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 59, tedious repetition. We have heard this before.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister is answering the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Instead of taking points of order maybe the Opposition should think of some better questions to ask. We know this is a very sore point for them. The former Government axed the North West Rail Link in favour of that brilliant Rozelle Metro that cost taxpayers half a billion dollars. Then in March 2008 the former Government re-announced a North West Rail Link and said it would be built by 2017. Then the former Government axed it again in October. Then in October 2010, when the now Leader of the Opposition became the Minister for Transport, the North West Rail Link was announced again.

That is the former Government's legacy with the North West Rail Link, and its members want us to take them seriously when they ask us a question such as this in the House. As the Premier said, on this side of the House we are very proud of the progress we have made on that project. In the past 12 months we have issued 25 contracts and let 15 tenders on the project. If Opposition members want detail they should read the 279-page submission; all the answers to their questions on the project are in that submission. If they really cared about the community they would look at the environmental impact statement, which is on display—more than 2,000 pages of it.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I inform Opposition members that there is a 78-page summary of the environmental impact statement if they do not have time to read the whole statement. I take this opportunity to thank all members of Parliament in western and north-western Sydney who have supported this project, the more than 2,000 community members who have come into the information centre and been part of all the seminars that we have held and all the residents who have contacted us about this project. The Federal

Government's response to the North West Rail Link is insulting. The Federal Government is telling people to get on buses; we are saying: build them the rail line they deserve. Labor has failed to do that; it has talked about it since 1998 and we on this side of the House will make sure we build that project for western Sydney.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. How is the Government delivering for hardworking nurses and midwives in the New South Wales health system?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for that fantastic question, which follows the marvellous visit we had to Manning Base Hospital where we met many of the fantastic nurses, midwives and other people working in that hospital. We sat down with them and had a good talk about the things that they are doing. I am very pleased to be asked this question today because we celebrated International Midwives Day last Saturday and we will celebrate International Nurses Day next Saturday.

I am particularly pleased because there are now 46,000 public sector nurses and midwives working in our hospitals. Does that number sound slightly larger than it was when Labor was in Government? It is. This Government has delivered 2,500 extra nursing positions in its time in office. Members opposite protest, but they abolished nursing positions and froze nursing numbers in western Sydney. Members opposite ignored the people of western Sydney in terms of public transport and roads, but this Government has provided extra nurses for the fantastic hospitals that all members on this side have joined me in visiting recently.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will cease interjecting or he will find himself out of the Chamber.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The Government has also provided 644 more nurses on the Central Coast, whereas the former Government put off 100 nurses. Across rural and regional New South Wales the Government has delivered 975 extra nurses. We now have 2,500 more nurses and midwives at patients' bedsides, delivering babies, working in operating theatres and emergency departments, and providing care in the community. The Government has also delivered 2,163 new graduate nurses and midwives in 102 hospitals statewide.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The Government has provided 2,500 new nurses. That includes 581 in western Sydney and 593 throughout rural and regional New South Wales. That is 500 more new nurse graduate positions than was provided for in the last year of the Labor Government. The Government has also provided \$10,000 scholarships for the nursing re-entry program that helps nurses who have been out of the workforce for five to 10 years. Under the new national registration requirements nurses must have recent practice, and I have provided sixty \$10,000 scholarships to help them return to nursing. I was thrilled to visit the College of Nursing to meet with a number of scholarship recipients. I will read an email I received recently from a nurse at that wonderful hospital at Coffs Harbour, who said:

... thank you sincerely for making all the scholarships available to attend the Assessment of Competence Course provided by The College of Nursing.

I was extremely lucky to receive the scholarship for Coffs Harbour. I have completed the 4 weeks theory in Sydney ...

I LOVE being back in the wards, it all comes flooding back, nursing/midwifery is where my passion lies

She went on to say that the other 12 young women who undertook the course with her in Sydney are amazing people who love being back in the workforce. I am thrilled that the Government is not only delivering extra nurses but is also supporting many other initiatives to help develop the nursing workforce. The essentials of care program is about the culture—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Begun by us.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: "Done by us", says the former Minister for Health.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: No, "begun".

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It was developed by nurses. How dare the member for Marrickville claim that—arrogance of the woman.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am also pleased that on Friday I will attend a breakfast at which the 2012 Judith Meppem Nursing and Midwifery Scholarships will be awarded to two fabulous nurses from Concord Hospital, one from Wollongong and one from the Central Coast. I will provide more information about those fabulous nurses after I attend that breakfast. I congratulate all nurses on the great work they do in our hospital system. I also congratulate the winners of this year's scholarships and the winners of the 2012 Judith Meppem awards.

ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Is it true that Royal North Shore Hospital is facing a predicted budget shortfall of at least \$22 million? If so, why has the Minister not intervened to boost funding and guarantee patient care?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Macquarie Fields is the man who was the Parliamentary Secretary for the last four years of the last Labor Government and he did absolutely nothing to restore confidence in the services provided in our hospitals. He is the man who promised infrastructure but never delivered. Let us talk about the hospitals at Tamworth, Dubbo, Bega, Campbelltown—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: Here is a man who goes and does—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The member for Canterbury is already on three calls to order. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Canterbury from the Chamber.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber, accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms]

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who seek the call without any hint of a point of order and who have been called to order more than three times will be removed from the Chamber under the sessional orders. I will not tolerate that kind of behaviour in the Chamber. For the information of members, the sessional orders state that the Speaker may direct a member who is grossly disorderly to leave the Chamber for up to three hours. The member for Canterbury is out for the rest of the day and deservedly so.

[Interruption]

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Let me talk about Royal North Shore Hospital and correct some of the mistruths put out by the shadow Minister on a radio program today that suggested, for example, that I have directed that no negotiations take place. That is simply nonsense, as the shadow Minister knows. It has been all over the radio broadcasts, but I do not think members opposite have been listening. As well as that, there was the suggestion that there are extra beds. There is not one extra bed at Royal North Shore Hospital and the shadow Minister knows that also. That will not occur until we take possession of the new building at the end of this year. There will be an extra 60 beds when the new hospital is occupied.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Macquarie Fields is belittling the nurses and others who work at Royal North Shore Hospital and causing enormous stress for them when they are doing the right thing by their patients. Nurses and others at Royal North Shore Hospital are very demoralised by the member for Macquarie Fields and his approach of trying to bash them up and say that things are not right.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: As I have said recently in many interviews, I have been a patient at Royal North Shore Hospital. It is a fantastic hospital and I would recommend it to any patient.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Macquarie Fields to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour in accordance with sessional orders.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Macquarie Fields left the Chamber at 3.07 p.m.]

Mr Barry O'Farrell: He has made history

The SPEAKER: No, he did not make history; I made history. The Minister has the call.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It is very hard to address a serious issue when members interject constantly across the table. As I said on Friday in relation to Royal North Shore Hospital, I was pleased when the Industrial Relations Commission got agreement from all parties in relation to the cleaning. Now we can move forward. An action plan has been developed involving the Ministry of Health, the local health district and others to ensure that the cleaners are there, and 20 extra cleaners have been employed. When the new hospital is opened at the end of this year life will be easier.

The reality is that the old Royal North Shore Hospital is difficult to clean. The member who removed himself from the Chamber knows that because he was with me in 2009 when we walked through that hospital. It was filthy because it was an old building. I am pleased that the former Minister for Health acknowledges that. I have learnt during this public-private partnership process that one does not get a contract to clean an old building; it is started from the new contract. Hospital staff will have a fabulous time when they move into the new building at the end of this year and when the further building that the Government has promised and funded is operational in approximately 2014.

CARBON TAX

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. What impact will the carbon tax have on local government in New South Wales?

Mr DONALD PAGE: I thank the member for Camden for his question and acknowledge his longstanding interest in local government matters. There are 152 councils in New South Wales and all of them will have higher costs imposed on them as a result of the carbon tax. This puts the lie to the Federal Government's deceitful claim that only the 500 of the "biggest polluters" will pay the carbon tax. Ratepayers in two city councils in New South Wales will be among the hardest hit by that tax.

Last week the Federal Government's Clean Energy Regulator released the official list of the 250 biggest polluters that will pay the carbon tax. They include Shellharbour and Wagga Wagga city councils along with BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto. Ratepayers in those two councils will be hard hit by the carbon tax, and there are more to come once all councils report to the regulator. Wagga Wagga City Council has put aside \$660,000 to pay the tax. Shellharbour City Council estimates that it could pay up to \$800,000 per annum, or \$15 million over the life of its tip. Those councils will now have either to pay the tax, to fund an emissions reduction strategy, or face having to cut services. Cash-strapped councils and struggling communities also face other higher costs due to the carbon tax.

Thanks to the carbon tax councils will have to pay more to turn on the street lights, to build a road and to collect rubbish. Importantly, all those costs are being shifted onto councils without any form of compensation, or even consideration, by the Federal Government. Ultimately, like any other business, local councils will seek to pass on those costs. They will need to charge higher rates or reduce services. I am sure everyone will have carbon tax at the top of their minds when they receive their next rates notice. I note that some councils, such as Shoalhaven City Council, are so concerned with this tax that a statement will be included on its rates notice on how much extra the carbon tax is costing ratepayers.

Dubbo City Council has estimated that its power bill alone will increase by \$500,000. Tamworth Regional Council estimates an impact on its electricity bill of an additional \$300,000, and Hawkesbury City Council estimates extra charges of \$269,000 for electricity, gas and street lighting. Camden Council has estimated the cost at \$150,000. The likely direct cost increases for councils from the proposed carbon tax include electricity for street and public lighting, council buildings, swimming pools, and water and sewerage

utility operations. The costs could amount to an increase on average of approximately 10 per cent. Councils also will pay 6¢ per litre more for fuel because of the reduction in the fuel rebate. Councils across the State will have to pay millions more for council waste management. There will be significant extra costs for essential supplies used by councils, particularly for bitumen, steel and concrete.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government's Climate Change Plan has very few initiatives of benefit to local government, and there is no financial compensation at all for councils. Modelling that has been done by Federal Treasury has been mainly examining household impacts. The impact of the carbon tax on New South Wales councils will be significant. I call on the Federal Government to consider that impact and to take the necessary steps to reduce the impact of the carbon tax on local government and ratepayers. Once again, local government and local communities have been ignored and forgotten by Labor, both at State and Federal levels.

Question time concluded at 3.13 p.m.

REGISTER OF DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS

The Speaker tabled the Supplementary Ordinary Returns by Members of the Legislative Assembly as at 31 December 2011.

Ordered to be printed.

VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2011-2012

Mr Baird tabled, by leave, pursuant to section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2011-12 relating to various agencies.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr Stephen Bromhead, as Chair, tabled the report entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 16/55", dated 8 May 2012, together with minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 15/55.

Report ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Stephen Bromhead.

PETITIONS

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

Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport

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

Pets on Public Transport

Petition requesting that pets be allowed on public transport, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Pet Shops

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

Container Deposit Levy

Petition requesting the Government introduce a container deposit levy to reduce litter and increase recycling rates of drink containers, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Animals Performing in Circuses

Petition requesting a ban on exotic animals performing in circuses, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Pet Bans in Accommodation By-laws and Tenancy Agreements

Petition requesting the prohibition of blanket pet bans in accommodation by-laws and rules and tenancy agreements, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

By leave and pursuant to resolution the Speaker identified that General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 221 to 239, 242 to 247, 249 to 253, 255, 257, 259 to 261, 263, 264, 266 to 272, 274 to 280, 283 to 286, 288 to 293, 295 to 302, 304, 306 to 308, 310 to 313, 315 to 319, 321 to 324, 326, 328 to 332, 334, 336, 339, 342, 343 and 345 had been reclassified as General Business (Community Recognition Notices).

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

YMCA NEW SOUTH WALES YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the YMCA 2011 Youth Parliament.
- (2) Acknowledges all members of Parliament who took part in proceedings, including the Premier.
- (3) Commends local high school student and Youth member for Kiama, Peter Mumford for his contribution during the proceedings.
- (4) Acknowledges the Government's contribution of \$10,000 to enable participants from indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds to take part in the next YMCA Youth Parliament.

HUNTER LEUKAEMIA FOUNDATION VOLUNTEER LACHLAN MCVICAR

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House acknowledges Lachlan McVicar for over 12 years volunteer work for the Hunter's Leukaemia Foundation, including helping to drive patients to hospital, organising other volunteers and chairing the Foundation Committee.

NORTHERN ILLAWARRA NEIGHBOUR AID

Mr LEE EVANS—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Northern Illawarra Neighbour Aid has moved into new premises in Helensburgh.
- (2) Commends the work done by this mainly volunteer organisation in providing services, such as Meals on Wheels and organising transport to medical appointments for the frail, aged and disabled residents of the Northern Illawarra.
- (3) Commends the group for supporting their community.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH COLLEGE

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council on the establishment of the Aboriginal Health College at Little Bay.
- (2) Recognises the leadership role of Christine Simpson, OAM CM, Chairperson, and Sandra Bailey, CEO.
- (3) Notes that 60 graduates in 2011 have gained a wide range of awards in areas of health that affect First Nation People.
- (4) Notes the importance of Aboriginal health professionals involvement in the delivery of health outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples.

CANCER COUNCIL

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Daffodil Day this year is on the 26 August 2011.
- (2) Notes the hard work of the Cancer Council in advocacy, prevention, research and support for people with cancer.
- (3) Calls on all members of this House to support the work of the Cancer Council.

NEW LAMBTON FOOTBALL CLUB FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates New Lambton Football Club for raising money for the cancer charity, CanTeen.
- (2) Notes the club will be hold various fundraising events and hopes to raise a total of \$2500 for the charity.

WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN SCHOOL MUSICAL PRODUCTION

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wollondilly Anglican School on its recent production of "Bye Bye Birdie".
- (2) Acknowledges the leads, Tammy Nelson, Briony Roelandis, Genevieve Woods, Jacob Fleming and Hannah Buick for their outstanding performances.
- (3) Acknowledges the Wollondilly Anglican School staff for its leadership and in particular headmaster Dr Stewart Quarmby; creative arts director and conductor, Simon Denley; backdrops coordinator, Belinda Taylor; music director, Mrs Sarah Talbot; choreographer, Mrs Christie Lee Ferris, together with Samantha Pool and Brandan Hay.
- (4) Acknowledges the entire cast and crew including the orchestra and stage production crew on a fantastic performance.

CAMPSIE SALVATION ARMY HOMEWORK CENTRE

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Campsie Salvation Army for establishing and running a homework centre.
- (2) Notes the high number of children and families especially from non-English speaking backgrounds attending and benefitting from the centre.
- (3) Notes that 40 to 60 children, on average, attend the centre each session.
- (4) Congratulates the wonderful volunteers involved.

COUNCIL OF INDIAN AUSTRALIANS

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Council of Indian Australians on its India Fair Day held on 7 August 2011.
- (2) Commends the work of Dr Yadu Singh and his committee including Subba Rao varigonda, Stanley D'Cruz, Praful Desai, Keyur Desai, and Shailendra Wadhwa in organising such a successful event.
- (3) Acknowledges the contribution made by the Indian Australians in Hornsby and the wider community to Australian culture, society and the economy.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Mrs BARBARA PERRY—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 9 August 2011 is International Day of the World's Indigenous People.
- (2) Celebrates the important role that Australia's indigenous people have played in the development of our nation.
- (3) Expresses sorrow at the mistreatment of indigenous communities in Australia and around the world.

SOUTH COAST TOURISM AWARDS

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the South Coast Tourism Awards which recognises the economic and social contribution of local tourism operators.
- (2) Congratulates the awards finalists Lisa Kelsey from the Sebel Harbourside in Kiama, Rajarshi and Sophie Ray from the Silos Winery Estate in Berry, Sally Bursell from the Kiama Visitors Centre, Professor Michael Hough from Wings Over Illawarra and Mark Bryant from Kiama Rugby Sevens.

BULLI SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB NINETY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr LEE EVANS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Bulli Surf Life Saving Club celebrating its 98th year of service to the community of Bulli and notes its centenary in two years time.
- (2) Congratulates all Club members on their record of never experiencing a death at Bulli, when patrolled, in its 98 years.
- (3) Acknowledges the Club's surf life saving achievements and their awards.

HURSTVILLE AND ST GEORGE LOCAL AREA COMMANDS

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the outstanding work of police in the Hurstville and St George Local Area Commands.
- (2) Acknowledges and thanks the Police from both area commands who combined this year for the St George Regional Police Ball raising money for Bear Cottage, which provides support to families, in particular sick children in our community.

TRIBUTE TO MR DAVE TORR, OAM

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Notes the death of Mr Dave Torr OAM.
- (2) Acknowledges the work Mr Torr undertook through his volunteer work at the Rail Transport Museum which began at Enfield and later at Thirlmere.
- (3) Extends its condolences to Mr Torr's family, his wife Wendy and their sons.

CAN TOO FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Notes the work done by "Can-too" in raising funds for cancer research.
- (2) Congratulates Margaret-Anne Hayes for her efforts in raising funds for cancer research and Can-too, in particular for organising the Old Fashioned Country Ball at Hornsby RSL on 5 August 2011.
- (3) Calls on members of this House to support the work of Can-too and the other organisations in raising funds for cancer research.

SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR DAVID JESSON

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates David Jesson on his tenure as Administrator of Shellharbour City Council.
- (2) Acknowledges his efforts to improve the governance and performance of Shellharbour City Council and his advocacy of important local projects such as Shell Cove Marina.
- (3) Thanks Mr Jesson for his efforts in serving the people of Shellharbour.

HEATHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL FASHION PARADE

Mr LEE EVANS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students of Heathcote High School who were involved in the recent fashion parade.
- (2) Acknowledges the high calibre of sewing skills at the fashion parade.
- (3) Recognises the effort and dedication of the teaching staff at Heathcote High School.

ST GEORGE LIONS CLUB

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Thanks the Lions Club of St George for its ongoing charity work for the community.
- (2) Notes its contribution to the Jeans for Genes Day on Friday 5 August 2011.
- (3) Calls on all members of this House to support the work of local groups such as the Lions Club in their community.

EYEWATCH PROJECT

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the timely implementation of Project Eyewatch, that brings the Neighbourhood Watch program in to the 21st century.
- (2) Congratulates Mr John Chew from Macarthur Gardens in the Wollondilly electorate for his involvement in the local program.

KENDALL COMMUNITY OP SHOP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the ongoing work of the Kendall Community Op Shop and especially the ongoing and significant financial contribution it makes to local projects.
- (2) Commends the dedication of the hardworking committee members, both past and present.

NETBALLER DANIELLE TAYLOR

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates Danielle Taylor of the Wallsend electorate on her selection in the New South Wales Netball Team for the School Sports Australia championship to be held in Darwin in October 2011.

KARATE CHAMPION TARA BOYD

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tara Boyd of the Wollondilly electorate on her recent success in winning the Australian Karate Federation's national under 10's kata championships in Caloundra, Queensland.
- (2) Acknowledges Tara's other significant achievements in 2011 including gold medals in the Commonwealth Karate championships, the Junior Olympics held in the USA and the USA Karate Open held in Las Vegas.
- (3) Congratulates her karate instructor Shihan Ivan Pacek for his skill and dedication.

SCHIZOPHRENIA FELLOWSHIP OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House commends the Schizophrenia Fellowship of New South Wales, a non-profit fellowship committed to improving the circumstances of those living with schizophrenia in the Hunter.

NORTH COAST REGIONAL DRAGON BOAT TEAM

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House acknowledges the recent success of the North Coast regional dragon boat team at the state titles and recognises its commitment to the sport of dragon boat racing.

HUNTER SAMARITANS AND KAIYU ORGANISATIONS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Samaritans and Kaiyu organisations are teaming up to provide additional support to disability services in the Hunter.
- (2) Commends their work in providing mental health services for adults, programs for young people and community based services, to help those with disabilities gain social skills and self-confidence.

KIDSAFE HUNTER EDUCATION VAN

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House acknowledges the Good Guys stores of Kotara, Maitland and Warners Bay and the Jesmond Lions for raising more than \$100,000 to contribute towards the new Kid-safe education van, teaching safety awareness to young people throughout the Hunter region.

KIDS OF MACARTHUR HEALTH FOUNDATION VOLUNTEER MRS DIANNE HINES

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the contribution of Dianne Hines for her contribution to the Kids of Macarthur Foundation, including creating more than 200 toys this year.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Hines is one of many knitting volunteers who contribute by creating bright bears that are distributed to sick children in hospitals in the Macarthur area.

NEWCASTLE DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP MEMBER NANCY MALCOLM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends Nancy Malcolm, of Wallsend, as a long serving member of the Newcastle Diabetes Support Group and currently convenor, secretary and interim treasurer.
- (2) Notes the important work of the group in helping many people suffering from diabetes across the Wallsend electorate.

KENDALL MEN'S SHED

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House recognises the important role of the Kendall Men's Shed within the local community and congratulates the committee and the organisation on the official opening on 13 August 2011.

LAKE MACQUARIE JUSTICES ASSOCIATION 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Lake Macquarie branch of the New South Wales Justices' Association on its 100th anniversary.
- (2) Notes the milestone achieved marks a century of important voluntary work by the organisation.

NSW PHYSICAL DISABILITY RUGBY LEAGUE COMPETITION

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the dedication of George Tonna in his efforts to establish the first Rugby League competition for people with a physical disability.
- (2) Acknowledges the support from New South Wales Rugby League and Macarthur Disability Services for this initiative.

CAMPBELLTOWN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges all nominees and participants who took part in the recent Campbelltown Local Business Awards.
- (2) Congratulates Geoff Lee, manager and the staff of Priceline Macarthur Square on winning the Business of the Year Award.
- (3) Congratulates John Hayward of Holy Sheet! winner of the Business Person of the Year Award.

ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the success of the Israeli Film Festival held at the University of Wollongong on 6 August 2011.
- (2) Notes the attendance of the University of Wollongong Deputy Vice Chancellor Judy Raper and Israeli Ambassador Yuval Rotem.
- (3) Congratulates the organisers Doron Katz and Yoke Berry on the successful event.

GYMNASTICS CHAMPION CHRISTOPHER BUNTON

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Christopher Bunton of St Clair for his achievement at the Special Olympics World Summer Games Athens 2011 where he won gold on high bar, silver on rings and bronze on parallel bars and for his overall third place.
- (2) Notes that despite having Down syndrome, Mr Bunton has diligently applied himself, together with the support of his family, to achieve success at national and international levels of gymnastic competition.

CITY2SURF

Ms CHERIE BURTON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the Sun Herald City to Surf fun run that will be held on 17 August 2011.
- (2) Notes that this fundraising event has been held annually since 1971 and has grown to be the biggest charity fun run in the country.

ST GEORGE AND HURSTVILLE POLICE FUNDRAISING BALL

Ms CHERIE BURTON—That this House congratulates the St George and Hurstville Police for their fundraising ball held on 6 August 2011, an annual event which this year raised money for Bear Cottage that supports terminally ill children and their families.

SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates all winners at the 2011 Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence held by Surf Life Saving NSW.
- (2) Recognises the Central Coast Branch for being named as joint winner, together with the Far South Coast Branch.

TRIBUTE TO SIMONE MORRISSEY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS—That this House:

- (1) Notes the sudden death of Simone Morrissey, at just 24 years of age.
- (2) Notes that Simone was The Greens candidate for Menai at the 2011 State election.
- (3) Offers condolences to her friends, family and loved ones.

VANDALTRAK GRAFFITI REPORTING SYSTEM

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the valuable community service provided by Vandal Trak, a private graffiti reporting service based in north-western Sydney.
- (2) Commends the initiative and dedication of Anthony Krkac, the founder, and the other directors of the organisation.

KIAMA STUDENT LEADERS FORUM

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the success of the Kiama Student Leaders Forum held at Parliament House on 9 August 2011.
- (2) Congratulates the participants from Albion Park High School, Bomaderry High School, Kiama High School and Smiths Hill High School for their contributions.

WESTERN SYDNEY CYCLING NETWORK

Mr NICK LALICH—That this House congratulates the Western Sydney Cycling Network, which operates out of Fairfield Showground, for their initiative that minimises landfill by using recycled bicycles and maximises the promotion of healthy lifestyles for the community.

OCTATHLETE JAKE STEIN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 17 year old Jake Stein of Luddenham for breaking a 10 year record in the under 18 octathlon at the Australian Combined Event Championships in Perth.
- (2) Notes his athletic achievements on winning Australia's first gold medal with a World Youth World record in the octathlon at the 2011 IAAF World Youth Championship Lille, France.
- (3) Commends his father and coach, Phil Stein, the assistant coaches and Athletics Australia for their guidance and support of Jake.

WOLLONDILLY NORTH ROTARY CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wollondilly North Rotary Club on its recent changeover dinner and service to the community.
- (2) Notes that the club won the Presidential Citation Award and the Bigger, Better, Bolder Award.
- (3) Notes the club's community events including an annual swap meet at Oakdale and the Youth Achievements Awards.

HAWKESBURY STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY—That this House commends the Hawkesbury SES for its professionalism and dedication over many years in relation to emergency response in times of flood, storms and road accident rescue.

SCHOOLS TREE DAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates all schools for their support of Schools' Tree Day on 29 July 2011.
- (2) Thanks every participating principal and teacher for facilitating this environmental life lesson to our young citizens.
- (3) Acknowledges the participation of Glenmore Park Public School and its principal Michelle Collins.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HUB FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Mr LEE EVANS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates everyone behind the Sutherland Shire Council's SSHED program to drive local economic growth and job creation.
- (2) Commends the Council for its innovative approach to accelerate local business.
- (3) Recognises that as of July 2011, 94 businesses benefitted from advice and support provided by the program.
- (4) Calls on the Government to continue its support for SSHED program.

DARLING POINT SOCIETY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the important work undertaken by local residents groups to create a strong and enduring sense of community in our neighbourhoods.
- (2) Congratulates the Darling Point Society on its recent successful afternoon tea at "Lindesay", the historic house, in building a sense of community.

SURF LIFESAVING

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the importance of surf life savers on our beaches each summer.
- (2) Notes that the next season of surf life saving begins in October.
- (3) Congratulates the volunteers who patrol the beaches at Shelly Beach Surf Club, Toowoona Bay Surf Club, The Entrance Surf Club and The Entrance North Surf Club.

24 HOUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER MACARTHUR INC.

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the dedication of the volunteers of the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer Macarthur Foundation.
- (2) Congratulates the board of directors of the foundation.
- (3) Notes the contribution to the Wollondilly electorate made by the volunteers of the foundation.
- (4) Acknowledges all those who have lost family members and friends to cancer.

ST MARYS SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulate St Marys South Public School on its 50th birthday on 13 August 2011.
- (2) Thanks the principal, Wayne Newton, and the organising committee, teachers and parents for their work in organising the commemoration.

DUNLEA CENTRE, ENGADINE

Mr LEE EVANS—That this House:

- (1) Commends the staff and volunteers of the Dunlea Centre in Engadine, Australia's original Boys' Town, in its mission to help boys and girls who are at risk of family breakdown.
- (2) Notes the work undertaken at the Dunlea Centre in repairing and maintaining family life.
- (3) Congratulates the centre and its supporters.

AFL PEACE TEAM

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON—That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the AFL Israeli-Palestinian Peace Team to Sydney to compete in the AFL International Cup to be held from 12 to 27 August 2011 in Sydney and Melbourne.
- (2) Commends this widely known peace initiative run by The Peres Centre for Peace and the Al-Quds Association for Democracy and Dialogue which demonstrates that Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Muslims can and do work together to reach their common goals.

CREATIVE TRADERS MARKETS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the Creative Traders Markets held in Wollondilly.
- (2) Acknowledges that such markets provide an opportunity for locals to buy and sell local produce and crafts.

GO-KAN-RYU KARATE CHAMPION TAYLAH STEVENS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes the sporting achievement of 11 year old Taylah Stevens from St Clair who won gold in the KATA event of the Go Kan Ryu World Cup in Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- (2) Acknowledges Katrina and Mark Stevens, for their support and encouragement of Taylah who commenced Go Kan Ryu as a four year old.
- (3) Commends the Premier in his support to the Stevens family in enabling Taylah Stevens to compete in international competition.

GARIE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr LEE EVANS—That this House:

- (1) Commends the members and volunteers of Garie Surf Life Saving Club.
- (2) Congratulates the Club on its efforts to keep the beach safe and beautiful.
- (3) Recognises that since its inception in 1938 no person has drowned at Garie Beach whilst it has been patrolled.
- (4) Acknowledges the club for its 1,287 lifesaving awards.

CALVARY MATER HOSPITAL ONCOLOGY NURSE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Wallsend community for its efforts to enable the employment of an oncology nurse practitioner for the next three years at the Calvary Mater Hospital.
- (2) Notes that the Newcastle-based group Supporters of Cancer raised \$90,000 and brokered a three-year sponsorship with the Newcastle Port Waratah Coal Services for the appointment of the nurse practitioner.

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANT LAURA ARCHIBALD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes the personal and academic achievements of Laura Archibald from Glenmore Park.
- (2) Congratulates Laura on being selected and sponsored by the University of Western Sydney to attend the University Scholars Leadership Symposium in Thailand in August 2011.

VIETNAM VETERANS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr RYAN PARK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 18 August 2011 was Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day.
- (2) Recognises the efforts of Vietnam veterans across the community and pays tribute to the men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice in protecting their country.
- (3) Congratulates the Vietnam Veterans Association in the Illawarra for their moving ceremony held at Flagstaff Hill on Vietnam Veterans Day in honour of those from the Illawarra who fought and died for their country.

DOUGLAS PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the green initiatives and environmental projects at Douglas Park Public School.
- (2) Encourages the school to continue their interest in the environment and the importance of sustainability.

NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM AND TAMMY HENDERSON

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tammy Henderson of Callaghan College, Jesmond on her selection for the National Youth Science Forum.
- (2) Notes the program aims to help students, moving into year 12, who have an interest in working in science.
- (3) Notes the support of Rotary, the Australian Government, research institutes and universities to the program.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN WILCOCKS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Commends John Wilcocks of St Marys for his many years of dedicated service to the St Marys Community Development Committee's Fun Run/Walk and the St Marys South Public School fundraising fun run.
- (2) Notes that John Wilcocks has organised and participated in these fun runs every year for the last 13 years.
- (3) Congratulates John Wilcocks for running in every City2Surf since the race started in 1971.

CAWDOR PUBLIC SCHOOL ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the ecology and biodiversity projects undertaken by the Cawdor Public School.
- (2) Congratulates Principal Sharon Ihlein and the staff for encouraging their pupils to be environmentally conscious.

ST THERESE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates St Therese's Primary School football team of New Lambton, who will be representing the Hunter in the 2011 final of the State-wide Catholic primary schools' rugby union knockout.

SUTHERLAND2SURF

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN—That this House congratulates the Wanda Surf Life Saving Club on the successful 40th anniversary of its Sutherland 2 Surf run held on 22 July 2011 with over 7000 entrants.

PROFESSOR HOWARD DICK PUBLIC TRANSPORT RESEARCH

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of Professor Howard Dick of the University of Newcastle and his contribution toward the Hunter Independent Public Transport Inquiry.
- (2) Notes his ongoing efforts to ensure a better system of public transport for both the University of Newcastle and the Hunter area.

APPIN PUBLIC SCHOOL GREEN GARDEN

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Appin Public School on its plans to build a green garden complete with 'bushtucker' garden and compost heap.
- (2) Commends the year 5/6 class for its presentation outlining the importance of the garden to their education in environmental sustainability.

NEW SOUTH WALES SECOND XI CRICKET TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the New South Wales Second XI cricket team will be playing in Newcastle for the first time in 20 years in a four day match in February 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the Newcastle Cricket Association for bringing the match to the Hunter.

BENNETT ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bennett Road Public School in Colyton on its 50th anniversary celebration on 2 September 2011.
- (2) Commends relieving Principal Ms Doyle and the organising committee, teachers and parents for their work in preparing for the celebration.
- (3) Commends the school for embracing the wider community by organising a 50th Anniversary Community Day to be held on 17 September 2011.

WALLSEND WINTER CARNIVALE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the 2011 Wallsend Winter Carnivale, and acknowledges the continued support of the Wallsend community.
- (2) Commends Father Robert Catt, Max McCorkell, Wallsend-Maryland Rotary and the co-ordinator Kathie Heyman.

CAMDEN HAVEN AND PORT MACQUARIE MARINE RESCUE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House recognises the ongoing services to the community by the Camden Haven Marine Rescue and the Port Macquarie Marine Rescue and the men and women who volunteer to ensure the safety of people in the water.

ROBERT GRIMSON BRAVERY COMMENDATION

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Rosemeadow resident Robert Grimson on his recently awarded commendation for bravery, presented by the Governor General.
- (2) Notes the danger Mr Grimson voluntarily placed himself in to save the lives of individuals caught in the flash flood outside of Broughton School in 2007.
- (3) Commends Mr Grimson for his service to the community.

TRIBUTE TO WARREN EVANS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes the passing of Warren Evans, one of Newcastle's finest citizens.
- (2) Notes that Mr Evans will be remembered for his dedication to youth and sport.
- (3) Notes that, in July 2012, Mr Evans was presented with the Paul Trisley 2011 Hunter Region Sports Administrator of the Year Award.

MINGARA RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the 2011 Mingara Relay for Life will be held at the Gatorade Regional Athletics Centre, Tumby Umbi on 15 and 16 October 2011.
- (2) Encourages all members of the Central Coast community to participate in the event to help celebrate and remember the lives of those who have battled cancer.
- (3) Calls on members of this House to raise awareness about this important health issue.

INDIA AUSTRALIA FRIENDSHIP FAIR

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the United India Associations Inc. India-Australia Friendship Fair took place on 14 July 2011 at Sydney Olympic Park.
- (2) Congratulates the United India Associations Inc. for its work on behalf of Indian Australians to promote multiculturalism and positive relationships within the community.
- (3) Congratulates India on its Independence Day which was recently celebrated across New South Wales.

JILLAROOS RUGBY LEAGUE SQUAD

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Newcastle sisters-in-law Rebecca and Julie Young have been named in the Australian Jillaroos rugby league squad.
- (2) Congratulates these local sports women and wishes them well in the forthcoming test match against Fetu Samoa.

SLITHER AND SLUMBER EXECUTIVE SLEEPOUT

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House congratulates the coordinators of the Slither and Slumber Executive Sleepout held on 5 August 2011 at the Australian Reptile Park which raised over \$60,000 for the homeless (Coast Shelter) and for youth suicide (Iris Foundation).

ST LUKE'S DAY CARE CENTRE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of St Luke's Day Care Centre, in the Oatley electorate, which has recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.
- (2) Commends the work of the Centre in providing respite care for people with disabilities and, in particular, the Centre's coordinators, Ruth Constable and Pam Lindberg.

SLICE OF HAVEN FESTIVAL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House acknowledges the Slice of Haven Events Committee for its work in organising the Slice of Haven Festival, which in just two years has grown to become a huge success attracting thousands of people each year.

RETIREMENT OF KEVIN THOMAS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kevin Thomas on his recent retirement from Picton High School as the Head Teacher of Social Science and wishes him a happy retirement with his wife Sue Thomas.
- (2) Acknowledges Kevin's dedication to public education and to the local community over the last 24 years.

MAX POTENTIAL PROGRAM

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates all participants of the Max Potential 2011, which is a youth leadership development and coach skills development program for young adults.
- (2) Recognises that the program was successfully run through the Mingara Recreation Club and promoted through the clubs industry with the support of 12 local high schools.

LUGARNO EVENING VIEW CLUB THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the 39th anniversary of the Lugarno Evening VIEW Club, celebrated on 15 August 2011.
- (2) Commends the Lugarno Evening VIEW Club for all the work it does in the community, particularly championing services for women, since VIEW was established by The Smith Family in 1960.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the vital services provided by Meals on Wheels.
- (2) Acknowledges National Meals on Wheels Day on 31 August 2011, which recognises over 78,700 volunteers across 740 branches in Australia.
- (3) Congratulates Meals on Wheels Central Coast for the upcoming opening of its new distribution centre at Tuggerah, which merges Gosford City Food Services Inc and Wyong Shire Food Services Inc into one organisation.

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the significant public health risk posed by prostate cancer, which claims the lives of 3,300 men each year and is equal to the number of mortalities from breast cancer.
- (2) Congratulates the Prostate Cancer Institute for its efforts to raise funds and work with the community to open stage 2 of the Prostate Cancer Centre at St George Hospital on 17 August 2011.
- (3) Commends the Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Hon Jillian Skinner MP for her commitment to improving health and medical research outcomes across New South Wales.
- (4) Commends the staff at St George Hospital and the members of the community who have supported this important initiative.

CAMDEN HAVEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House recognises the success of the Camden Haven Music Festival, which each year brings music and cultural activities to the Port Macquarie electorate.

TOM REEVE BRAVERY COMMENDATION

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tom Reeve on his recently awarded commendation for bravery, presented by the Governor General.
- (2) Notes the danger Mr Reeve voluntarily placed himself in, to save the lives of individuals caught in the flash flood outside of Broughton School in 2007.
- (3) Thanks Mr Reeve for his service to the community.

AFL INTERNATIONAL CUP

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the invaluable contribution that sport makes in bringing people of all backgrounds together to build positive community relationships.
- (2) Congratulates the AFL on its initiative in bringing teams from all around the world to compete in the 4th AFL International Cup 2011 taking place until 27 August 2011.
- (3) Commends the China Red Demons who visited Hurstville Public School and attended a luncheon to promote AFL to members of the Chinese community in Hurstville.
- (4) Encourages all members of our community to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT ATHLETE OF THE YEAR BROOKE LAWRENCE

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Brooke Lawrence on her recent success in winning the South West Sydney Academy of Sport Athlete of the Year Award.
- (2) Notes her achievement in gaining entry into the Academy's netball program and representing the Wollondilly region.
- (3) Wishes Brooke luck in her netball career in the future.

SYRIAN REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the work done by the Syrian Refugee Support Group to raise awareness and funds for displaced communities in the Middle East.
- (2) Congratulates the Syrian Refugee Support Group for its fundraising dinner on 18 August 2011.

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICE/TRAINEE OF THE YEAR JORDAN SMITH

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Brisbane Water Secondary College, Woy Woy, student Jordan Smith on winning the Central Coast Regional School Based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year Award.
- (2) Congratulates the Peninsula Village management for its support of Jordan to work at the Village to gain practical skills for his trade qualification.

HAWKESBURY RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Hawkesbury Rural Fire District annual championships presentation ceremony is on 28 August 2011.
- (2) Congratulates the volunteers and staff of the Hawkesbury Rural Fire Service for their generosity, commitment and hard work in protecting the safety and property of Hawkesbury residents.

TRIBUTE TO BROTHER CLARENCE CUNNINGHAM

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of Brother Clarence Cunningham on 18 August 2011.
- (2) Notes the significant achievement and service Brother Cunningham gave to the education industry including his accomplishments as Principal of St Gregory's College, founding Principal of John Therry Catholic High School in Rosemeadow and founding Principal of Mount Carmel High School.
- (3) Pays its respects to Brother Cunningham's family.

RESOURCEFUL AUSTRALIAN INDIAN NETWORK

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the work of the Resourceful Australian Indian Network (RAIN), which is a St George based community group.
- (2) Congratulates RAIN on its annual fundraising event on 20 August 2011.

DAFFODIL DAY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the 25th anniversary of Australia's Daffodil Day on 26 August 2011.
- (2) Thanks the Cancer Council of NSW for its ongoing work in research and support of cancer sufferers.
- (3) Notes that to celebrate this year's special anniversary there will be many events within the Hunter, including a yellow couture catwalk during Newcastle Fashion Week.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE BASE RICHMOND

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the importance of RAAF Richmond as a military institution that provides vital logistical support for military operations in times of conflict and peace.
- (2) Congratulates the New South Wales Department of Transport's Transport and Logistics Workforce Advisory Group on holding the Greenlight Transport and Logistics Day at RAAF Richmond for students in years 9 to 12 who are interested in pursuing a career in the transport and logistics industry.

CALVARY MATER NEWCASTLE AUXILIARY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Calvary Mater Newcastle Auxiliary for its wonderful effort, in presenting \$206,145 to the Hospital on 4 August 2011.
- (2) Commends the Auxiliary for raising over \$1.5 million over the past 11 years.

NSW PARLIAMENTARY DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the establishment of the NSW Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group which held its inaugural annual general meeting on 25 August 2011.
- (2) Congratulates the Member for Oatley on his election as Chair and the Member for Campbelltown on his election as Deputy Chair.
- (3) Thanks all members of this House who attended and expressed an interest in being involved with the NSW Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group.
- (4) Looks forward to working with organisations involved with diabetes and working to promote the awareness and prevention of diabetes.

HUNTER WOMEN'S SOCCER

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Australian Matildas soccer team on its success in the recent World Cup.
- (2) Notes the positive impact that this success has had on young females across the Hunter, who are following in the Matildas' footsteps and joining local teams.
- (3) Notes that 2011 has been a record year for girls registrations in soccer teams, as 46,238 have joined up to play alongside the boys in their local teams.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

Ms NOREEN HAY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the teachers, students and parents in the 147 National Partnership schools for their outstanding performance in literacy and numeracy.
- (2) Particularly recognises the outstanding efforts of students at Cringila Public School, Cringila; Farmborough Road Public School, Unanderra; and St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Warrawong, who participated in this worthwhile program.
- (3) Acknowledges that the participating schools used the available National Partnership funding to establish intervention programs to meet the specific needs of individual students, which has resulted in an increase in the percentage of students at or above the minimum NAPLAN standards.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Bills

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

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the passage through all stages at this or any subsequent sitting of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill.

Members of the House would be well aware of the need to move quickly in relation to the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill, of which notice was given today. The intent of the legislation is to ensure that industrial organisations that cease to operate effectively and are not providing the services that should be provided to their members may be salvaged.

Mr Chris Hartcher: A good bill.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is a good bill that has been born of much concern about activities in the Health Services Union, which has highlighted the need for this urgent legislation to be passed. Members of the House would be well aware that in the normal course of the past year and a half I, as Leader of the House, have made every effort to ensure that the Opposition and the Parliament are given more than ample notice of legislation. In most instances the legislation passes through this place in the normal order with five days notice, but this legislation must be passed to the upper House and through Parliament today.

There are serious allegations of persons acting dishonestly and improperly with regard to the Health Services Union. There is absolutely no question that this House should have a sense of urgency about dealing with this type of legislation. Members of Parliament have a moral responsibility to union members to ensure that the unions are functioning properly, appropriately and honestly and that moneys are being used for the purposes for which union members expect them to be used.

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 (for Bills) No. 1 lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 105 (3).

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

North West Rail Link

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [3.19 p.m.]: My motion deserves priority because today in our nation's capital, far removed from the concerns that ordinary Australians face on a daily basis, the Federal Greens-backed minority Labor Government will be delivering a budget that affects our future. For too long it has promised big but it has failed to deliver. Labor should stop listening to spin doctors and pandering to minority groups and listen to those who speak with credibility. As my motion states, Business Council of Australia Chief Executive Officer Jennifer Westacott said that the North West Rail Link is the most important piece of infrastructure in Sydney. Research commissioned by the Property Council confirms the North West Rail Link as Sydney's number one transport priority.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will be heard in silence.

Mr BART BASSETT: The rail link will save commuters up to 3½ hours travel time to the central business district and remove 160 buses from the central business district in the morning peak hour. I condemn

the Federal Labor Government and Anthony Albanese for ignoring the infrastructure needs of the people of my electorate and of western Sydney. This motion deserves priority because the decisions made by the Federal Parliament in the budget appropriations bill will affect this State's economic future. Across western Sydney there is growing anger that infrastructure is used as a political tool rather than as a community need. In addition to respected groups such as the Property Council and the Business Council of Australia, the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils—a regional body that represents local government across western Sydney, that has strong Labor ties and whose counsellors, Labor, Liberal and Independent, think of their communities first and foremost—backed a resolution calling on the Federal Government to reallocate \$2.1 billion from the Parramatta to Epping rail link to the North West Rail Link.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr BART BASSETT: For too long Labor ignored western Sydney, failed to build the north west and south west rail links and failed to solve the \$12 billion question, that is, the missing link—the M4 East extension to connect the M4 to the city. This was as a result of the poor, short-sighted, populist decisions by the Wran Government in the 1970s to sell off the M4 preserved corridor. Over the past 16 years Labor talked big but, as usual, it failed to deliver. Now Labor has a chance to right its wrongs, to back western Sydney, the North West Rail Link and this priority motion. The refusal by the Federal Labor Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, to reallocate funding to build the North West Rail Link is an insult to the people of western Sydney. As the Minister said a moment ago, we should congratulate the president of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils because she stood up for western Sydney. Today the New South Wales Opposition should acknowledge the importance of delivering the North West Rail Link. It promised it for a long time and it should support this priority motion to reallocate the money.

Transport Infrastructure

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [3.22 p.m.]: This motion deserves priority because Premier O'Farrell needs to stop bickering and passing the buck and start building infrastructure. From tonight \$200 million is heading to New South Wales to help this do-nothing Government plan for the M4 East, the M5 duplication and the F3 to M2 tunnel link. The Government needs to stop making excuses, accept this money and just get on with it. This lack of progress on reducing congestion and building our essential infrastructure has become an embarrassment. Nearly every day in our major newspapers there is a story lamenting the lack of vision of this Government. Today's editorial in the *Daily Telegraph*, which is entitled "Stop bickering and start digging", is the latest example.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: This motion is urgent because this Government is more than one year into its term and we still do not know which projects will be built or when they will start. The motion is urgent because motorists from across Sydney are spending hours every day not with their families or adding to the productivity of our State but cursing the congestion on our roads, which is getting worse every day. Motorists from Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly sit for hours every day in the M5 car park lamenting the lack of action by this Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Lakemba will be heard in silence.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Motorists from the Blue Mountains, Penrith, Mulgoa and across western Sydney sit trapped on the M4 every day wasting time because this Government cannot get its act together. This motion is urgent because the Government must accept the money that is on offer from the Federal Government and begin planning work to fix New South Wales. Sydneysiders who are sitting on our clogged roads are sick and tired of waiting for the Premier to take action.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Freight trucks meander in traffic and are stuck getting from rail to port, thus undermining business productivity. People's commutes to work resemble nightmares and mums and dads are getting less time to spend with their kids. It is not easy juggling a job and the shopping while getting the kids to child care, school, sports practice or music lessons. People have a right to wonder when this Premier and this Government will take action to ease the gridlock. I am proud of the fact that the previous Labor Government

built the world-class Sydney orbital motorway network. The Premier had 16 years in opposition and more than a year in government to work out a plan for the last remaining connections. Unfortunately, we still do not know which roads will be built or when that building will start. This infrastructure Premier, who has not built any infrastructure, seriously believes that Sydney's aviation needs are best served by an airport in Canberra. [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion of the member for Londonderry be accorded priority—put and resolved in the affirmative.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [3.27 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that the Business Council of Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer Westacott, has said the North West Rail Link is "the most important piece of infrastructure" in Sydney;
- (2) notes that research commissioned by the Property Council confirms the North West Rail Link as Sydney's number one transport priority;
- (3) notes that the rail link will save commuters up to 3½ hours of travel time to the central business district [CBD] and remove 160 buses from the CBD in the morning peak; and
- (4) condemns the Federal Government and the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport for ignoring the infrastructure needs of the people of Western Sydney.

It is an all too familiar pattern with Labor making grand infrastructure announcements that are poorly costed and ill thought out and that end in expensive failures. This was established by former Premier Bob Carr's Transport Action Plan 2010. If that plan had been delivered we would not be arguing about the North West Rail Link; it would have been built and operational. Bob Carr, the architect of the failed plan, left the sinking ship and was rewarded by the faceless men of the New South Wales Labor machine with a place in the Senate and the Federal Labor Cabinet—the same Labor Cabinet that is now snubbing western Sydney. The voices of anger are growing, even from those opposite.

The Property Council, the Business Council of Australia, local councils across western Sydney and even Federal Labor members are calling on Labor to build the North West Rail Link. But Labor continues to ignore the needs of western Sydney—a region that is bigger than South Australia. Bob Carr's Government released thousands of new houses into the north-west growth centres but it did not prioritise the provision of infrastructure. The community was promised the North West Rail Link and the Coalition will deliver it. The Prime Minister's backbench members acknowledge its importance. In 2011 the Federal Labor member for Greenway, Michelle Rowland, said that she had bought land in Glenwood 14 years ago with the expectation that the North West Rail Link would be built by now. State Labor should stand by its commitments to the thousands of families across western Sydney who, like Labor member of Parliament Michelle Rowland, purchased family homes expecting the rail link to be built.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Coalition went to the election with a plan to build the North West Rail Link and is building it. The project has been properly planned and costed and it can be delivered. The State's submission to Infrastructure Australia on the North West Rail Link comprised 279 pages, as the Minister stated. The submission for the Parramatta to Epping rail link comprised a flimsy five pages, yet Anthony Albanese insists on allocating \$2.1 billion of taxpayers' money for that project while Labor snubs the North West Rail Link yet again. This stunt was an attempt at saving Labor's bacon at the Federal election rather than acting in the long-term interests of New South Wales. Even Bob Carr's former director general of planning, Jennifer Westacott, now argues emphatically that the North West Rail Link is the most important piece of infrastructure in Sydney.

But one key western Sydney Labor member of Parliament remains on the fence. For backing Julia Gillard against Kevin Rudd, David Bradbury was rewarded with the position of Assistant Treasurer in the Gillard minority Greens-backed Labor Government. What has David Bradbury done to argue for Federal budget funding for the North West Rail Link and get a good outcome for his community? Absolutely nothing. He wants to impose more buses on an already overcrowded road network as if it somehow is a gift to the people of

western Sydney. Ed Husic, another western Sydney Federal Labor member of Parliament, said on 19 April 2011 that the North West Rail Link needs to be built and that all levels of government needed to work together to make the project a reality.

Ed Husic is spot on. We do not know where the Leader of the Opposition and member for Blacktown, John Robertson, stands on the issue of reallocating funding for the North West Rail Link. This is his chance to make his position known. Building the North West Rail Link is a high priority and I call on John Robertson and State Labor members of Parliament to support my motion. The community is fed up with spin and broken promises. Labor needs to honour the promise to build the North West Rail Link and support us, otherwise the entire Labor parliamentary teams from New South Wales, Queensland and Canberra will be able to fit into one of those buses— *[Time expired.]*

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.32 p.m.]: The member for Londonderry says that members of the public are sick of spin and broken promises. Someone should walk out of this Chamber and go straight to the Premier's office to let him know that, because judging by his talk in this place he is not aware of that fact. The member for Londonderry said also that the angry voices are growing. Indeed, they are, about this do-nothing Government and this do-nothing Premier. They are angry about this Government being mired in reviews and not being able to put one foot in front of the other unless some expert tells it how to do it.

Mr Bart Bassett: We're building.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I do not know what this Government is building, but it is not any infrastructure. This Government is about running deficits. In one budget it increased net debt by 40 per cent with a forecast to double government debt over the next four years. Government borrowings are through the roof with deficits and red ink for as far as the eye can see. Deficits are fine if they are handled as we did during the global financial crisis by building \$18 billion worth of infrastructure in one year and allocating \$56 billion over four years to keep people employed.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Where is it?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The Royal North Shore Hospital is one example, with \$1 billion being allocated to it along with \$1 billion for Port Botany. Every hospital in New South Wales was upgraded or rebuilt. That is where the money went when Labor was in government. That is why we suffered only a very slight drop in employment during the global financial crisis and a return to surplus in one year. If Sydney's transport needs are so obvious to this new Government, why does it take 18 months to conduct a review and appoint external people to do the bleeding obvious? A planning review will take 18 months and a transport review with Infrastructure NSW will take 18 months. Infrastructure NSW was a core election promise of Barry O'Farrell when he was Opposition leader. Another core election promise he made was that he would immediately sink \$5 billion into Infrastructure NSW. After some 15 months of this do-nothing Government, the bank account of Infrastructure NSW is punctuated by a big, fat zero; not one cent of money has been provided to Infrastructure NSW. It would not make any difference anyway because nothing would be built. Paragraph 1 of the motion states:

... the Business Council of Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer Westacott, has said the North West Rail Link is "the most important piece of infrastructure" in Sydney.

Jennifer Westacott is a very smart woman; that is why we engaged her. She was a terrific contributor to New South Wales. If the Premier thinks she is so good, is she the chair of Infrastructure NSW? No. Is she the chief executive officer? No. Is she on the board with all the blokes?

Mr Nathan Rees: No.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: No. Is she being used by Minister Hazzard in his planning review with the other two blokes?

Mr Nathan Rees: No.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: No. It is fine to quote Jennifer Westacott's view about the North West Rail Link—everyone has a view about the North West Rail Link. But the people who really matter to this Government are the ones it trusts the most—people like Nick Greiner. What does he say about the North West Rail Link? In the *Daily Telegraph* he said:

[It] was about fulfilling a political promise and easing lifestyle pressures ...

It was not about productivity or boosting the economy. Nick Greiner said:

[it] was about lifestyle pressures rather than being value for money.

... the \$9 billion line had a low "cost-benefit ratio" ...

The northwest rail line ... is unequivocally happening ... it hasn't got the highest cost benefit ratio in NSW, everyone knows that—

behind the M4 East and M5 East for a start—

that's not an issue.

It certainly is not an issue for the Premier. The article continued:

But he said Infrastructure NSW wanted to ensure it was "very clear to the government and the public ... the costs of political commitments".

Those are the comments from the State infrastructure guru. The Federal infrastructure guru Michael Deegan equally is as unequivocal as Nick Greiner. He said that the State Government had not explained how it planned to incorporate trains on the network—just a small matter. It is a train line, but a plan incorporating trains has not yet landed on the Premier's desk and the Minister for Transport is getting fonder of herself by the day. A *Sydney Morning Herald* article states:

The chief executive officer of Infrastructure Australia, Michael Deegan, said he was not convinced that the long-promised rail link to Rouse Hill was the top transport priority ... based on—

the other thing we really do not need to worry about with this Government—

little economic analysis.

That is just a small detail. He said:

We can't see what happens at Chatswood ... The capacity between Chatswood and Wynyard is limited on current arrangements.

The \$2.1 billion on offer from the Federal Government would fix that, but this Government is only ever about one thing—politics. This is all about politics. For the record, I wish I had another 30 minutes.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no standing order to allow that.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [3.37 p.m.]: Hundreds and thousands of residents across north-western Sydney were shocked and bewildered yesterday at the arrogance of a Labor Federal Government that had just told them that they do not count, that Labor could not care less about them and that the project they had been promised for years but which State Labor never tried to deliver will not be supported by Julia Gillard and Anthony Albanese. The flimsy justification for this stance is that the Federal Government does not believe the North West Rail Link is a high priority. Apparently, this huge area of Sydney not served by high-volume public transport is invisible to Labor. Apparently, news of the north-west growth centre, which has been central to the State's planning for more than a decade, has not yet reached the ears of Anthony Albanese or Julia Gillard. For the benefit of those yet to hear this news, I shall update the House on land already released or in the pipeline for Sydney's north-west.

Over the past few years the following precincts have been rezoned: Colby with 800 dwellings for approximately 2,500 people; north Kellyville, 4,500 dwellings for of the order of 12,000 people; Alex Avenue, 6,300 dwellings for about 18,000 people; Riverstone, 9,000 dwellings for 27,000 people; and the romantically named Area 20 Precinct, 2,500 dwellings for 6,400 people. Precincts that have been exhibited in preparation for rezoning for residential areas include: Box Hill with 10,000 dwellings for 28,000 people; Schofields precinct with 3,300 dwellings for 9,500 people; and Marsden Park precinct with approximately 10,000 dwellings for 30,000 people. In addition there has been rezoning of business and industrial precincts: the Riverstone west precinct has an estimated capacity for 12,000 jobs; Marsden Park industrial precinct has an estimated capacity for 10,000 jobs plus 1,200 dwellings adjacent to the town centre; and the Box Hill industrial precinct has approximately 245 hectares of employment land and some housing areas.

This produces a total of almost 50,000 new homes and 140,000 additional people moving into the area in coming years in rezoned and exhibited precincts alone. Beyond that, five other precincts are yet to be released

for development planning, located at Vineyard, Riverstone east, Marsden Park north, Schofields west and Shanes Park. Congestion with the existing population in north-western Sydney is already acute. Many of the suburbs comprising my electorate of Riverstone, such as Glenwood, Stanhope Gardens and Kellyville Ridge, were built in the expectation of the coming railway line. [*Time expired.*]

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [3.40 p.m.]: "Just as we promised we are building this line—no ifs, no buts", said Barry O'Farrell on 7 September 2011. "The North West Rail Link is the biggest transport infrastructure project in this State since the construction of the Harbour Bridge, and the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are absolutely committed to delivering this."

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Keira does not need any help.

Mr RYAN PARK: That was said on 12 December 2011. "I am proud to be serving in a Government that is getting on with the job of delivering the much-needed North West Rail Link", said by Mr Conolly on 30 May 2011. "In Sydney we are building the south west and north west rail links", a quote from the Premier dated 23 April 2012 in the ethnic media. My point is simple: The Government made the promises to build this project. The Government did not say before the last election the project was contingent on Federal funding. The Government did not say before the last election it can be done only if it gets help from Canberra. No. What the Government said and what the Government has continued to say up until the last 48 hours is: The Government will build it. If the Government will build it, as it has said, it should stop bringing meaningless debate to this Parliament and get on with the job of building it. That is what the Government promised before the last election and that is what the Government continued to promise in the lead-up to this budget. It is only in the last 48 hours that the Government has said it has some problems. It is time for the Government to deliver on its promises.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [3.43 p.m.], in reply: I thank my colleagues for their contributions to this debate. I thank the member for Riverstone for his contribution and the two members opposite, the member for Maroubra and the member for Keira, whom I like.

Mr Nathan Rees: What about the member for Liverpool?

Mr BART BASSETT: I like the member for Toongabbie too, but I will leave the backbench out of it.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Londonderry has the call.

Mr BART BASSETT: Judging by their response, the members opposite are not often told they are liked. I am glad I have made their day. Those opposite are still very confused; they have learnt nothing. The member for Keira said that the building of the North West Rail Link was "contingent" on Federal money. I do not believe I have heard that word used before in this debate. It is a new word to associate with the North West Rail Link because the Government is building the North West Rail Link—no ifs, no buts. Let me make that clear. The member for Maroubra questioned the suggestion that people in the community are angry about infrastructure. I will point out to him why they are angry. They are angry because for 16 years they were promised many things. They were promised the widening of the M5 East; it never happened. They were promised the North West Rail Link numerous times; it never happened.

They were promised the F3-M2 connection; it never happened. They were promised the Parramatta to Chatswood link. What did they end up with? They ended up with the Chatswood to Epping rail line, at double the cost. The Sydney Metro light rail was not delivered. I could keep going, but I will not. The public were bored with their promises without commitment. Those opposite have learnt nothing, nor have their Federal Labor colleagues. This Government is getting on with its commitment to build infrastructure such as the North West Rail Link. The people of western Sydney know we are building the North West Rail Link and it is not contingent on Federal funding.

Western Sydney was promised \$2.1 billion Federal funding for rail infrastructure prior to the last Federal election. The infrastructure priority is the North West Rail Link. The \$2.1 billion that is available should be reallocated to the North West Rail Link. If the Federal Labor Government wants to sit down and discuss what that entails and what the \$2.1 billion will fund in relation to the North West Rail Link, this Government will do that. At present, there is a public exhibition of an extension of the North West Rail Link through to Richmond or the Western Line. The Federal Labor Government will not sit down and talk about that because they want an excuse not to provide the funding. I thank the members for their contributions to this debate and I commend the motion to the House.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 66

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

Noes, 18

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The motion accorded priority having concluded, the House will now consider Government business.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS) BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Greg Smith, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [3.56 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012. This bill proposes to make amendments to the provisions in the Industrial Relations Act 1996 that deal with misconduct in industrial organisations registered under that Act. Industrial organisations are bodies that represent the

industrial interests of employers or employees. An organisation registered under the New South Wales Act becomes a legal entity and has the right to participate in the industrial relations framework established under that Act. A similar approach is taken in the national Fair Work system. Industrial organisations may be registered under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009. It is not unusual for there to be separate national and State registered organisations representing the same kinds of workers for the purposes of operating in each jurisdiction.

The Health Services Union is such a union. It is registered under the national law and has a branch called the HSU East Branch, which covers New South Wales and Victoria. Under the State law, there is a legally distinct entity called the HSUeast, which is registered in the State system and is able to operate in the New South Wales industrial relations system. It does not operate in the Federal jurisdiction. The two organisations, while separate legal entities, have substantially the same members. The rules of the State union provide that persons elected to office in the branch of the national union are taken to be elected to office in the State union; this includes officers elected in Victoria. The finances of the two organisations are intertwined. It is understood that members of the national union's branch pay their membership dues to the State union.

The current state of affairs within the Health Services Union is notorious. There are serious allegations of wrongdoing against various office holders. Several investigations are underway, including the inquiry by Fair Work Australia, which has taken three years to make its report, and the investigation by the NSW Police Force which culminated in a dramatic raid on the union's premises last week. The Commonwealth Minister for Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten, has applied to the Federal Court for a scheme to be set up under section 323 of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act to provide for an administrator to be appointed to run the union and arrange for the reconstitution of its branches. Controversially, Minister Shorten's application would extend to the State union.

Currently, the New South Wales Act does not contain any provision that would permit the establishment of a scheme or the appointment of an administrator to clean up a union that is in the kind of mess that the Health Services Union is in. This is a significant shortcoming. The bill seeks to address those shortcomings in the New South Wales Act. It is incumbent on the New South Wales Government to ensure that State law contains the powers necessary to ensure that State-registered organisations operate appropriately. That should not be the task of the Federal Minister. The main proposal in the bill is to provide that the responsible Minister—in this case the Minister for Finance and Services—is able to appoint an administrator for a State organisation. This would address the most serious and urgent cases, such as the situation of the Health Services Union. That is a significant and far-reaching power which is not to be exercised lightly or capriciously.

For that reason, a high threshold must be surmounted before the power can be exercised. The bill accordingly provides that the Minister must have reason to believe that there is an ongoing investigation into alleged gross misconduct by a collective body of an organisation or one or more officers of that organisation, or that an investigation has found that there is evidence of such alleged gross misconduct and that the appointment of the administrator will enable proper administrative arrangements to be put in place. In this context, gross misconduct includes any conduct that would constitute a serious offence within the meaning of this division of the Act, which includes fraud or dishonesty; offences in relation to the conduct of elections; or offences in relation to the formation, registration or management of a registered organisation.

Orders made by the Minister under this provision deal with the appointment of an administrator to conduct the affairs of a State organisation. Officers of the organisation cease to hold office once the administrator is appointed. The administrator may make arrangements for elections to fill the now vacant offices. Importantly, the exercise of these powers by the Minister would be subject to review by the Supreme Court, which may affirm or set aside the Minister's order, or alternatively make another order in accordance with the powers proposed in the bill.

In addition, a section modelled on section 323 of the national law, but with appropriate modifications to ensure that it operates effectively under the State law, will be inserted into the New South Wales Act. That section will permit persons with a sufficient interest, and the Minister, to apply to the Industrial Relations Commission in Court Session for a scheme to be put in place where an organisation is not operating effectively or its officers engage in gross misconduct or an office is vacant and cannot be filled. Unlike section 323—the shortcomings of which have been revealed by questions asked by the Federal Court judge who is dealing with Minister Shorten's application—this section will make it clear that such orders may be sought by the Minister and that schemes may include the appointment of an administrator.

The appointment of administrators will be possible even if an organisation is registered in both the State and Commonwealth jurisdictions. If an organisation is dually registered, the administrator appointed in the State jurisdiction may be the same person as the one appointed in the Commonwealth jurisdiction. Generally speaking, administrators appointed under these provisions will have the job of ensuring that the organisation operates effectively while the relevant organisational and administrative problems are addressed and fresh elections for official positions take place, as appropriate. It will be an offence to fail to assist or to provide information to an administrator and, in particular, to fail to provide documents reasonably requested by the administrator. Administrators will be indemnified in relation to any act or omission done in good faith during their term of office as an administrator.

A number of other amendments are proposed that would shore up the capacity to deal with dysfunction or misconduct within unions. These include express powers to investigate the internal affairs of unions to determine whether officers of a union have contravened express requirements in the New South Wales Act that they not act dishonestly or make improper use of their positions for personal profit. Changes to the regulations will ensure that persons with appropriate skills and experience are able to be appointed to undertake any such investigations and to prosecute any alleged contraventions.

Finally, the bill proposes to extend the statute of limitations for offences in relation to the duties and liabilities of officers of organisations from the current 12 months to five years by amending section 398 of the New South Wales Act. The amendments proposed in this bill are crucial to ensure that unions operating in the New South Wales industrial organisation are properly regulated with a view to ensuring maximum probity. These entities are given special status and privileges under the State industrial law. Most importantly, these organisations are supposed to be democratic and must be accountable to their members. This bill will give teeth to those commitments. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.05 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in this place on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012. The Opposition received the bill for the first time today. I can indicate that we will not oppose the bill in this place but we will give the matter some consideration and may seek to move appropriate amendments in the other place. The objects of the bill are expressed as follows:

- (a) to enable the Minister to appoint an administrator for a State industrial organisation if there is an ongoing investigation into or evidence of gross misconduct by its officers and proper administrative arrangements need to be put in place,
- (b) to enable the Industrial Relations Commission to make orders approving schemes to enable a State industrial organisation to work more effectively, hold elections or to do other things if the organisation ceases to function effectively, its officers engage in gross misconduct or an office is vacant and cannot be filled,
- (c) to enable the industrial Registrar to arrange for elections for a State industrial organisation where all of its offices are vacant due to action against an associated federal organisation,
- (d) to require the Industrial Registrar to notify the Director-General of the Department of Finance and Services of instances of misconduct by officers of State industrial organisations,
- (e) to confer on inspectors powers to investigate misconduct offences by officers of State industrial organisations,
- (f) to extend to 5 years the limitation period for prosecutions for misconduct offences by officers of State industrial organisations,
- (g) to enact other provisions of a consequential or savings or transitional nature.

As I said, this side of the House certainly does not oppose the appointment of an administrator to the State branch of the Health Services Union. The issue seems to have arisen because of the 1969 case of *Moore v Doyle*, in which a previous Premier in this place—Neville Wran—appeared for one of the parties. That case involved a well-known principle of industrial law that there can be a State branch of a national union and a separately State-registered union mixed in together. From time to time there inevitably will be conflicts and differences in various jurisdictional aspects.

We certainly do not oppose in principle the concept of appointing an administrator to the Health Services Union or generally appointing an administrator to manage the affairs of unions where the union is dysfunctional or where there is appropriately serious misconduct. I do not think it is possible to regard what has been revealed about the Health Services Union as being in any other category. One can only unequivocally condemn the behaviour of some of the union officials. In a sense, this side of the House is angrier about that than anyone else because that is where we come from and it makes us extraordinarily angry that people in such

positions have behaved in that way. It is entirely unforgivable, regardless of the legal consequences that flow. Certainly, the Health Services Union should have an administrator appointed—that is the view of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and Unions NSW. Health Services Union members are hardworking hospital members and they deserve to be looked after by a functioning union that is focused on their interests.

For the Health Services Union to function into the future it must advocate on behalf of its members in a proper and democratic way. The union must be accountable to its members and uphold the highest standards. Its members have not been properly served by the Health Services Union East branch and it is appropriate that an administrator be appointed. It is worth making the point that provisions to appoint administrators currently exist in the Federal legislation and, in a sense, it is almost a historical accident that those provisions are not in the New South Wales legislation. There are certain provisions for individual union officials to be dealt with and removed and the proposed legislation is, in a sense, an extension of the logic of that position. Frankly, this Parliament is playing catch up to the Federal jurisdiction.

Section 323 in the Federal legislation relates to court-appointed administrators. If the Opposition has a concern about this legislation it is in the provisions that vary from the Federal model. As I say, Opposition members will consider the legislation in more detail and may then move amendments in the upper House. It would seem to me though that the appropriate procedure is for an independent tribunal to appoint administrators rather than merely a government by Ministerial fiat. There can be no valid argument about that taking too long. Urgent *ex parte* applications are made every day of the week to all tribunals and there is no reason why that could not be done with extraordinary expedition.

Once again, having looked at the bill briefly after having received it only today, the Opposition is also concerned that the ministerial powers seem able to be triggered merely by allegations and investigations without any findings. If the appointment of an administrator was by a court perhaps our concerns would not be so great, but when they are merely by an executive on the basis of allegations that have been raised without a concluded investigation it may well spread the net far wider than the situation with the Health Services Union, which this bill is said to be aimed at. By way of analogy, allegations were made last year and indeed run with by the then Opposition and now Government against the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU]. Those allegations were made by a couple of liars called Bates and Ballard and last week were comprehensively thrown out of the Supreme Court.

Under the provisions of this bill, as the Opposition members understand them on their first reading, those allegations could have triggered the dismissal of the leadership of the union last year. That is notwithstanding that those claims have now been established by a Supreme Court judge—hardly someone in the pocket of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union—as entirely without merit and indeed as lies. If this bill allows that to happen then there may need to be some amendment to that process. By analogy, councils can be dismissed but only after an inquiry and only after definitive findings are made. To follow the logic of that through, there could be a situation where a union is conducting a claim against the State Government in which it is seeking to have an increase in wages.

If an allegation is made without substantiation or any concluded investigation the Government could then intervene and remove the leader of the union which is issuing the wage claim against the government. An entirely unsatisfactory situation would result. When we look further at the legislation we may say that the situation can be prevented by the way in which it is drafted. At first blush, having not had the time to take a detailed look at the bill, that seems to be a possible outcome and I would not have thought that that was in line with the policy. I add that those concerns relate merely to the situation in which the Minister directly appoints an administrator in the urgent category of cases.

I think there is an alternative way of doing that, but the broad principle is undoubtedly correct. There should be a facility for a tribunal to dismiss a union's leadership and replace it with an administrator. As I said earlier, that flows logically from the provisions that already exist about individual officials and to that extent the New South Wales jurisdiction is perhaps playing catch up with the Federal jurisdiction. Certainly there is no doubt in the minds of Opposition members that the Health Services Union East branch needs to be replaced by an administrator. What has been revealed in that branch is entirely unacceptable and inevitably leads to a feeling of revulsion on this side of the House.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [4.13 p.m.]: The purpose of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012 is to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to address situations in which gross misconduct by elected officials is alleged or suspected or there is other dysfunction in the internal

operation of a registered organisation. By way of background, the Act provides only limited powers to address alleged or suspected gross misconduct by officials of registered organisations. These shortcomings have been highlighted by recent events concerning the Health Services Union and its State-registered body, the Health Services Union East.

The current Federal Court action has been referred to previously. It was initiated by the Commonwealth to address these issues. We believe it will be hampered by jurisdictional issues that prevent the Federal Court from taking action against the Health Services Union East, which is a State-registered organisation. The bill principally operates under chapter 5 of the Industrial Relations Act, inserting a new division 11 of part 4 of chapter 5, which deals with the regulation of industrial organisations. The amendments were outlined well by the Attorney General in his second reading speech. I will not go over the specifics of each provision; suffice it to say that there is a need to put beyond any doubt the power to appoint an administrator. Premier Barry O'Farrell made that point in foreshadowing the introduction of this legislation to this Parliament.

I will not dwell on the circumstances that have brought forward the need for this legislation, but I am pleased to see them acknowledged across the floor of this Parliament. The Government obviously welcomes the Opposition's support for the urgent passage of this bill. But the pressing need for this legislation must be pointed out, as well as the need to introduce it in a way that puts the public interest first. There has been a perception, if not a reality, that the Federal Minister, Mr Bill Shorten, is more driven by a desire to have a say in who will become the union's administrator and how that process might be managed. The New South Wales Minister for Finance and Services, the Hon. Greg Pearce, pointed out in a letter to Mr Shorten that the Federal Minister was intruding on the New South Wales Government's jurisdiction.

Indeed, Justice Flick of the Federal Court also queried whether Mr Shorten had a right to intervene in what is believed to be the first time a Federal Minister has tried to remove a union's elected officials. As reported in today's *Australian Financial Review*, Justice Flick said, "The application should not have commenced unless you were certain on jurisdictional issues." He went on to say, "The court either has the power or it does not." Justice Flick was cautioning the barristers representing both the Federal Government and the six Health Services Union branches on what can be construed as an inappropriate course of action. We are now here taking the better course of action in the appropriate jurisdiction. If the Federal Government was determined to act it had plenty of time over the past two to three years to act on the serious allegations at the core of the matters that are now driving this legislation. But some would say that, like an ostrich, Prime Minister Gillard and her Government had their head in the sand.

Now that the sand has blown away and they risk losing their head there is a desperate scramble to try to do something to control what is clearly a scandalous situation and to limit the political fallout. Indeed, I note that some of my Federal colleagues have told Mr Bill Shorten, who is now "appalled and disturbed", using his own words, that his actions are too little too late. I do not think it is being overly cynical to question why somebody who is now professed to be quite embarrassed as a former union official has not acted as a current Federal Minister. This legislation is appropriate and needed, and must proceed through both Houses of this Parliament with alacrity. To be fair, like fair-minded individuals in the public, I welcome the stated desire of the Federal Government and the New South Wales Labor Party to address the dysfunction that we now clearly see within the union movement.

I hope that kind of behaviour is not representative of the broad union movement. Indeed, I am sure that there are many very capable and honest union officials. But the point that also needs to be made is that, in addition to having the power to appoint administrators, there needs to be appropriate governance arrangements for transparency and accountability as part of a union approach to governance. To that end I welcome comments both from Bill Shorten and the incoming Australian Council of Trade Unions secretary, Dave Oliver, indicating that there is a desire to ensure that appropriate governance practices are tightened and to assure union members that union membership fees are being used for the right reasons. Clearly there are some serious instances when that has not been the case.

With increased transparency other instances of inappropriate union official behaviour may be uncovered. If any member of the Labor Party—Labor being more acquainted with union matters—is aware of indiscretions or inappropriate behaviour, they should come forward now instead of allowing these issues to foment and grow. They should not hide the issues in the way that clearly has been attempted in relation to some of the appalling behaviour that lies at the core of the current scandalous situation. The Government has stated the real need for this legislation. We welcome the Opposition's support for the bill while recognising the right of the Opposition to propose amendments in the other place. But on behalf of the broader public of New South

Wales we must have appropriate measures in place to ensure that industrial organisations that cease to operate effectively and are not providing the services to their members that should be provided are salvaged, and so that alleged wrongdoing can be investigated and dealt with.

In particular, when an officer or officers of an organisation are suspected or alleged to have acted dishonestly or to have made improper use of their positions for personal profit, the bill provides for the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission and, in extreme cases, the Minister for Finance and Services to appoint an administrator who will take over the running of the organisation pending fresh elections for official positions. In response to the comments made by the shadow Attorney General I state that the instances underpinning this legislation are extreme cases. The bill also proposes that the New South Wales industrial relations inspectors will have a full range of powers to investigate any alleged offences, including the right of entry to offices of the organisation and the power to seize relevant evidence. If the conclusion is reached that officers of an organisation have breached the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act prosecution action may be initiated.

The shadow Attorney General expressed concern about the appropriateness of the Minister having the right to appoint an administrator. The provision will be used only in the most extreme or urgent cases. The threshold for taking that action has been appropriately set at a high level. The Minister must be able to reasonably form the view that there is an ongoing police investigation into alleged gross misconduct within the organisation before being able to appoint an administrator, and appointment of an administrator will enable proper administrative arrangements to be put in place. Furthermore, any officer of an organisation has the right to apply to the Supreme Court of New South Wales for a review of the order.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [4.23 p.m.]: I support the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012. At the outset I state that I am pleased to note that the Opposition supports the bill. But the fact that this legislation is necessary is not only a sad indictment of the union in question, the Health Services Union East, but also a very sad indictment of the Labor Party. This whole sorry affair has cast a pall not only over the Federal Parliament but also over the Federal Government. The Federal Government's handling of this very unfortunate matter has been poor. It has taken three years for Fair Work Australia to investigate the matter.

Mr Troy Grant: That's longer than the police royal commission.

Mr ANDREW GEE: Yes it is, and questions have to be asked not only about why this legislation is necessary but also why it took so long for Fair Work Australia to do something about the matter. Why did Fair Work Australia not cooperate with the New South Wales and Victorian police? That is the question.

Mr Troy Grant: It's not their culture.

Mr ANDREW GEE: The facts of the case speak for themselves: it is not their culture. They should have cooperated with the police.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: It's a Labor culture.

Mr ANDREW GEE: As the member for Myall Lakes rightly points out, it is Labor culture, and I thank him for his comment. It is a culture and approach that is characterised by delay and obfuscation. The Health Services Union East has been treating its membership with absolute contempt and has been aided and abetted by the Federal Government. This week in the Federal Court the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten, sought to intervene in proceedings before the court. As reported in the *Australian*, the Federal Government has been attempting to prevent, or at least delay, the release of a number of reports on this issue, but in particular the Temby report. Federal Court judge Geoffrey Flick found the timing and rationale of Mr Shorten's intervention to be curious. He stated:

I have a degree of scepticism as to the timing of this application ... The minister should have made it much earlier than today.

That sums up the way the Federal Government handled this matter from day one—delay and obfuscation. It is all very well for the member for Liverpool to quietly, in his feline manner, say, "We have no objection to it", and then to quietly slink away, but the problem is with the Labor Party and the way the matter has been handled. Labor has not been clear or transparent, and that is why the legislation is needed.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: They tried to cover it up.

Mr ANDREW GEE: Labor tried to cover it up and tried to delay it. Even now the Federal Government still relies on the vote of Mr Thomson. We have heard all types of details as to the way in which the infamous credit card was used, the way it apparently was stolen by people or parties unknown, and then returned only to be used again in yet another or different location.

Mr Troy Grant: He has more tricks than Houdini.

Mr ANDREW GEE: As the member for Dubbo points out, Mr Thomson has more tricks than Houdini. The member for Dubbo probably could elaborate on those, but I will not go there. This legislation is necessary to ensure that industrial organisations that cease to operate effectively and that are not providing services that should be provided to their members can be salvaged, and that any alleged wrongdoing can be investigated and dealt with. It is the union membership, besides the broader public and Australian democracy, that has been duded. It is ironic that it has fallen to The Nationals and Liberals to clean up this mess and introduce legislation that will assist to protect union members who have been treated so poorly by their own organisation. The Labor Party, which is the political wing of the union movement, let this happen and let matters unfold on its watch. It has been absolutely appalling to witness this disaster unfold. The whole affair has an absolute stink about it.

A particular feature of the bill is that when an officer or officers of an organisation are suspected or alleged to have acted dishonestly or have made improper use of their positions for personal profit, the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission and, in extreme cases, the Minister for Finance and Services, may appoint an administrator to take over the running of the organisation pending fresh elections for the official positions of that organisation. But it is intended that this power can be used only in the most extreme or urgent cases. The threshold for doing so has been set very highly—appropriately so—and the Minister must be able to reasonably form the view that there is an ongoing police investigation into alleged gross misconduct in the organisation and that the appointment of an administrator will enable proper administrative arrangements to be put in place. Further, any officer of an organisation subject to such an order by the Minister can apply to the Supreme Court of New South Wales for a review of the order. The Supreme Court would have the power to affirm, vary or set aside the order made by the Minister. So there are plenty of checks and balances in this legislation.

Again, at various times the unions have been demonstrating in Macquarie Street, and they have been in this House, yet it is the Liberal-Nationals Government that has introduced this legislation to help clean up rogue unions such as this one. It is commendable that the Attorney General is at the vanguard of introducing such legislation in this place. The bill requires that any alleged offences concerning the misconduct of officers or collective bodies of an organisation reasonably suspected by the Industrial Registrar must be notified to the Director General of the Department of Finance and Services and, if necessary or appropriate, an investigation into the alleged offences can then be initiated by the director general. In practical terms, the investigation would be carried out by industrial inspectors with a full range of the necessary powers: the right of entry to organisation premises, the power to require the production of records and the power to seize relevant evidence. In recent days we have had good examples of the attempted spiriting out of documents from the building.

This legislation has plenty of teeth to it. Regulation changes will make it clear that the director general can appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person as an inspector to conduct such an investigation. If the investigation finds there is or has been misconduct and offences against provisions governing the duties and liabilities of officers of the organisation, prosecution action may be initiated against those officers. I can see the member for Macquarie Fields is taking this on board. He knows this is good legislation. He is smiling: he likes it. If the nature and/or effects of that misconduct are such that they constitute gross misconduct or they have caused the organisation to cease to function effectively, interested parties or the Minister may apply to the commission for action to have the organisation reconstituted or enabled to function effectively. There is always a spot on this side of the House for the member for Macquarie Fields.

Dr Andrew McDonald: I'm a vicious Labor attack dog.

Mr ANDREW GEE: The member for Macquarie Fields has aptly described himself as a vicious attack dog. That wild canine opposite seems to be on the leash at the moment. He has been caged. I am grateful for that, given that I have the call. I am not sure that the Mount Druitt mauler, who sits next to the member for Macquarie Fields, would be so kind. An administrator may be appointed to rectify the problems identified before the commission. If necessary or appropriate, some or all of the official positions in the organisation may

be declared vacant and fresh elections may need to be conducted. In urgent or extreme cases the Minister may appoint an administrator directly. If he does so all office holders in the organisation cease to hold office when the administrator is appointed. I commend the bill to the House. [*Time expired.*]

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.33 p.m.]: I support the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012, which amends the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to address situations in which gross misconduct by elected officials is alleged or suspected or in which there is other dysfunction in the internal operation of a registered organisation. In particular, if an officer or officers of an organisation are suspected of acting or alleged to have acted dishonestly or made improper use of their positions for personal profit, the bill provides that the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission, and in extreme cases the Minister for Finance and Services, may appoint an administrator to take over the running of the organisation pending fresh elections for the official positions of that organisation.

The Industrial Relations Act provides only limited powers to address alleged or suspected gross misconduct by officials of registered organisations. These shortcomings have been highlighted by recent events concerning the Health Services Union and its State-registered body, Health Services Union East. Current Federal Court action to address these issues has been initiated by the Commonwealth. However, as previous speakers have said, it may be hampered by jurisdictional issues that prevent the Federal Court from taking action against the Health Services Union East, a State-registered organisation. We have all heard the stories about the former Labor member's involvement with the union, the corruption and scandals. It has been going on for some years.

I read just recently that \$500,000 was missing from the union's funds. That organisation represents hardworking people in the health industry. When I was working as a nurse I was a member of the Nurses Association and I paid my dues. The Health Services Union East did not exist then, but funds collected by that organisation being used to pay for visits to brothels and parties, and to fund an election campaign and other things is absolutely disgraceful. But that is Labor Party *modus operandi*. This is exactly the way the Labor Party in New South Wales operated for 16 years. The unions and the Labor Party are inextricably linked. You cannot pull them apart. The member for Liverpool said, "It is where we come from."

The right faction of the New South Wales Labor Party has members in the Legislative Council and one member in the Senate. The problems it has faced for the past 16 years—scandals, mismanagement, corruption, incompetence, negligence, paralysis and inertia—are now being experienced by the Federal Labor Party. An example of its *modus operandi*, scandals and corruption, is Milton Orkopoulos. Did the Labor Party do anything about that? Was it angry about that? No, it was not. It attacked the whistleblower. Nothing could be worse than attacking the whistleblower, the poor woman who put up her hand. The New South Wales Labor Party had Ministers such as Kelly, Macdonald—looking after his mates in relation to mining applications and so on—and members such as Paluzzano, D'Amore, Tripodi, Obeid, Stewart and Campbell, and the list goes on.

This is exactly what is happening with the Health Services Union East and Labor. It is a cultural thing. Many in the Labor Party and in unions believe that a credit card given to them by the organisation is for their personal use and that they can do anything they want with it. They believe there is nothing wrong with using it to pay for services provided in a brothel. What is wrong with using the card at a brothel? It is mind-boggling, but it is part of their DNA. The Labor Party was warned before the election not to preselect this bloke Thomson. Did it listen? No, it pre-selected him because he had an estimated \$200,000 of Health Services Union funds to put into the campaign. This bill will undo all that. This bill will put in an administrator to look after the union, to look after all those hard workers who are contributing to their union, and to try to provide good governance. Former great Labor Party stalwart Rodney Cavalier said:

Basic principles of governance have broken down in the NSW Labor branch.

I add that they have broken down also in the Federal branch. Let us take not just his word. Former Australian Labor Party president, Senator Steve Hutchins, said:

New South Wales Labor ... is in opposition after four of the most shameful years in history.

All these people were State or Federal members of Parliament because of their connections with unions.

Dr Andrew McDonald: I'm not.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Except for the very good member for Macquarie Fields.

Dr Andrew McDonald: The vicious attack dog.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The vicious attack dog who, I am pleased to see, is back in the House after spending an hour in time-out. He was yellow carded and sent to the sin bin. It is good to have him back in the House attacking me viciously from the Opposition benches. This bill has been introduced, not before time, to try to undo what the Federal Labor Government has been trying to do for the past three years—trying to cover up and protect a member on whose vote it relies. The Federal Labor Government is not legitimate as it relies on the votes of people such as Craig Thomson, Peter Slipper, members of The Greens—poor old Labor is learning a lesson in dealing with them—and the three Independent members. That is why we have had a soap opera for the past three years and the Federal Government has not been able to govern. That also is the reason for the state of our economy and our problems. This Federal Government will do anything. As Graham Richardson's old Labor handbook says, "Say anything and do anything to remain in power." Only by being in power can it deliver to its unions and its masters.

This bill addresses those issues. It requires any alleged offences of misconduct by officers or collective bodies of an organisation reasonably suspected by the Industrial Registrar to be notified to the Director General of the Department of Finance and Services. If necessary or appropriate, an investigation of the alleged offences can be initiated by the director general. If this had been done three years ago we would not have had the problems we had. Every week in the paper we read all about the State or Federal Labor Party soap opera. In practical terms, an investigation will be carried out by industrial inspectors with the full range of necessary powers: the right to enter organisation premises, power to require the production of records and power to seize relevant evidence. Changes to regulations will make it clear that the director general can appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person as an inspector to conduct such an investigation.

If the investigation finds misconduct and offences against provisions governing the duties and liabilities of officers of the organisation prosecution action may be initiated against those officers. If the effects of the misconduct are such that they constitute gross misconduct or have caused the organisation to cease to function effectively, interested parties or the Minister may apply to the commission for action to have the organisation reconstituted or enabled to function effectively. Let us hope the inspectors can undertake that task because the health workers of New South Wales deserve a proper union doing the right thing by its members. The last thing we need is Labor Party members of Parliament abusing that confidence and those privileges. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [4.43 p.m.]: I will make a brief contribution to debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012. I echo the words of the member for Liverpool and shadow Attorney General by saying that, after the little time it has had to examine the detail, the Opposition supports the principle of the bill. Any clause that may need adjusting will be raised in the Legislative Council. I did not intend to make a substantial contribution to the debate, but I thought it was a bit rich for the two lawyer members of The Nationals to tell us about the virtues of being honest and above board. However, because their contributions were so stupid they were not worthy of my interjecting. The object of the bill is:

to amend the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* as follows:

- (a) to enable the Minister to appoint an administrator for a State industrial organisation if there is an ongoing investigation into or evidence of gross misconduct by its officers and proper administrative arrangements need to be put in place,
- (b) to enable the Industrial Relations Commission (the *Commission*) to make orders approving schemes to enable a State industrial organisation to work more effectively, hold elections or to do other things if the organisation ceases to function effectively, its officers engage in gross misconduct or an office is vacant and cannot be filled,

I shall not refer to the other objectives, which deal with auditing, et cetera. If we adopt the principle of the previous two Nationals speakers, that the performance of an individual is in the DNA of the whole organisation, then we must accept that any corrupt police officer is representative of a systemic problem with the whole Police Force. On their premise, if a State or Federal Labor member of Parliament is considered to have done something wrong, as the allegations suggest in the Thomson case, then the whole Australian Labor Party is wrong. Of course, anyone with the brains that enable one to walk on two feet would know that that argument is absolutely ridiculous.

The member for Liverpool made a good point: things that damage the union and the labour movement cut deeper on our side of politics than they would on the shallow bunch opposite. Anything that ruins or tarnishes the reputation of the union movement hurts the particular union and perhaps in some way affects its ability to continue to achieve community reforms. I was talking to a friend who had arrived in Australia recently from the United Kingdom. He said that he admired former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and I would have suggested that perhaps on more occasions than not he had probably voted for her. However, in talking about the

British movement he said, "I recognise that without the union movement and without its fights on behalf of the working people" of his country, not to mention the Western world "kids would still be working in the coalmines." In one sentence he recognised Margaret Thatcher, the most conservative of conservative politicians, and the role of the union movement.

Any criticism of an organisation because of the behaviour of one, two or however many is a ridiculous argument. I will not take up my time by reading out the list of Coalition members of Parliament who have fallen foul of the law, whether criminal or otherwise. Does that suggest that every member of The Nationals somehow is tainted because of one individual's behaviour 10 or 20 years ago? Of course not. Is every Liberal member of Parliament tarnished and carrying the burden of behaviour and reputations of people who held the office of Premier from that side of politics? Of course not. That argument is so stupid it barely warrants that much comment. I repeat that the two Nationals members who proffered those suggestions were lawyers. I know that the legal profession is an organisation whose members have never ripped off anybody!

Dr Andrew McDonald: Never.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: Never! I am sure that throughout the thousands of years of existence members of that profession have never misused their entitlements! With my tongue planted firmly in my cheek I can say that I have no doubt that on no occasion would lawyers abuse their office or entitlements, such as company credit cards. It does not mean that because of those indiscretions every lawyer in this country is a crook. What an absurd analogy from those Government members who spoke in debate on this bill. Federal Minister Bill Shorten said that our auditing laws should be toughened not just for union officials but also for corporate employers who run our banks, our insurance companies and our law firms. There should be more scrutiny of the use of those funds.

The cases that were referred to earlier tonight concern the misuse of union subscriptions. If the head of a bank were to misuse funds many more people would be ripped off and they would have to pay additional bank fees and charges. A strong case has been made out for strengthening and tightening our auditing system as it applies to those who are responsible for maintaining the funds of industrial entities or private companies. If our auditing laws are toughened as a result of the mess that has been created by the union movement, the Labor Party or even private enterprise some good will come out of it.

It has been said that constitutional difficulties might arise between State and Federal legislation. Even if the motivation for this bill is political it should be supported if it corrects those constitutional technicalities. As the member for Liverpool said earlier, the Opposition supports the bill. I find outrageous and I reject totally the earlier statements by The Nationals members that the behaviour of one or two members of the Labor Party amounted to systemic misconduct. Those Nationals members who alleged that the Labor Party had bad DNA used former Minister Rodney Cavalier and former Australian Labor Party President Steve Hutchins to support their arguments. I am amazed that they could not find one Coalition member, past or present, to support their arguments. I welcome this bill, which will tidy up a legal situation that exists between Federal and State legislation. If it improves our auditing processes it will be a good thing. The Opposition supports the principles of this bill, subject to any amendments that might be made in the Legislative Council.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [4.53 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012 and wish to refer to a number of the points that were raised by the member for Mount Druitt. It is interesting that the member criticised two Nationals members for referring to former Labor members to support their arguments. It would have had more impact if Opposition members had referred to the hopelessness of the current Federal Government. When talking about the Federal Labor Government in Canberra and former Labor governments in this State, those Nationals members could have drawn from a legion of Coalition members who have highlighted the deficiencies of the Federal Labor Government and members of the Labor Party in New South Wales. There are many decent Labor Party members of Parliament. However, the prevarication of the Prime Minister and her Government in delaying action against the member for Dobell has done great disservice to the nation and to those battlers who are members of the Health Services Union.

The refusal by Fair Work Australia to hand over the documents requested by the New South Wales and Victorian police is a disgrace. Fair Work Australia had the power and the right to hand over material relating to investigations but it refused to do so. The four-year delay in producing its report is a national disgrace. To rely on the vote of the member for Dobell to pass the budget and other bills in an effort to prop up a dying government is an abomination of democracy. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that New South Wales industrial relations legislation contains adequate remedies in cases where misconduct by officials or collective governing bodies of registered organisations has rendered those organisations dysfunctional and incapable of

responding to their members' needs. A case in point that we have been talking about and that everybody has heard about is the Health Services Union. Currently the Health Services Union is the subject of several investigations, including two by the New South Wales and Victorian police respectively.

The Health Services Union is a registered organisation under both New South Wales and Commonwealth legislation but as it stands the relevant New South Wales legislation does not provide for the independent investigation of the type of conduct in question and nor does it provide for the appointment of an administrator with the job of cleaning up the organisation, which is a big job. This is out of step with Commonwealth legislation which is currently the basis of Federal Court action to appoint just such an administrator for the federally registered part of the Health Services Union. This bill proposes new powers, firstly, for the Minister for Finance and Services to appoint an administrator if he or she believes that there is an ongoing investigation into alleged gross misconduct by a collective body of an organisation, or one or more officers of that organisation, or an investigation has found that there is evidence of such alleged gross misconduct and that the appointment of the administrator will enable proper administrative arrangements to be put in place.

It is true to say that these are far-reaching and broad powers. For that reason the bill has been drafted in such a way that a high threshold must be surmounted before the Minister's power can be enlivened. To issue an order under these provisions the Minister must be reasonably convinced that there is an ongoing investigation into alleged gross misconduct by a collective body, or one or more officers of an organisation, or that an investigation has found that there is evidence of such alleged gross misconduct and the appointment of an administrator will enable proper administrative arrangements to be put in place. In this context gross misconduct includes any conduct that would constitute a serious offence within the meaning of this division of the Act, which includes fraud or dishonesty; offences relating to the conduct of elections; or offences relating to the formation, registration or management of a registered organisation. In short, the touchstone for activating this ministerial power is an investigation or evidence of serious misbehaviour in a registered organisation.

Further, the exercise of these powers by the Minister is to be subject to review by the Supreme Court, which may affirm or set aside the Minister's order or, alternatively, make another order in accordance with the powers proposed in the bill. The result is a transparent and accountable ministerial power which can be used only in the most extreme or urgent situations. Similar powers to those conferred on the Minister are conferred on the Industrial Relations Commission in Court Session with the obvious difference that the approval of a scheme to address dysfunction and/or misconduct in an organisation will, in the first instance, be the subject of proceedings before the commission. In addition, new powers to investigate allegations of misconduct will be conferred on industrial inspectors to ensure that any allegations of misconduct or other misbehaviour in organisations are investigated speedily and thoroughly. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Greg Smith agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

CO-OPERATIVES (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 3 May 2012.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [5.00 p.m.]: The Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement provides for the Co-operatives National Law as new national uniform template legislation for

regulating cooperatives in all States and Territories. I support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012, which will enable that new Co-operatives National Law, and the national regulations, to be applied in New South Wales. The law is set out in schedule 1 to the bill. The law will apply to the non-banking cooperatives, which are also known as general cooperatives. The banking cooperatives are sometimes called financial cooperatives, such as credit unions, building societies and friendly societies. They are regulated under separate legislation administered by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. Cooperative housing societies will also continue to be dealt with under the authority's separate laws.

Cooperatives are a significant part of the New South Wales, Australian and world economies. In Australia there are about 1,700 registered cooperatives and in New South Wales about 680. About three-quarters of cooperatives are established as not for profit in that they have rules that prevent them from distributing any surplus to their members. Yet these cooperatives may provide crucial services to their members, such as health and medical care, job searching, training, housing or child care. They operate in a diverse range of industries, such as book sales, clubs, dairy produce, fishing and fruit marketing, rural grocery and petrol supplies, grain handling, cotton growing, labour hire, plumbing supplies, property sales, recycling, sugar milling, tourism and wine sales. New South Wales cooperatives have a total turnover of around \$2.9 billion and total assets of around \$2 billion, employ around 10,000 people and have around 1.8 million members. Cooperatives provide an organisational structure for individuals and small businesses through which to acquire goods and services in economies that increasingly are dominated by large corporate organisations.

The Co-operatives National Law has the same objects as the current cooperatives legislation of New South Wales. These include enabling the formation, registration and operation of cooperatives; promotion of cooperative principles; and protection of the interests of cooperatives, their members and the public in the operations and activities of cooperatives. The reforms will ensure consistent content and administration of laws across all States and Territories, providing greater certainty and lowering costs and red tape with cross-border operations. This will be achieved by jurisdictions either directly applying the uniform template Co-operatives National Law or making their own legislation consistent with the law. All jurisdictions will use their best endeavours to administer the Co-operatives National Law uniformly, in line with the agreement. Automatic mutual recognition of cooperatives by other jurisdictions will facilitate cooperatives conducting operations across State and Territory borders. Currently, a cooperative needs to apply separately to each jurisdiction in which it wishes to operate.

Simplification of the financial reporting and auditing requirements for small cooperatives by using a risk assessment based system will reduce costs and red tape for those cooperatives. Responsibilities and duties for directors and officers of a cooperative have been updated and made consistent with those requirements applying to directors and officers under the Corporations Act. This will mean that directors and officers in similar circumstances in a cooperative will be treated similarly to those in a company. Director liability for corporate fault under the Co-Operatives National Law has been revised according to the Council of Australian Governments director liability reform. More flexibility for a cooperative to raise funds from both members and the public has been created by the introduction of the option to use cooperative capital units by cooperatives in all jurisdictions.

To save reinventing the wheel, cooperatives laws have for some time referenced Corporations Act laws where appropriate; for example, in dealing with disclosure of information for fundraising from the public, insolvency, liquidation and winding up situations. The referencing of the Corporations Act has been updated and made consistent across jurisdictions. The introduction of enforceable undertakings is a cost-effective method of facilitating compliance with the law; for example, the registrar may accept a written undertaking from a cooperative to take action to prevent contravention of the law. This can be reinforced with a court order, applied for by the registrar, provided there is agreement from the cooperative. The adoption bill and the law have been approved by all States and Territories through the Council of Australian Governments consumer affairs forum out-of-session process.

The Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement requires States and Territories to secure the passage and proclamation of their laws within a set time of 12 months from the assent of the New South Wales Co-operatives (Adoption of National Laws) Act, or such further time as may unanimously be approved by the Council of Australian Governments consumer affairs forum. However, as the United Nations has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Co-operatives, the States and Territories, including New South Wales, are working towards the commencement of the Co-operatives National Law during 2012, to coincide with this international year. One of the three goals set by the United Nations for this international year is to encourage governments to establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of

cooperatives. Commencement of the Co-operatives National Law in 2012 would meet that goal and is therefore a fitting tribute to the celebration of the International Year of Co-operatives in New South Wales and in the other States and Territories. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.07 p.m.]: I speak today in debate on the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012 and state from the outset that, in accordance with the Opposition's position, I will support the legislation. The bill is a step forward in what has been a long road in creating a consistent set of laws across Australia to regulate cooperatives. Cooperatives are mutual organisations run for the benefit of their respective members. There are many forms of cooperatives. They provide a large number of services to the community from health care to employment services. Some cooperatives provide an essential social role in the community. They may take the form of social or sporting clubs, where people are able to come together. Some cooperatives are industry specific. They allow people in specific fields to come together to use their cumulative numbers to promote the interests of their particular field. For instance, many small-scale farms and family farms have formed agricultural cooperatives to compete with large-scale commercialised farms.

In New South Wales there were approximately 680 registered cooperatives for the 2010 financial year. They covered many aspects of the community. As such it has been vitally important to make sure that the laws regulating cooperatives in New South Wales are essentially comparable with similar legislation across Australia. I note the road to uniform legislation has been a long one. The process of introducing uniform cooperatives legislation started in 1996 when the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General of Australia agreed to a core set of provisions for cooperatives to be introduced by each State and Territory. Despite such intentions, it has been generally recognised that the original attempts fell short of the goal of achieving uniformity. In 2007 the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs again saw the different States and Territories commit to the implementation of uniform legislation.

In December 2009 a draft national law for cooperatives was launched. The objectives of the draft national law aimed to provide freedom to operate on a national basis, better access to external capital funding and an accessible, modern legislative environment. It is important to note that the first objective of the bill—to provide freedom for cooperatives to operate on a national basis—is aimed at addressing recognised concerns that the current legislative framework throughout Australia leads to competitive disadvantages for the cooperatives sector, as it imposes restrictions and compliance costs that do not apply to non-cooperative entities.

This bill represents the commitment of New South Wales to the process of creating uniform national regulation. Its main purpose, according to the Minister for Fair Trading, is to enable the uniform Co-operatives National Law and the national regulations to be applied in New South Wales. These regulations cover corporations that are not banking cooperatives; such bodies are governed through other legislation and beyond the scope of this bill. The bill also introduces a number of amendments to existing legislation, again aimed at providing more efficient legislation for cooperatives. The first amendment seeks to introduce automatic mutual recognition of cooperatives across all eight States and Territories.

The current framework is cumbersome in the sense that cooperatives have to be registered in each State or Territory in which they are active. That process requires the payment of requisite fees and the processing of associated paperwork in each State or Territory. Such duplication is unfair to cooperatives, which at times have to compete with non-cooperative entities that do not have to comply with such regulations. Mutual regulation will remove the administrative shackles, allowing cooperatives to operate across State and Territory boundaries with greater simplicity. The bill also will simplify the financial reporting and audit requirements of small cooperatives. The bill will introduce changes to the duties and responsibilities of directors and officers of cooperatives to make their statutory obligations consistent with the Corporations Act.

Further, the bill will amend the liability provision of cooperatives. It will make directors of cooperatives liable for any contravention of the law where there is a clear link between their actions, deviation from their responsibilities and the contravention of statutory provisions. Finally, the bill will seek to introduce cooperative capital units. The objective of cooperative capital units is to provide greater flexibility for cooperatives to raise funds from their membership base and the general public. This reform was initially introduced in New South Wales and has become part of the uniform Co-operatives National Law. In conclusion, the Opposition supports the bill.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [5.12 p.m.]: I speak on the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. Cooperatives are mutual organisations principally operated for the benefit of their members. There are two types of cooperatives: distributing and non-distributing. Distributing cooperatives

predominantly operate in wholesale and retail trades, transport, agriculture, manufacturing and property services. In general, distributing cooperatives maintain a proportion of any surplus to build the capital of the organisation and then disperse any remaining surplus to members. Non-distributing cooperatives are restricted from making distributions to members. Those cooperatives deliver benefits to their members through mechanisms such as access to shared equipment and business services and lower charges for services or products. Non-distributing cooperatives are found in agricultural produce handling, consumer cooperatives and professional organisations, as well as cultural and sporting clubs. Traditional not-for-profit activities, such as child care and community services, also can be found in the non-distributing cooperative sector.

State and Territory legislation enabling a cooperative to become incorporated as a legal entity is very similar across jurisdictions, as it is based on a set of core consistent provisions developed in 1996 by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. Those 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 with other entities. Those impositions include additional burdens on cooperatives through outdated corporate governance provisions and financial reporting requirements, additional compliance costs on cooperatives that wish to trade across State and Territory borders, and inconsistent provision for access to capital markets to enable expansion through external funding.

In 2007, to address inconsistent State and Territory legislation and competitive disadvantages that exist in comparison to entities operating under the Corporations Act 2001, the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs [MCCA] agreed to implement nationally uniform legislation for cooperatives. A draft Co-operatives National Law and consultation regulatory impact statement were released for public consultation in December 2009. The objectives of the proposed law are to ensure that there are no competitive advantages or disadvantages for cooperatives when compared to corporations by providing freedom to operate on a national basis, better access to external capital funding and an accessible, modern legislative environment.

I take this opportunity to enlighten the House about some of the fabulous local cooperatives in my region that will benefit from these reforms. One such cooperative is HunterNet. HunterNet was incorporated in 1992 and is a network of small- and medium-sized manufacturing, engineering and consulting companies located in the Hunter region of New South Wales. It was formed as a non-trading, not-for-profit cooperative and involves more than 150 companies that are active in national and international markets in defence, power generation, mineral processing, transportation and major resource projects.

HunterNet's website indicates that HunterNet was formed as a response to the changing economic climate of the 1990s, which saw many of the smaller manufacturing and engineering companies competing in a more limited market. HunterNet markets the combined capability of the members, provides business development and training opportunities and promotes the Hunter as a manufacturing and engineering region of excellence. The network provides member companies with the opportunity to take part in activities previously out of reach of smaller enterprises, including training and development, networking, joint marketing initiatives, joint project bids, focused task forces, trade missions and tendering. Relationships with key bodies such as Industry and Investment NSW, Regional Development Australia-Hunter, the Hunter Export Centre and the University of Newcastle provide the network with additional support, services and weight in the political and business arenas.

The success of HunterNet members in winning work for major projects in areas such as shipbuilding, aerospace, rail and mining on an individual and collective basis will be a key factor in achieving future success for the region as the Hunter gears up for its next stage of industrial development. With many new industrial and mining projects coming forward, the Hunter will truly become Australia's leading industrial and manufacturing region. The message that all Hunter members of Parliament consistently bring to Government is that if the Government provides us with the tools we will drive the New South Wales economy through this century. HunterNet holds a very popular awards night. It is one of the leading nights in the region for Hunter manufacturers. Manufacturers in our region cherish HunterNet awards and, as it is such a competitive environment, winning one of these awards is no small achievement. HunterNet is a fabulous advocate for manufacturing in our region and I congratulate the work of John Coyle as well as board members Richard Everleigh, Garry Baunach, Nick Killen, Tim Hardy, Stephen Cowan, Anita Hugo, Jeff Phillips, Chris Reeve and John Gambrill.

Another iconic cooperative in my region is the Newcastle Fishermen's Co-operative. The Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative—formerly the Newcastle District Fishermen's Co-operative—was formed in 1945 to

service the needs of local commercial fishers by providing fuel, ice, gas, cold storage, mooring facilities, transport and the marketing of the daily catch of seafood either locally or in Sydney. It has 130 shareholder members who work independently in their fishing businesses in the estuaries or on their fish or prawn trawlers, depending on their individual endorsements. Deregulation of seafood marketing in 1999 forced the cooperative to compete for the product from individual fishers with other registered fish receivers. Therefore, it provides subsidised services to ensure the continued support of members to guarantee supply to their own organisation and safeguard their investment in the industry. The volume of seafood consigned through the Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative over the past 20 years has been consistent with any variations influenced by adverse weather conditions.

Mr Assistant-Speaker, as a former resident of the Hunter you would be aware that the Newcastle Fishermen's Co-operative is a hive of activity on the Thursday before Good Friday and on Christmas Eve. People will queue from 3.30 a.m. on Christmas Eve to get their seafood. It is a Hunter institution. Some of my earliest memories are of being down at the wharves with the ships bringing in what was then bycatch—Balmain bugs—and selling them off cheap because everyone was buying prawns. But as we know, the formerly humble Balmain bug is no longer bycatch. Today my children love a visit to the Fishermen's Co-operative. They are still adjusting to the idea that the fish on ice are not about to be returned to the sea like Nemo is in the cartoon, but nonetheless it is a good life lesson for them.

Cooperatives have made an enormous contribution in my electorate. HunterNet has promoted manufacturing from the Hunter to the rest of the country and the world. At a more local level the Newcastle Fishermen's Co-operative has made a significant cultural contribution. Cooperatives are a most valued part of our community. These reforms will make cooperatives better able to compete on an even footing with corporations and will be of great benefit to them. This is another positive and strong reform from the Department of Fair Trading. It is legislation that our side of the House can take pride in. It will have enormous financial benefits throughout the New South Wales economy in the years ahead. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.22 p.m.]: At the National Housing Co-operative Conference held in March this year speakers argued that it was time for cooperatives to move forward, to "engage the community and promote and advocate the cooperative option as an alternative to investor-owned models of business". This year is the International Year of Co-operatives. Speaking at the recent conference, the chief executive and principal of the United Kingdom Co-operative College, Mervyn Wilson, said this special year presented an opportunity to "demonstrate how cooperatives can change the lives of people throughout the world." He noted that for "too long Australia's cooperative sector has been invisible in the global cooperative community." Other speakers pointed out that cooperatives and mutuals "had not explained what cooperatives are about". One addressed the delegates with these words:

[We have] got to explain to people [what] co-operatives [are] and how they work. We need to be a bit more brave as co-operatives.

Cooperatives have been declining in broad numbers over recent years in Australia. It is pertinent to ask whether their time has come and gone. In my opinion, we can never say that our communities would be better off without this form of business organisation. In 2009, as the world reeled from revelations about the dodgy practices of financial institutions overseas, the chair of Co-operatives Australia, Mr Tony O'Shea, had this to say about the place of cooperatives:

The Global Economic Crisis has created a favourable climate for the more widespread use of co-operatives as a form of enterprise very well suited to weather the storms caused by rampant capitalism and greed.

Boards and Management of Co-operatives are able to take a longer term view than their Public Company counterparts, as their thinking is not driven by the pressure of having to maximise their share price on a stock exchange.

Across the world cooperatives operate according to seven key principles: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for their community. According to the regulatory impact statement prepared for the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs:

Cooperatives are mutual organisations which are operated for the benefit of their members. Cooperatives are distinguished from other forms of organisation by their democratic structure and the fact that capital is used to service the common needs of the members, rather than to provide individual benefit. Cooperatives are also distinguished from other business enterprises and organisational structures because they operate according to internationally agreed cooperative principles developed by the International Cooperative Alliance.

These organisations operate as financial institutions. They provide advice on tenancy matters and help with group food purchasing opportunities. Some cooperatives are involved in manufacturing, while many are active in the hospitality industry, providing meals and accommodation. Yet others work in health services, forestry, education and cultural and recreational services, providing otherwise unaffordable sporting opportunities such as ski clubs. They are in construction, agriculture and fishing. According to the regulatory impact statement, as at June 2000 there were 2,350 registered cooperatives in Australia, falling to 1,726 by September 2009 and approximately 1,700 now. This is unfortunate. Cooperatives have a valued history in this nation and have been central to rural and regional life—a way of getting things done in a world outside the big cities. By removing the drive for profit it has been possible to deliver prices and services comparable to those found in cities. They are also, in combination, a significant source of employment, with around 10,000 people in this State currently employed by cooperatives.

Of the 680 cooperatives registered in New South Wales, 10 have their home in the Albury region. They work in areas such as the arts, in the provision of taxi services, housing, LPG gas and Indigenous services, and in staging the mighty Henty Machinery Field Days. For example, the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative Limited operates in a "culturally appropriate and sensitive community-controlled environment that maintains a holistic approach to service provision and emphasises the importance of family and community". It provides a medical clinic and undertakes research. The legal structure of the cooperative helps maintain a community focus on the needs of its members, not on profits or success measured purely in business terms.

Where we have erred is in ignoring the impact of legislative inertia on cooperatives, effectively making this legal structure more restrictive and in some cases more expensive to operate than an ordinary limited liability company. Progress in regulating corporations has not been matched by similar reform for cooperatives. Whereas the financial cooperatives, such as building societies, credit unions and friendly societies are regulated under legislation administered by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, the remaining or general cooperatives are regulated and supervised by the New South Wales Department of Fair Trading Registry of Co-operatives and Associations under the Co-operatives Act 1992.

The Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012 is based on new national uniform template legislation proposed for all States and Territories under the terms of the Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement. The Legislative and Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs, formerly the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs, agreed to adopt the Co-operatives National Law and set in train the process of updating and improving the laws governing cooperatives in 2007. The aim is not simply to update the regulation of cooperatives but to set in place a legislative structure that also encourages communities to establish new cooperatives. This Government is acting now to remove entrenched competitive disadvantage.

The bill pulls our various State and Territory jurisdictions back together for consistency of rules and practices. Importantly, there is simplification of financial and auditing requirements for small cooperatives so that they do not drown in red tape reporting. We also will see the introduction of enforceable undertakings as a cost-effective method for ensuring compliance with applicable laws. With the introduction of mutual recognition we will at last have a scheme that encourages rather than discourages cooperatives to operate in more than one jurisdiction, making it more affordable to expand their services across borders. The duties of responsible officers and directors will align with those responsibilities under corporations law.

The bill before the House will ensure that the uniform Co-operatives National Law and the national regulations will take effect in New South Wales from the date of commencement of the Act. As I have noted, one of the reasons for renewed interest in tackling this task is that 2012 has been declared the International Year of Co-Operatives. What we are debating today must be seen as a small piece of an international movement to keep the cooperatives legal structure as a viable and affordable option for grassroots communities that want to organise so as to better pursue quality of life and financial security. As part of a national scheme, this bill provides opportunities for fresh engagement by communities in the marketplace through the mechanism and organisational structure of cooperatives. For the reasons I have stated, I support the bill.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [5.30 p.m.]: Cooperatives are people-focused businesses and organisations that contribute significantly to the New South Wales economy. According to the New South Wales Registry of Co-operatives and Associations, in 2010 there were approximately 680 registered cooperatives in New South Wales. They conduct operations in a wide range of industries, such as property sales, tourism, grocery outlets and various clubs and service providers. Apart from an estimated membership of approximately 1.8 million, the contribution to the New South Wales economy is well worth pointing out. With

an annual turnover of approximately \$2.9 billion and assets worth approximately \$2 billion, cooperative businesses employ approximately 10,000 people and provide a structure for small businesses in which to compete with larger corporations.

The worldwide representative body for cooperatives, the International Co-Operative Alliance, has developed principles to guide the interpretation of the law with regards to cooperatives: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education and training, and cooperation and concern for the community. I do not have to look far to see the benefits of such values within cooperatives. Several cooperatives are based in my electorate of Castle Hill, including Australian Valuers Institute Coop Limited and the Elderly Australian Chinese Homes (NSW) Co-operative Limited. I commend the Minister for introducing this bill to the House. Public and stakeholder consultation tells us not only that the current cooperatives legislation needs to be reformed but also that the proposed amendments have much support.

It has been more than 15 years since the laws governing cooperatives were reviewed. Following consultation with the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs, a uniform template for all States and Territories was developed, and it is easy to see why. Many problems exist with the current legislation. Co-operatives doing business across States and Territories are disadvantaged due to restrictions that relative companies do not face. Financial reporting requirements for small cooperatives are cost burdens that are not always justified and need to be applied more flexibly. Inconsistent provisions exist in the current cooperatives legislation, which uses certain provisions from the Corporations Act 2001 that need revision and updating. Providing States and Territories with the option to apply for national cooperatives uniform template legislation will improve efficiency for both the cooperatives and governments.

The main function of the bill is to apply Cooperatives National Law and national regulations in New South Wales. The proposed legislation will be the cooperatives national uniform template legislative scheme that is provided for in the Australian Uniform Cooperative Laws Agreement. At present, the various States and Territories promote a favourable interpretation of the cooperative principles, and the bill's amendments will continue this approach. The reforms affected by the Co-operatives National Law are very much needed in New South Wales. As a Government, we appreciate the difficulties that small businesses face and understand the importance of reducing impediments to the growth of small businesses. We understand the importance of providing certainty to all parties that are involved with cooperative businesses that are seeking to avoid high costs in operating between borders. As a Government we support measures in this bill that will remove the current requirement for cooperatives to seek registration in each jurisdiction in which they wish to operate.

Those registration and compliance costs impose an unfair financial burden. Governments have an obligation to cut red tape and reduce the costs that impede the growth of cooperatives, businesses and organisations. The amendments in this bill will simplify the requirements for financial reporting and auditing by installing a risk assessment-based system. Depending on the complexity of a cooperative, this may result in a saving of more than \$1,000. For directors and officers of a cooperative, the duties and responsibilities now are similar to those imposed under the Corporations Act. This ensures blanket liability provisions have been removed and forces responsibility onto a director when there is a clear link between the director's responsibility, actions and the contravention of the law. With the United Nations declaring 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives, each State and Territory is working towards implementation of the Co-operatives National Law to coincide with this international year. I commend the Minister for seeking to promote, in accordance with the United Nations goals, the growth and stability of cooperatives in New South Wales and around the nation.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [5.34 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012, which has been introduced by the great Minister for Fair Trading and member for Lane Cove, whom history will record as one of the greatest Ministers for Fair Trading the State has ever seen. The bill has been introduced to enact cooperatives legislation for New South Wales as part of a proposed national scheme. A cooperative may be understood as an association of persons who unite voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural aspirations through a jointly owned, democratically controlled enterprise.

Cooperatives are quintessentially Australian. They provide individuals and small businesses with a structure that allows them to enjoy large economies of scale when obtaining services and goods. The State has been blessed with iconic cooperatives such as the Batlow Fruit Co-Operative Limited, which produces Batlow apples. I am sure at some stage every Australian kid has taken a Batlow apple in his or her school lunch bag.

I am sure the member for Bankstown, who is present in the Chamber, has packed some of them in her time. Other cooperatives are Meals on Wheels, Legion Cabs, the Co-Op Bookshop, and Dairy Farmers Milk. I know that I and many other members would not have got through our university degrees without the benefit of purchasing their books from the Co-op Bookshop.

Mr Andrew Gee: Even after university.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: That is true. Every Aussie kid has probably had a frothy milk moustache as a result of having enjoyed Dairy Farmers milk. In Campbelltown, that great opal of the south west, cooperatives support our community and culture. I draw to the attention of the House the Campbelltown Steam Preservation Co-op Society located at Menangle Road, Menangle, where a unique collection of vintage steam and internal combustion agricultural and industrial machinery is housed. I also am pleased to inform the House that the society's next field days are 19 and 20 May. Mr Assistant-Speaker, if you have some spare time, you could come out to Campbelltown and enjoy some of the great community and culture that is so evident in the opal of the south west.

The opening ceremony is on Saturday 19 May at 10.00 a.m. and the field day continues until 4.00 p.m. On Sunday 20 May, the field day resumes at 9.00 a.m. and concludes at 3.00 p.m. I also draw to the attention of the House how amazing it is that cooperatives now include parents and citizens associations, which have adopted the cooperatives model to great advantage. The Macarthur P and C Co-op was established in 2010 and is fully funded by the U-Design Schoolwear. U-Design Schoolwear was motivated by wanting to give something back to the community—as many Campbelltown local businesses do—and discussed its dream with Polly Grundy, a long-term parents and citizens association member. Mrs Grundy said:

Imagine if all the wonderful people who work so hard for their schools could come together in one place and form a "family" of P&Cs ... sharing ideas and resources ... with everyone working together.

Subsequently the Macarthur P and Co Co-op was born. The more uniforms it sells, the greater is the amount of money that is reinvested in the cooperative. On 3 March this year the *Macarthur Chronicle* reported that the cooperative had purchased a 12-seater bus. The local principals stated that their "dream piece of equipment was a bus". The report states:

U-design Schoolwear (which funded the purchase) said if that's what they want that's what we'll get them.

The schools now have a 12-seater bus. As Mrs Grundy said, the 12-seater bus now makes it much easier for schools to organise trips for debating teams, sporting groups and others, and, dare I say, even trips to Parliament. They are examples of what cooperatives can do. It is all about reducing red tape and reducing the cost of doing business with cooperatives. One of our pledges at the last election was that we would help to reduce some of the red tape and make it easier for those providing businesses and services to the community to get on with their work. I am pleased to support this bill.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [5.40 p.m.]: I support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. The aim of the legislation is to establish a national set of regulations for cooperatives operating across the country. Cooperatives are currently regulated by their appropriate State or Territory, but for some time State federations and the national federation have wanted to establish a national framework. With this in mind, the Australian Uniform Co-operatives Laws Agreement identified the need for a uniform template for all States and Territories, also referred to as jurisdictions. This template is known as the Co-operatives National Law. Cooperatives are people-centred organisations that are owned, controlled and used by their members.

The main purpose of a cooperative is to benefit its members. The International Co-operative Alliance states that cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, and that their members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. Australia currently regulates more than 1,800 cooperatives in each State and Territory through legislation, but for the past 15 years it has lacked consistency across borders. The top 100 cooperatives, mutuals, and credit unions in Australia turned over \$14 billion last year, which highlights the importance of consistency.

Before I continue to explain the benefits of this legislation, I will point out the importance of cooperatives in New South Wales. Most of us probably are unaware of the sheer number of cooperatives operating around us. New South Wales has more than 680 operational cooperatives, or about 40 per cent of the total number of cooperatives in Australia. Each cooperative is a uniquely member-owned, member-controlled entity that exists to provide benefits to members. Cooperatives use profits for the members to collectively enjoy

and to achieve activities, while investor-owned entities use activities to achieve profits for their stakeholders. A cooperative is a business, usually incorporated, that sells goods and services and that usually has strong links to the community in which it operates and in which its members live. It is not a charitable organisation or a social service agency.

Cooperatives are not necessarily small operations; New South Wales has 1.8 million members, generating approximately \$2.9 billion in revenue each year. They are often not driven by short-term returns, but instead by a longer-term view. Cooperatives provide crucial services to their members in a range of fields including health and medical care, job searching, training, housing or child care. In many sectors, we would be lost without them. A few examples of well-known cooperatives in New South Wales include Dairy Farmers, Batlow Apples, the NRMA, Newcastle Permanent Building Society, the aptly named Co-Op Bookshop, the EAC, or Estate Agent's Cooperative, St George Cabs and many of our credit unions. Many cooperatives involve people from my electorate and its surrounds.

The member for Heathcote, who is present in the Chamber, would be aware of the Bundeena Bowling Club and Sylvania Bowling Club, the Lucas Heights Lodge Co-operative, 89.3FM Liverpool-Green Valley Community Radio, and the Shopfront Theatre, which provides opportunities in the arts for under 25 year olds, and which is the only youth theatre company in the country owned by its members. SHINE for Kids is a cooperative that works with and for young Australians affected by family member involvement in the criminal justice system. It supports many of the 38,000 children who wake up with mum and/or dad in prison. It helps create hope, inspires them to reach their potential, nurtures their growth and empowers them to succeed. SHINE for Kids is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary of helping these children with dinner tomorrow night in the parliamentary dining room. I encourage members to attend the dinner or to find out more about the organisation.

This year is the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives, and its theme is "co-operative enterprises build a better world", so it is quite fitting that we debate this legislation today. The objective of the International Year of Co-operatives was to highlight the advantages of the cooperative model, and to raise its public awareness. It is considered to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to communicate the scale and scope of cooperatives. It is time to establish a national framework to enable cooperatives across the State and across the country to work more efficiently with a uniform system. This has been identified by cooperatives across the country and by State governments. It should be noted that these new regulations will apply only to general cooperatives and not to financial or housing ones—they will continue to be regulated under separate legislation.

This legislation will specifically address five key problems in the current New South Wales Co-operatives Act 1992, and corresponding legislation in other jurisdictions, by introducing the Co-operatives National Law. Cooperatives provide an organisational structure for individuals and small businesses through which to acquire goods and services in markets that are increasingly dominated by large corporations. Continuing the existing frameworks, the Co-operatives National Law will encourage new cooperatives to form, register and operate. It will also continue to promote cooperative principles and protect the interests of cooperatives, their members and the public. In essence, the new legislation will not change any of these key operational principles.

Members of cooperatives democratically control the direction of the business. In most cooperatives each member gets one vote. Members elect a board of directors to monitor the business, set goals and hire management to operate their business. Ultimately, the board is accountable to the members for its decisions. This legislation is really about achieving consistency. The national framework will provide consistency of content and administration of laws across all States and Territories. New South Wales has been selected as the host jurisdiction to enact this law. While each State and Territory will still administer the cooperatives law separately, it is hoped this template will make it as uniform as possible.

Enacting a uniform agreement will provide greater certainty to all parties with rights, duties and powers in cooperatives, plus it will help to eliminate red tape when working across borders. It just makes sense. One of the great things about this bill is the automatic mutual recognition of cooperatives by other jurisdictions. Red tape will be cut as cooperatives will no longer need to apply separately to each jurisdiction in which it wishes to operate, which meets one of our election commitments. Additionally, the fees associated with working interstate have been reduced. Not only that, but paperwork requirements have also been simplified to make it easier to work across our borders.

This bill will reduce costs and cut red tape for cooperatives by introducing a new risk-assessment based system that will simplify financial reporting and auditing requirements for smaller cooperatives. The bill amends

the responsibilities and duties of directors and officers of a cooperative to make them consistent with the requirements applying to directors and officers under the Corporations Act—they will be treated the same as those in an ordinary company. A director will no longer be protected under a blanket liability provision, but instead will face direct liability, thus bringing the role of director within a cooperative in line with other corporate organisations. The bill introduces the option of using cooperative capital units in all jurisdictions for funding, therefore providing more flexibility. When fundraising from members or the public, cooperatives will now follow the Corporations Act when dealing with the disclosure of information, insolvency, liquidation and winding up situations, enhancing consistency of the operations of cooperatives.

I reiterate that this bill was drafted following consultation with the peak representative bodies of cooperatives and the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs, which agreed to develop a uniform template cooperatives legislative scheme that could be applied by the States and Territories. With the help of public consultation, this bill will reduce former members' rights to two years from the existing five. In his second reading speech, the Minister for Fair Trading said that one of the goals set by the United Nations for this international year is to encourage governments to establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives. The United Nations further states that this is about creating a supportive environment for their development. It is timely that we are debating this bill and working to tick this goal off our to-do list. As the United Nations further states, cooperatives are about "people coming together in a way that benefits the many equally, rather than the few unequally." It is with pleasure that I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [5.50 p.m.]: I support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. Our Minister for Fair Trading has done a tremendous job in the past 12 months, as highlighted by the member for Campbelltown. The staff of the Minister for Fair Trading also work extremely hard and do a great job on behalf of the Government—I shall say more about that later. Minister Roberts is an extremely good friend of my electorate. A few months ago he visited the Camden show with his wonderful, lovely wife, Alicia, and family spending a lot of time talking to stallholders and doing great work on behalf of Fair Trading. I return to the reason for this debate. This bill was introduced at a fitting time and it is a fitting tribute to this year being declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Co-operatives. Cooperatives play important roles in our society. Cooperatives are run by their members, who may be individuals or businesses, and allow people to work together for the specific purpose of benefitting members by acquiring goods and services.

Cooperatives have become vital in industries that often compete with large corporate organisations that are driven by huge profit margins. Cooperatives play a highly important role in rural areas in maintaining services as large corporations move out at such a fast rate. Cooperatives are fast becoming relied upon to provide goods and services at community levels. Cooperatives first came to New South Wales in the mid 1800s and were spread across the retail and agriculture industries by the late 1800s. Fast-forward to today when New South Wales has around 680 registered distributing and non-distributing cooperatives covering a vast range of industries including health care, education and training, sporting clubs, tourism and agricultural marketing, groceries and petrol supply, taxis, labour hire, cotton growing, child care and housing. These cooperatives provide many essential services for communities. By their very existence cooperatives enable the provision of essential services that otherwise would not exist in many bush areas.

The Minister spoke about the economic contributions of cooperatives and the extremely impressive turnover of approximately \$2.9 billion. Also impressive is that cooperatives employ 10,000 people in our rural regions, which I know will interest you, Mr Assistant Speaker. That is a wonderful effort on behalf of cooperatives. We should do everything we can to achieve better results for cooperatives, and this bill aims to do just that. At present cooperatives are regulated by different State and Territory legislation that was set up in the mid 1990s. The legislation is similar between jurisdictions, but as it has been more than 15 years since it was reviewed comprehensively the laws need to be improved and updated to achieve consistency. This Government prides itself on consultation and through an extensive consultation process with the peak representative bodies, the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs agreed to develop a uniform template cooperatives legislative scheme that could be applied by the States and Territories.

Key stakeholders support this legislation. As the host jurisdiction, New South Wales will apply the uniform Co-operatives National Law and Co-operatives National Regulation. This will enable other jurisdictions to enact similar application of laws, legislation or alternative consistent laws within 12 months of the assent of the New South Wales legislation. This uniform legislation will benefit cooperatives, advisers and regulators in every State and Territory. This bill will see a clearly defined and designated authority, and put in place

arrangements for national and local regulations. The current New South Wales Co-operatives Act 1992 will be amended to introduce mutual recognition to enable cooperatives to carry on business across jurisdictional borders.

The cost of financial reporting and auditing requirements for small cooperatives will be reduced, a major benefit to cooperatives and something not lost on the Minister in introducing the bill. Director and officer duties will be aligned with the Corporations Act 2001 so that the same duties that apply to companies will apply to cooperatives. Former members' rights will be reduced to two years in line with public consultation comments. Cost-effective compliance by way of enforceable undertakings will be introduced. Some great cooperatives in my local area include Camden Preschool and Kindergarten, and Families in Partnership, which works with great organisations such as Play Links Macarthur, Macarthur Respite Care and Northcott Disability Services.

Mr Bryan Doyle: A great organisation.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I believe I have toured Northcott Disability Services with the member for Campbelltown and Minister Constance. As mentioned earlier, Minister Roberts has put a great deal of thought into the best way to serve cooperatives and ensure their success as they employ 10,000 people and are worth \$2.9 billion to our economy. I commend the Minister for his action in providing this response. I commend also a few of the Minister's hardworking staff who worked on this bill: Madeleine Boulton, Policy Manager, and Emily McCosker, Principal Policy Officer from Fair Trading; and Robyn Donnelly from the Registry of Co-operatives and Associations. They have all been outstanding. The hardworking staff of the Minister for Fair Trading should be commended: Tim James, chief of staff; Belinda Russell, policy adviser; Brandon Jacobs; Shane Evans; Kurt Graham; and Sue Clark. They all do a wonderful job. I commend this bill to the House.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [6.00 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. I have seen firsthand the wonderful role that cooperatives play in our local communities. I will talk about that later in this debate. The purpose of this bill is fourfold. It will apply the uniform Co-operatives National Law and Co-operatives National Regulation in New South Wales as the host jurisdiction. That will enable other participating jurisdictions to apply similar laws, legislation or other consistent laws within 12 months of the assent of the New South Wales legislation. Cooperatives, advisers and regulators will all benefit from access to this uniform and updated legislation. This bill will also address five key problems in the current New South Wales Co-operatives Act 1992.

The Co-operatives National Law will enable cooperatives to carry on business across jurisdictional borders by introducing mutual recognition, reducing the cost of financial reporting and auditing requirements for small cooperatives, aligning director and officer duties with the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) duties that apply to companies, reducing former member's rights to two-years duration in line with public consultation comments, and introduce cost-effective compliance by way of enforceable undertakings. The bill provides for the administration of the Co-operatives National Law New South Wales, including defining the designated authority and arrangements for making national and local regulations. The bill will also address transitional matters such as the preservation of certain entitlements of former members of a cooperative following the commencement of the Co-operatives National Law New South Wales.

The important role that cooperatives play in our local communities has been raised by a number of previous speakers during this debate. The Minister is to be congratulated on taking the step to ensure that they operate under legislation that is appropriate and effective. It is appropriate that this bill coincides with the International Year of Co-operatives as declared by the United Nations General Assembly. This year is about highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to our local communities and in particular their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. The theme that has been adopted by the United Nations for the International Year of Co-operatives is "Co-operative enterprises build a better world". The United Nations' website recognises the three main objectives of the International Year of Co-operatives. First, to increase awareness, that is, increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socioeconomic development and the achievement of the millennium development goals.

The second objective is to promote growth, by promoting the formation and growth of cooperatives among individuals and institutions to address common economic needs and for socioeconomic empowerment. The third objective is to establish appropriate policies by encouraging governments and regulatory bodies to establish policies, law and regulation conducive to cooperative formation and growth. Membership in cooperatives is now estimated to be more than one billion people across 96 countries. Cooperatives offer an

alternative business model to a shareholder or a business ownership model. It is a model that hinges on democratic ownership and governments. That is, they are governed by the members with all members having one vote, and decisions based on votes taken by members.

I mentioned previously the importance of cooperatives within local communities. In my electorate of Port Macquarie it is no different. Not surprisingly, the electorate of Port Macquarie has a number of fishing cooperatives that play an extremely important role in the community. These include the Hastings River Fisherman's Co-operative, the Laurieton Fishermen's Co-op Limited, and the Crowdy Head Fish Co-op Limited. I have had the pleasure of visiting each of these cooperatives over the past couple of years and I take this opportunity to congratulate them on their role in promoting their industry in our community as well as the support they provide to their members.

Mr Geoff Provost: Great prawns at Laurieton.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Tweed and his mention of the great prawns you can buy at the Laurieton cooperative. I will also mention a significant cooperative in the neighbouring electorate of Oxley, the electorate of the Deputy Premier. The Hastings Co-op is a significant and important local cooperative, located in the town of Wauchope. I know the member for Tweed will acknowledge that people will travel far and wide to go to the Hastings Co-op because it is a fantastic store that has a wide range of products. The Hastings Co-op has been operating for 96 years and has some 9,000 local members. Cooperatives are about members investing in a locally owned business where every cent stays local and where, if you are a member, you can receive discounts by shopping at the Hastings Co-op. The Hastings Co-op employs more than 300 local people, making it one of the biggest local employers. The Holiday Coast Credit Union was formed out of the Hastings Co-op approximately 50 years ago. The Hastings Co-op is currently running a campaign of "locals supporting locals". Local farmers who have issues breaking into national markets are able to get local support through the Hastings Co-op. I acknowledge the Cooperative Lord Howe Island Limited which is in my electorate.

Mr Ryan Park: That is in your electorate, isn't it?

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Keira: It is in my electorate. I had the good fortune to visit Lord Howe Island last week. I took the opportunity while attending a forum on Lord Howe Island to visit the local cooperative. It is an amazing shop. It is not particularly big as the population on the island is only small. The cooperative is situated next to the post office on Andersons Road. It sells a range of products. The important and significant thing about this cooperative is that it sells everything in bulk. The reason for that, as members will understand, is that for island communities waste and the disposal of waste are a real issue. What the community has done is offer the advantages of having a cooperative whilst ensuring that they are minimising packaging, and therefore waste, for the island. The cooperative sells a range of produce including dried fruits, nuts, pasta, cereals, rice, bread mixes, sugars, juices, cheese, cleaning products and local organic produce. I congratulate the employees and volunteers who work in that cooperative and the local community that supports this wonderful venture. I congratulate the Minister for Fair Trading on taking the initiative to introduce this bill and I commend it to the House.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [6.09 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. As members have heard, the main aim of the bill is to apply the uniform Co-operatives National Law and the national regulations in New South Wales as the host jurisdiction. This is in line with arrangements in the Australian Uniform Co-operatives Laws Agreement to introduce a uniform regulatory scheme for cooperatives in each of the participating States and Territories. All the States and Territories have entered the agreement. The passage of the bill through the New South Wales Parliament will enable all the other jurisdictions to apply the Co-operatives National Law template in their State or Territory or legislation which is consistent with that template law.

Whilst the law is based on the current Co-operatives Act in New South Wales, and similar legislation in the other jurisdictions, it has been thoroughly revised to bring it up to date for introduction as the uniform template legislation. In his speech supporting this legislation, the member for Balmain noted that the Legislation Review Committee had some concerns regarding the inclusion of certain powers in the regulations that will accompany the Act, rather than in the principal legislation. I can assure the member for Balmain that the regulations that will accompany the Co-operatives National Law will be the subject of further public

consultation later this year and will also require approval by the National Ministerial Forum on Consumer Affairs. The member for Balmain was also concerned that the Co-operatives Federation of New South Wales had advised in its submission that it had not had time to examine every section of the proposed law in detail.

I note that the consultation period extended for three months and that the Co-operatives Federation of New South Wales is also a member of the Co-operatives Council, an advisory body to government which has been continually informed of the drafting process and changes made to the law since the initial consultation period. The Co-operatives Federation of New South Wales supports this law. Indeed the chairman of the federation, Mr Tony Rogic, has welcomed the new national legislation, saying that it would make it easier for cooperatives to work across State borders and that the new laws will be promoted extensively by the federation and help raise awareness of the sector.

I wish now to acknowledge an issue that has been raised by both sides of this House: that of the legacy bequeathed to us by the former Minister for Cooperatives and member for Dubbo, the Hon. Gerald "Gerry" Peacocke. Gerry played a crucial role in shaping the current legislation governing cooperatives in New South Wales, and I applaud the members for Coffs Harbour and Mount Druitt for highlighting his contributions to our State. I will pass on to Gerry Peacocke all the best wishes of this House. He is a man of great vision; he contributed to this great State a legacy that endures. I pay tribute to Gerry Peacocke for the great contribution he made to this State. I join with the member for Mount Druitt in sending my best wishes and those of all members in this place to Gerry at this time.

I sincerely thank the members representing the electorates of Bankstown, Rockdale, Northern Tablelands, Smithfield, Coffs Harbour, Tweed, Mount Druitt, Vaucluse, Wagga Wagga, Granville, Balmain, Myall Lakes, Orange, Gosford, Newcastle, Cronulla, Fairfield, Charlestown, Albury, Castle Hill, Campbelltown, Menai, Camden and Port Macquarie for their wonderful and significant contributions to the debate. I thank the stakeholders who have assisted with the development of the bill and its law. I would also like to thank Tim James, Belinda Russell, Brandon Jacobs, Shane Evans, Kurt Graham and Sue Clark, and the dedicated policy staff of NSW Fair Trading, led on this reform by Madeleine Boulton, who have worked so diligently on leading this key reform.

I draw to the attention of the House Ms Emily McCosker from NSW Fair Trading in particular, for playing a major role in ensuring the progression of this bill. I sadly report that Ms McCosker will be leaving us after this week, as she joyously prepares to welcome a baby girl into her life. I would like to highlight the role of Ms Robyn Donnelly of the NSW Wales Registry of Co-operatives within NSW Fair Trading, who has been instrumental in shaping and guiding this reform for many years, and for whom the passage of this bill will represent the culmination of all of that immense effort. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Anthony Roberts agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BIOSECURITY) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 28 March 2012.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [6.14 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. Biosecurity is an extremely important issue because threats to our primary industries as well as to our natural environment have the potential

to impact not only our economy but also our community in general. Agriculture and fisheries make a significant contribution to our national economy, contributing almost 3 per cent of gross domestic product valued at close to \$50 billion annually. Our agricultural production, including exports such as wheat, beef, dairy products, wine and wool, contribute approximately \$35 billion to our economy and fisheries production close to \$2.3 billion.

Regional communities in New South Wales, whether they are along the North Coast, west of the divide, on the Liverpool Plains or in the Hunter Valley, rely on primary production for their survival. Agriculture and fisheries provide direct and indirect employment opportunities for those living in rural communities and in regional town centres. So it is vitally important that measures are put in place to protect our agriculture and fisheries industries, particularly when emergency situations arise that threaten our biosecurity. This bill provides that protection. The aim of the bill is to ensure that New South Wales has in place appropriate legislation that will enable a timely and effective response to biosecurity emergency situations, such as an outbreak of an animal disease or a plant pest or disease.

The bill will also improve our compliance as a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity and its emergency response agreements under which New South Wales is obliged to have appropriate legislation in place. The recent outbreaks of Hendra virus and the equine influenza outbreak in 2007 highlighted the gaps and limitations of the current legislation and the need to rectify these gaps. Specifically, the bill provides mechanisms to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests including the declaration of infested places, restricted areas and control areas. It also deals with restrictions on movement and orders relating to control and eradication of animal pests. The bill prohibits interim court orders that might inhibit or delay emergency measures where there is an emergency outbreak.

The bill also provides for the use of quarantine areas to control the spread of noxious fish and marine vegetation and to allow for the publication of urgent orders relating to the quarantine of fish and marine vegetation areas, noxious weeds, plant diseases and pests in either newspapers or via the government website. The bill being debated here today proposes to amend four Acts: the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991, the Plant Diseases Act 1924, the Fisheries Management Act 1994 and the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. The changes to the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreak) Act, specifically section 32 (1A), will importantly give the Minister the power to order the destruction of wild or feral animals whether or not they are infected.

With regard to the destruction of native animals the amended Act, section 32 (4) requires the Minister to consult with the Minister administering the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 about the order. Similarly, section 13A (1) of the Plant Diseases Act will be amended to provide for the destruction of plants or fruit whether or not they are affected if the Minister believes on reasonable grounds that it is necessary to do so in order to eradicate or prevent the spread of a defined emergency plant pest or disease. In addition, section 13 will allow inspectors to enter non-residential premises for the purpose of conducting surveillance work if there is a suspicion that the disease or pest is present at, or is likely to spread to, that land, premises, vehicle or vessel. The bill also allows for the Fisheries Management Act to be amended to strengthen the quarantine provisions to better protect aquatic ecosystems. Proposed sections 209C and 209D outline the Minister's powers with regard to the declaration of quarantine areas.

The Plant Diseases Act and the Noxious Weeds Act will also be amended by the insertion of proposed section 24A and section 64A, respectively, to safeguard biosecurity response actions in respect of an emergency plant, pest or disease by protecting them from challenge or interim injunctions. The changes summarised in the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 make perfect sense and I congratulate the Minister for Primary Industries on implementing these changes. These amendments address the limitations of and the gaps in the current legislation and in doing so minimise the risks associated with biosecurity emergencies that potentially could impact on our State, our economy, our natural environment and our local communities. The amendments give power to the Minister to act appropriately and, importantly, in a timely manner in order effectively to minimise risks associated with biosecurity emergencies. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [6.21 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 which will provide the community of New South Wales and other jurisdictions with confidence that the New South Wales Government can respond in a meaningful way to an emergency biosecurity outbreak. We know the bill will improve our biosecurity legislation because it is informed by the department's experience in responding to recent biosecurity outbreaks, including myrtle rust. Myrtle rust is a fungus that affects plants belonging to the myrtaceae family, including Australian natives such as bottlebrush, tea-tree and eucalypts. It was given its name because it appears as powdery bright orange-yellow spores on infected plant parts. The rust causes leaves to buckle, twist and potentially die as a result of infection.

In April 2010 myrtle rust was detected on a cut-flower property on the Central Coast of New South Wales. By early November 2010 the program to contain and eradicate myrtle rust had been implemented on more than 150 sites. In December 2010 the management of myrtle rust moved from an eradication plan to a management plan. That was because the rust was detected on a large number of sites, including natural vegetation and State forests, and it was no longer feasible to contain and eradicate it. Since December last year the rust has been detected in Queensland, along the New South Wales coast and as far south as Victoria. Between April and November 2010 the main cause of the spread of myrtle rust was the movement of people. We know that because the majority of infected sites were retail garden centres, wholesale nurseries and cut-flower facilities.

Tracing the movement of plants and people is critical for determining the source of the infection. The faster the source of the infection can be traced the more likely it is that the containment and eradication program will be successful. Inspectors need to be able to question individuals and collect documentary information such as sales histories. By doing that they hope not only to identify a clear pathway back to the first area of plant infection but also to determine where potentially infected material may have been distributed. The powers in the Plant Diseases Act relating to traceability are currently limited. Inspectors can only ask questions of fruit and plant vendors; they cannot question someone whom they think may be able to provide information—for example, a member of the public who has purchased a plant. In addition, the Act does not allow inspectors to collect documentary information. In the case of myrtle rust and most pest and disease outbreaks, industry is usually forthcoming with information.

However, if an instance were to occur where an industry member was unwilling to cooperate, inspectors would not have the power to make them comply. Amendments in this Act will address those gaps. The bill also will strengthen the surveillance capabilities of inspectors under the Plant Diseases Act. Surveillance is used to identify the areas where plants may or may not be infected by a pest or disease and it is an important tool in the management of an outbreak of a pest or disease. Currently the Act only allows inspectors to conduct surveillance on a property if they believe that a plant is infected or is likely to spread infection, or they believe that it has been brought illegally into New South Wales. The powers of the Act do not enable inspectors to undertake surveillance to ensure that the pest or disease is not present in an area. To address that the bill will allow inspectors to enter non-residential premises to conduct surveillance if they reasonably suspect that the disease or pest may have spread to the property and they wish to determine whether it has.

These sensible and practical amendments will provide the community of New South Wales and other jurisdictions with confidence that the New South Wales Government can respond effectively to an emergency plant pest or disease outbreak. The New South Wales Government is aware of the growing risks to our primary industries, our environment, our lifestyles and our livelihoods due to changes in climate, population growth and the globalisation of trade and travel. The Government is being proactive and is planning to respond and effectively protect our communities from any potential threats to our environment and economy.

I spoke in the debate on the Noxious Weeds Amendment Bill which will enhance the prevention of new weed entry and more effective weed management in New South Wales. The Minister for Primary Industries also introduced this bill and I commend her and the department on acting so vigorously in the best interests of the people of New South Wales and paving the way to ensure that New South Wales is protected from harmful pests, weeds and diseases for the foreseeable future. In March Camden hosted its 126th Camden Show. The show primarily is to showcase and promote agricultural, horticultural, commercial and industrial resources in the Macarthur region through competition, exhibition and entertainment.

This year former Australian cricketer Glen McGrath, as patron of the Year of the Farmer, officially opened the show and presented our local winners of the inaugural Farmer of the Year Awards to Farmer of the Year Michael Perich; Innovative Farmer of the Year John Fairley; and Young Farmer of the Year Patrick Buckley. I congratulate these farmers on their contribution to the industry. As responsible farmers I am sure they will appreciate the Government introducing this bill. Even though I did so only 15 or 20 minutes ago, I commend our wonderful Minister for Fair Trading, Anthony Roberts, who spent the whole of Saturday at the show with his lovely wife, Alicia, his wonderful children, John and Samuel, and took part in many activities. Throughout the day he took the time to meet many exhibitors and he has since told me what a wonderful day he and his family had.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Camden has clearly worked very hard on this speech. I hope that everyone will listen in silence. Members who wish to have conversations, be they politically ecumenical ones on the Labor backbench or anywhere else, should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I must admit that I have been distracted. The Minister told me what a wonderful day he and his family had and how he believes the Camden Show is now the premier show in New South Wales. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I thank members for their indulgence because myrtle rust, this bill, the Camden Show and the virtues of Minister Roberts are all extremely serious topics. I thank the David Head, President of the Camden Show Society, Lindy Cornwell, Secretary, John Stanham, Treasurer and the wonderful show society committee for all their hard work in putting on Camden's annual premier social and family event. The show is sponsored by great local businesses including Hennings Jewellers, Macarthur Stockfeeds, CPE Tree Services, Macarthur Lady Funerals, William Inglis and Son Limited, Camden Hire, Funnells Electrical Contracting, Coulcher's Accounting, Southwell Irrigation, Eagles Automotive, Ingham Enterprises and Dairy Farmers. I also thank all the volunteers who donate their time and effort in assisting the show society to make the show the great success that it is. This is a very good bill. I commend the Minister for her wonderful efforts and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [6.32 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. I endorse the comments of the member for Camden relating to the importance of biosecurity to New South Wales, in particular, because many rural communities and Sydney have just enjoyed their royal agricultural shows, as have Maclean and Grafton in my electorate. It goes to show how important biosecurity is to rural areas. To date New South Wales can be proud of its biosecurity management. Effective planning and swift, efficient responses have prevented pests and diseases adversely affecting New South Wales agricultural production and trade and the wellbeing of its people and natural environment. I know that later the member for Tweed will speak about the impact of cane toads in his electorate. Of course they are making their way down south. If this biosecurity legislation had been in place we might have been able to eradicate them without the use of a 1½ wood. Even so, the current system can be improved.

The rate of change in the world is increasing at a pace not seen before in human history. This enhances the risk of new pest, weed and disease encounters with less predictable results. Climate change is expected to affect the behaviour of invasive species as they shift in distribution and abundance in response to the changing environment. Our agricultural industries have access to premium world markets based on New South Wales's favourable pest and disease status. The world recognises the quality of the products from rural and regional New South Wales. Exotic pest and disease outbreaks would, therefore, have a significant impact on trade and market access as well as on production.

New South Wales's current prosperity and our quality of life have been built on healthy, natural environments and the ecosystems they support. Effective biosecurity systems are essential to protecting our way of life and the agricultural and environmental assets we enjoy and value. Most recently, the avian influenza epidemic in 2006, the equine influenza in 2007 and the swine flu pandemic of 2009 showed us how vulnerable we are to these type of diseases, and how quickly they can spread around the world and throughout our communities. The equine influenza resulted in a significant cost to our country and State, which is why this legislation is so important. An outbreak of equine influenza occurred in New South Wales and Queensland and it had a significant impact on a number of industries, such as the horse transport industry, the racing industry and other recreational horse industries.

The Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry stated that the national standstill was the only way to contain and eradicate the disease by allowing surveillance and tracing operations to be undertaken. Australia has international obligations to report any exotic disease outbreak which results in tightened overseas quarantine arrangements for horses originating from Australia. The outbreak and horse transport standstill had a multimillion dollar impact on the horseracing industry, including the Spring Racing Carnivals, the associated tourism aspect and the breeding season, and it significantly impacted on the broader equine work, trade and pleasure activities. The Olympic squad selection trials were disrupted also by the cancellation of important squad selection events and the inability to train horses and maintain their condition due to quarantine lockdowns.

On 28 February 2008 the New South Wales Minister for Primary Industries declared that equine influenza had officially been eradicated from New South Wales. He said that more than 47,000 horses on 6,000 properties in New South Wales had recovered from equine influenza and no longer carried the disease. In New South Wales more than 63,000 horses were vaccinated during the outbreak. The New South Wales Government implemented a whole-of-government response that included the Rural Lands Protection Boards, the

NSW Police Force, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Service and NSW Health. That demonstrates the impact that the influenza had on the industry as a result of lax biosecurity legislation in the past.

On 15 February the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry announced that Federal Parliament had approved an emergency funding package to assist those affected by equine influenza. This included \$97.2 million to reimburse the States and Territories for funds they spent fighting equine influenza and \$255.7 million for financial aid to individuals and businesses in the horse industry following the outbreak. This shows the significant amount of money that such an outbreak costs when biosecurity legislation is not strong. That does not include lost gambling revenue from the TAB. The New South Wales TAB turnover was down by about \$227 million and the Victorian TAB turnover had fallen by \$77 million—significant amounts of money. To address these challenges and prepare for the future the New South Wales Government is reshaping and strengthening our biosecurity arrangements.

New South Wales needs a road map to ensure our future biosecurity. The traditional view of biosecurity, with its focus on agricultural industries, is outdated. The contemporary view of biosecurity includes consideration of a broader range of pests and diseases, with potential impact on the economy, environment and community. Agricultural biosecurity in this State remains a key focus for this Government. Minimising the impact of pests and diseases on our primary production and ensuring access to important domestic and export markets remain key aims of our biosecurity programs. Good biosecurity will protect our capacity to produce food, and food security is one of the most important issues facing our planet. However, we also need to protect the environment from biosecurity threats.

It is notoriously difficult to treat many environmental pests and diseases once they are established. Therefore, we will place greater emphasis on investing in prevention. Resilient natural areas are better able to withstand pest and weed invasions than degraded areas. Building resilience by reducing existing threats such as land degradation and poor land management helps reduce the risk of biosecurity threats. We are committed to our ongoing role as the State's land and water manager and custodian. However, government alone cannot ensure a biosecure future for New South Wales; in the presence of an increasing number and range of potential threats industry and the community will need to play their part.

Farm businesses, resource managers, industry and the general public are already becoming more aware of biosecurity issues. Many are involved in programs and practices that reduce biosecurity risks. There is increasingly a better understanding of responsibilities around duty of care to other landholders and the community. Many landholders take appropriate action to manage noxious weeds and invasive pest species on their property, thereby helping to protect neighbouring properties and community areas. Government, landholders and the community in general will be key allies in the fight against new pests, weeds and diseases. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [6.42 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. The bill will improve the State's ability to respond to a biosecurity emergency. The provisions in the bill fall into four categories: first, pests and diseases of animals; second, pests and diseases of plants; third, pests and diseases of fish and marine vegetation; and, fourth, noxious weeds. The bill will amend four Acts—the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991, the Plant Diseases Act 1924, the Fisheries Management Act 1994 and the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. In each case the bill addresses two areas: first, gaps and limitations in legislation that could prevent an effective response to a biosecurity emergency; and, second, compliance with the four national biosecurity agreements to which New South Wales is a signatory.

Previous speakers have addressed in considerable detail these areas of amendment to be made by the bill. I will say something about that if time permits but I would like to elaborate on the need for these reforms. Australia enjoys a high degree of protection from any harmful pests, weeds and diseases that affect other parts of the world. This has been due in part to our natural advantages of relative geographical isolation, the absence of shared land borders and a broader-focused system of biosecurity. Australia is free from some serious animal diseases that plague other countries, such as foot and mouth disease and rabies. New South Wales is free from many pests and diseases that plague other States, such as red imported fire ants in Queensland, the European house borer in Western Australia and chestnut blight in Victoria.

But here in New South Wales we cannot be complacent. Biosecurity risks are increasing. Domestic and global challenges are putting pressure on natural ecosystems and driving competition for resources. First, domestic population growth and expanding urban areas are bringing people closer to agricultural production and

sensitive environmental areas. Second is the growing number of vessels, passengers and goods. Third is the increasing number of imports from a growing number of countries. Fourth, and related to the third, is the increasing complexity in biosecurity risk management, with new and different products arriving from a wider variety of countries, including higher-risk origins. Fifth is the increased volume of goods arriving via international mail rather than more traditional importation routes, such as sea cargo. Sixth is climate change. As I said in my inaugural speech and when addressing the Mining Legislation Amendment (Uranium Exploration) Bill 2012, it is highly likely that the globe is warming and the majority of scientists tell us that this is due to human activity.

The shifts in climate patterns could potentially affect vector pathways, such as airborne or tidal movements, for pests and diseases. At the same time as this is happening our international trading partners are demanding higher and higher levels of assurance in relation to Australia's exports. Australia's approach to managing the risk of incursions of exotic pests and diseases involves complementary measures in three categories: first, offshore activities that seek to prevent biosecurity risks reaching Australia; second, border activities that seek to intercept biosecurity risks present at airports, seaports, mail centres and along the coastline; and, third, onshore arrangements designed to reduce the likelihood that the pest or disease will become established in Australia in the event that there is an incursion of a pest or disease of biosecurity risk. The amendments proposed by the bill address onshore arrangements.

In early 2011 New South Wales became a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity. The agreement aims to minimise the impact of pests, weeds and diseases on the Australian economy, environment and community. The agreement sets out the goals, priorities, roles and responsibilities of jurisdictions in relation to biosecurity management. The agreement is supported by two response agreements and one response deed for animal diseases, plant pests and diseases, and the environment. These agreements set out how responses to biosecurity emergencies will be managed and how costs will be shared between government and industry groups that are signatories. As a signatory New South Wales has an obligation to ensure that it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond to emergency biosecurity incidents.

Reviews of New South Wales biosecurity-related legislation, the equine influenza outbreak in 2007 and the recent outbreaks of Hendra virus and myrtle rust have revealed a number of limitations and gaps in New South Wales legislation. As I said at the outset, the bill amends four Acts—the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act, the Plant Diseases Act, the Fisheries Management Act and the Noxious Weeds Act. The present powers in the Fisheries Management Act for dealing with noxious fish and marine vegetation are inconsistent with the powers for dealing with diseases of fish and marine vegetation. As an example, the Minister can declare a quarantine area in relation to a declared disease but cannot declare a quarantine area because of the presence or suspected presence of noxious fish or noxious marine vegetation, yet noxious fish and marine vegetation can cause serious devastation to a marine environment.

Therefore, the bill will amend the Act to allow a quarantine area to be declared because of the presence or suspected presence of a noxious fish or noxious marine vegetation. The bill's amendments also will allow quarantine orders to be published through more immediate media in urgent situations—for example, on television, the department's website or radio—instead of solely in the *Government Gazette*. Furthermore, current quarantine provisions that relate to declared diseases provide for certain areas only to be declared a quarantine area. Problems have arisen when diseased or noxious fish are present in the hold of a moving boat. The bill will amend the Act to allow a boat to be quarantined if it carries diseased or noxious fish and marine vegetation. This will provide the Minister with the power to direct the movement of a boat and order the destruction of the diseased or noxious fish and marine vegetation at an appropriate location.

The bill also will allow greater flexibility in the type of controls on movement that can be used to prevent the spread of diseased or noxious fish and marine vegetation. Currently fish and marine vegetation can be moved within a quarantine area—for example, from boat to boat—which may result in pests and diseases having a chance to spread. The Act will be amended by the bill to allow a quarantine order to prohibit or restrict the movement of fish or marine vegetation into, within or out of a quarantine area. In the longer term the Government will be considering the development of more streamlined and integrated biosecurity legislation and a new biosecurity strategy for New South Wales. I support the bill because it will improve the State's ability to respond to a biosecurity emergency, it will comply with national biosecurity agreements to which New South Wales is a signatory and, given the increasing global and domestic challenges to which I have referred during my speech, it provides an important part of the State's armoury in dealing with biosecurity emergencies. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.51 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to address the House during debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012, which I believe is very important legislation. A number of speakers have complimented the Minister for Primary Industries and her staff on their professionalism, for which there is a real need in the community, particularly in the agricultural industry. New South Wales is now a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity and its complementary emergency response agreements, such as the emergency animal disease response agreements, the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, and the national environmental biosecurity response agreements. Those agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of, and cost-sharing arrangements among, all Australian governments and industry bodies that are signatories to those agreements in responding to emergency animal and plant, pest and disease incidents.

As a signatory to those agreements New South Wales has an obligation to ensure that it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to effectively respond to a biosecurity emergency in a timely manner. Among the significant changes that will be effected by the bill are amendment of the scope and objects of the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991 to ensure that New South Wales will be able to respond to emergencies involving animal pests as well as diseases. As members know, I am fiercely loyal and 100 per cent for the Tweed, so I know a number of issues concerning biosecurity have occurred in the Tweed over the past few years. First on the list is equine influenza. A case of equine influenza in my electorate received considerable publicity, but it caused a great deal of economic harm to the equestrian industry and social harm in the Tweed.

A particular case concerned horses at the Border Park Raceway, which is situated on the Queensland edge of the State border between Queensland and New South Wales. More than 40 horses had been quarantined for a period of approximately six months. No agreement was in place. The Queensland Department of Primary Industries took the view that it was a New South Wales problem and, believe it or not, at that time the Department of Primary Industries in Sydney believed that the horses were on Queensland soil. The horses were in no-man's-land, and that caused a great deal of economic harm to their owners. No-one wanted to claim responsibility. The member for Camden and other members who preceded me in this debate referred to myrtle rust. I cite a letter I received from P. Guinane Pty Ltd of Kingscliff, which operates a tea-tree plantation. The company is run by Paul and Pat Bolster, who are two of the Tweed's leading citizens. They first drew the issue to my attention in 2010. Their letter states:

The issue of Myrtle Rust arose in 2010 when an outbreak occurred at a plant nursery on the Central Coast of NSW near Gosford. This was a bio-security breach. The NSW Government Department as part of the decision making process decided to do nothing for four months. After considerable industry pressure and four months after the first identification of Myrtle Rust the earlier decision was reversed and an attempt was made to contain it. The attempt was not successful. Myrtle Rust eventually spread to Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. The other states were not part of the original decisions made by the NSW Government Department—

I point out clearly that this letter refers to 2010—

—and were not kept apprised of what was happening in the early stages of the bio-security outbreak.

In 2010 I received an approach from the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, which had not been advised of the outbreak and knew nothing about it, in spite of myrtle rust having a significant impact on our agricultural industries. The letter goes on to state:

The Queensland Government invoked the provisions of its Plant Protection Act and wanted to stop all plants and plant products entering Queensland from NSW.

It is fortunate that P. Guinane Pty Ltd took it upon itself to quarantine its large plantation of tea-trees and managed to successfully negotiate. The letter goes on to state:

The Tea Tree Industry Development Officer was able to negotiate permits to allow tea tree mulch into Queensland.

This 2010 letter had copies of the permits attached. I compliment the Minister for Primary Industries on her ability to introduce this legislation by adopting a coordinated approach. Approximately three years ago the former Labor Government chose to remove tick control officers from local border areas, claiming that video surveillance would be sufficient. Since then and up until recent times 38 cattle tick outbreaks have occurred in border areas. During that period I approached the previous Labor Government for assistance. A large dairy farm lost a lot of its prize bulls through cattle tick infestation. Other pests include cane toads and fire ants. Queensland has a significant number of pests that seem to be heading south. Cane toads were introduced to

combat the cane beetle, but they are migrating south slowly. I have heard reports that cane toads have been found in Sydney. They are an insidious pest. They breed rapidly and are virtually out of control in the Tweed. Anything that can be done to control them in a combined and coordinated effort should be done.

This legislation needs support. It is pleasing that the Minister is on the ball and is basing this legislation on intergovernmental agreements. Earlier I cited the example of equine influenza and Queensland taking the view that the outbreak was a New South Wales responsibility and vice versa, with the result that nothing was done. The Hendra virus also has had a significant impact in my electorate, where there are large colonies of flying foxes. My electorate had a number of outbreaks in border areas and there have been outbreaks in areas just over the border in Queensland which, unfortunately, resulted in loss of life. The disease has not been totally eradicated. Two of the remarkable features of the approach by the Minister and her Parliamentary Secretary are the speed with which they take action and the extent to which they listen carefully to people on the ground such as farmers and key industry stakeholders. If the same Minister had been in charge in 2010 during the myrtle rust outbreak I am sure it would have been contained on the Central Coast instead of spreading throughout the rest of Australia. It is an insidious disease that affects forestry products, ornamental plants and nurseries.

According to the experts myrtle rust can never really be eradicated. It adversely affects the production of tea-tree oil, a thriving industry on the North Coast. Tea-tree oil has antiseptic properties and is increasingly being accepted as an alternative medicine, but myrtle rust can slash production by up to 50 per cent or more. While we have been promoting alternative forms of agriculture, new crops, new ideas and new business ventures, this disease was imported, I understand, in a shipment from South America to a plant nursery. It was really the delay in formulating a coordinated approach across the State and, more importantly, having a coordinated approach with our neighbours in Queensland and Victoria that resulted in our not being able to contain it. We have seen it grow out of all proportion. In the past 12 months there were 28 exotic pest and disease incursions into Australia that triggered a formal response.

Seventy-five per cent of all new diseases in humans have arisen from animals. We often hear about foot and mouth disease but we are very fortunate in Australia not to have that disease. If we had outbreaks of foot and mouth it would have a financial impact on the economy of between \$8 billion and \$13 billion. Forty per cent of flying foxes have been exposed to the Hendra virus. Four people in Queensland have died from the disease and in 2011 eight cases were confirmed in horses in New South Wales and 10 in Queensland. Hendra virus is an insidious disease because it can be transmitted from animals to humans. As we know, flying foxes are very common, particularly around schools, in my area. I applaud the Minister for bringing forward the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 and commend the bill to the House.

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

FIREARMS AMENDMENT (AMMUNITION CONTROL) BILL 2012

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced, read a first time and printed.

Second reading set down as an order of the day for a future day.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Matter of Public Importance

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [7.01 p.m.]: Not surprisingly, I am absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to acknowledge in this House the wonderful work of our nurses and midwives and to highlight how deserving they are to have an international day of recognition. International Midwives Day was celebrated last Saturday 5 May and this Saturday 11 May we will celebrate International Nurses Day. It is a day to celebrate the contribution these very hardworking and dedicated professionals make to our community. These people work around the clock to care for the 1.5 million patients who are admitted to our public hospitals each year. I have had the privilege to work side by side with some simply exceptional people—nurses whom I have seen go beyond the call of duty time and again to ensure that the patients under their care get the best possible treatment and a hospital experience that is positive.

It needs to be emphasised that there is much more to the role of nurses and midwives than making beds, assisting patients with personal care and taking observations at regular intervals. Importantly, nurses are

advocates for patients and their families and, in many cases, carers. There are many occasions when patients in hospital are very vulnerable emotionally and physically. Nobody is at their best when they are unwell, so patients more often than not put their trust in the nurses to make sure their voices are heard and their medical and personal needs are met. When family members cannot be there or when patients have no family members to voice their concerns it is the nurses who step in to fill this advocacy role. As a nurse with experience in a palliative care ward I know only too well how families and patients who are in a fragile emotional state rely on the nurses to express and convey their fears, challenges and concerns to medical staff.

I reiterate that nursing is much more than patient care. No matter in which area of the hospital nurses work their role is extensive and demanding and they are continually having to broaden their skill set in order to meet the growing complexity of patients presenting at our public hospitals as well as the advances in technology in the health sector. I have made some lifelong friends through my nursing career and I know that a majority of the nurses in our hospitals are pleased to now be the beneficiaries of a Government that is backing nurses and midwives in our public hospitals.

In New South Wales we now have 44,597 nurses and midwives and, thanks to the O'Farrell-Stoner Government, that number is growing. Earlier today the Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, announced that since being elected to office in March last year this Government has already met its election commitment of delivering 2,500 additional nurses and midwives into the workforce in just over 13 months. This commitment comprises: 2,200 additional nurses and midwives, of whom 1,400 are additional award positions as a result of the memorandum of understanding with the New South Wales Nurses Association; and \$47 million to employ 275 additional clinical nurse/midwife educators and clinical nurse/midwife specialists.

In 2012 we will employ more than 2,000 graduate nurses in the public health system, nearly 500 more than the last intake under the previous Government. We are actively recruiting nurses and midwives at the local, State and national levels and we also have conducted an overseas recruitment campaign to attract experienced nurses from the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States of America to work in New South Wales. Of course, it is now much simpler to recruit locally following the establishment of our local health districts and the decision to return responsibility for recruitment to the local level.

The Government has taken steps to bring back the skills of previously registered nurses affected by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's recency of practice registration standard. We are offering 60 re-entry to nursing scholarships over two years to the value of \$10,000 each to individuals who wish to return to their profession after an absence of five to 10 years and who are committed to working for two years in the public health system. The Government also has acted to restore the right of ward nurses to be involved in setting rosters so that individual needs are accommodated as far as possible while ensuring that an appropriate skill mix is maintained.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [7.06 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak on this matter of public importance in honour of International Nurses Day next Saturday and also to celebrate International Midwives Day last Saturday. Nurses are the backbone of any health system. They are the good guys and we need more of them here as members of Parliament. I note that both speakers on the Government side in this debate are nurses. Rather than give a prepared speech, I would like to quote from this month's copy of the *Lamp*. Sharon Cylkowski has written a letter to Lee Evans, the member for Heathcote, which I think states matters better than any politician could ever say. It states:

Dear Mr Lee Evans MP,

I live in your electorate of Engadine.

I have nursed for 30 years—as a dedicated, compassionate and caring RN contributing with my knowledge, skills and ongoing enthusiasm to deliver optimal care in hospitals and in the community setting.

I believe we need to hold onto our skilled, dedicated nurses, as so many are leaving the industry in search of better employment conditions, despite their love for the patients. Across the board, we are feeling more and more pressure to deliver a high standard of care, at a faster pace, with a shortage of resources and funding.

Past NSWNA initiatives have helped keep skilled, dedicated nurses like myself in the practicing field but, if our conditions change, I too will be forced to turn away, study an alternative vocation and leave our community suffering as a result. This means a lot to my colleagues and me. Please help stand up for the rights of nurses, for the sake of everyone's future.

Nurses fought long and hard to win ratios for safe patient care in our Award last year. They did so because they understand what the longstanding problems of the health system are and how to fix them. Nurses understand that unless ratios are kept legally enforceable in our Award, safe patient care will once again be at the mercy of Treasury and cuts to hospital budgets.

Now, the government has given the tick of approval to the interim Audit Commission Report that specifically recommends banning staffing ratios from Awards. This would reduce the number of nurses and midwives employed in the public health system and ultimately patient care will suffer.

This comes on top of bills now introduced to parliament that increased tenfold the fines that could be levied if nurses ever again have to take action to ensure safe patient care.

I urge you to take a stand in parliament and speak out to stop these new bills from being passed. I urge you to ask the Premier and Minister to Health to immediately reject recommendation 22 of the Audit Commission Report and keep nurses' ratios legally enforceable for the sake of safe patient care in our community.

Sharon Cylkowski, RN

Tonight Sharon is not nursing; she is out volunteering. That says it all about what wonderful people our nurses are. I also refer to two other articles in this month's *Lamp*. One relates to Bob Fenwick, who died on 5 January 2011 after being attacked by a patient. On days when we recognise the work of nurses we also need to remember the incredible bravery of Bob and the many other nurses who far too often are subject to violence in the health system. This issue needs to be addressed because the rate of violence in our emergency departments and general wards is increasing with the rise in the use of amphetamines. Finally, on page 7 of the *Lamp* is a letter about nurses from Vera Spasojevic, in which she states:

Thanks for your support

I wish to thank all the staff at Port Kembla hospital for being so kind and understanding in my grief on the passing of my husband Slavko.

I also thank those that sent me flowers, condolence cards, visits and phone calls to help me regain my need to carry on with daily life and to be able to continue working in the hospital with such wonderful friends.

Yours forever,
Vera Spasojevic

Those three articles in this month's *Lamp* say it all about the modern nurse. They are the good guys and they do an incredible amount of good for our community. They deserve their status as the most trusted of all professions in society. They provide multiskilled care in public hospitals, aged care, private hospitals and general practitioner surgeries. They are now university trained, highly skilled and able to adapt to performing numerous roles, such as clinical nurse consultant, clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner. With the increasing complexity of health care, their roles will continue to develop over the next few years. The caseload of midwifery is one of the major changes, but nurse education is also an area that will need to continue to be expanded. As I said, nurses are the good guys. I am so proud to be able to give them a voice today. I commend this matter of public importance to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [7.11 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I speak on this matter of public importance celebrating our nurses and midwives. It is a privilege for me to be part of a Government that is delivering for the New South Wales health system. The New South Wales Government is delivering upgrades to hospitals across regional New South Wales. We also are employing more nurses in our hospital system. The Government is committed to the core values of collaboration, openness, respect, and empowerment. We want to ensure that our health system has a supportive working environment for health professionals that is free from bullying and harassment.

The Essentials of Care Program aligns with the Government's core values and is at the vanguard of the cultural change we want to see embedded in our public health system. The Essentials of Care Program has now been rolled out to over 600 wards and units across New South Wales. The program aims to improve the patient's experience of health care whether in hospitals or other healthcare settings. The program actively encourages and enables patients and nurses to work together to identify where improvements can be made and to celebrate good, effective care that centres on people and their individual needs.

As a result of the Essentials of Care Program, changes have been made at the ward and unit levels that have led to significant improvements, including: improved nutritional care of patients; a reduction in falls; a reduction in medication and administration errors; fewer complaints from patients and families; better communication between patients and their families and clinical teams; improved accuracy in the completion of documentation; and increased staff satisfaction and staff retention. The Government is committed to the continued rollout of the Essentials of Care Program and recognises the pivotal role of our nursing and midwifery unit managers and their vital contribution to managing safe and effective patient care.

A few weeks ago I accompanied the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, on a visit to the Manning Rural Referral Hospital where we spoke with nurses and nurse unit managers on programs and systems to improve services that are being developed by nurses and clinical teams and the implementation of these programs at a local level. They spoke highly of this initiative. They also spoke highly of the much improved clinical services at Manning River Referral Hospital since the O'Farrell-Stoner Government came to office. They referred to 25 new graduate nurses, six new registered nurses, a new midwife, two new anaesthetists, two new intensive care specialists, a new orthopaedic surgeon, for the first time a new oncologist, for the first time in eight years a new ear, nose and throat specialist and a new general surgeon.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [7.14 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Myall Lakes for their contributions to this matter of public importance. Clearly, they spoke with much sincerity because they were speaking from personal experience. They join with me in acknowledging that nurses are the public face of our health system and that they provide the support and care that makes a patient's experience easier. As well as celebrating International Nurses Day this Saturday, last week we celebrated International Midwives Day, which highlights the enormous contribution midwives make to the care of women and their families in their journey from pregnancy to parenthood.

The World Health Organisation recognises midwives as the health professionals best able to deliver safe, cost-effective maternity services to the majority of females. Midwives are in the privileged position of sharing the journey of a woman and her family from pregnancy to parenthood. Being involved in the birth of a new life is just one of the great rewards for those who make this career choice. Today in New South Wales many women are able to choose a midwife to provide all their pregnancy care and be confident that they will receive high-quality, individualised, safe care that is tailored individually for them.

In hospitals around New South Wales and across Australia nurses on various health sites will come together at lunchtime barbecues or at morning or afternoon teas to celebrate their internationally recognised days. I am sorry I will be unable to join my former colleagues at Port Macquarie Base Hospital this Friday. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank them for their dedication and hard work. I congratulate in advance the nurses not only from Port Macquarie Base Hospital but across the State who will be recognised for their individual and exceptional contributions to their local hospitals and the health sector generally with special awards and certificates. Again, I thank the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Myall Lakes for their contributions. I know that they, together with all members of this House, congratulate our nurses and midwives and acknowledge the great job they do day after day in our public health system.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ACCESS COMMUNITY GROUP

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [7.19 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about a very important community group based in Corrimal in the electorate of Keira. In particular, I want to talk about the work that chief executive officer Samantha Hall and her team is doing in relation to the Adult Voluntary Post Release Support Service and the Juvenile Justice Post Release Support Program. I hope the Attorney General is listening because he should seriously consider this program and roll it out across New South Wales—and the Access Community Group should be involved in that process. Through this program the Access Community Group has been working with ex-offenders for more than 15 years.

The Access Community Group's post release support program is about doing everything possible to ensure that people do not return to prison. It is about keeping people out of jail. The group supports its clients in addressing personal barriers. It assists with health and wellbeing, interpersonal and communication skills and, most importantly, re-engagement with education and training and transition into employment. In a nutshell, this wraparound service is about trying to provide the level of support that people need at community, personal and social levels, as well as at an engagement and workplace training level. It is trying to give them some meaning and focus in life, and the opportunity to see that jail is not the only option.

I understand that despite positive discussions between the Attorney General and the Access Community Group in the past, the group has not been able to secure the necessary funding to roll out the program. The briefing and the evaluation the group provided to me speak enormous volumes about Samantha Hall and her

team. The statewide average for recidivism is about 40 per cent. The Attorney General, the Attorney General's Department and those of us who have worked with law enforcement know that, tragically, a person who goes to jail once often returns. This wraparound program, which focuses on personal, social and educational needs and on community links, has a recidivism rate of approximately 11 per cent. That is still too high but when compared with the statewide average it shows the group has some serious runs on the board.

All members of this House should examine the program. Governments, no matter their political persuasion, are always focused on trying to keep people out of jail for community safety and economic reasons. Incarceration is a huge drain on government finances, and taxpayers' money should be spent elsewhere. I hope the Attorney General has a rethink about this program. I have written to him in the hope that he will give it serious consideration. The Attorney General has spoken in this House before about reducing the recidivism rate and breaking the cycle of crime. I have listened and paid careful attention to his speeches. As Attorney General, he needs to consider this program seriously on behalf of the communities of New South Wales because it is getting results. It is not only about case management but also about giving people accredited training, pathways to education and employment, life skills and the all-important mentoring and necessary support. I hope that the Attorney General will look carefully at my correspondence. I am happy to speak with him about the program in more detail. It is an important program from our community that is making a real difference to our community.

BROKEN HILL AGFAIR

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [7.24 p.m.]: A great event was held at Broken Hill last weekend: the biennial Agfair. The Agfair was started by Bruce Church, OAM, a member of the Rotary club, who had a vision of holding an agricultural show in Broken Hill. As a result of his continued focus, the event was staged, and it has got better and better over the years. Last weekend there were a record number of exhibitors. I am not sure whether gate takings broke the record but I was told last Saturday that they exceeded \$60,000. People attended from across the region, particularly Broken Hill. The Rotary Club of Broken Hill has made a significant investment over time to ensure that each Agfair is better than the previous one. Last weekend there was a driver simulation program, the proceeds of which went to local charity Silverlea.

The Rotary Club of Broken Hill South was also involved and provided refreshments in its tent. Agfair is a very important biennial fundraiser for both Rotary clubs. As members will be aware, Rotary clubs make a significant contribution to the community; they support all sorts of events and initiatives. There is no doubt that the local Rotary clubs will use the money raised through Agfair to benefit the community of Broken Hill. The Nationals were well represented at the fair. We were there in force, ensuring the Far West community is aware of our commitment to people in the bush. Five years of drought decimated attendance numbers at the Agfair but the breaking of the drought brought renewed interest in the event. I believe most of the grazing families from western New South Wales who attended the event would have been pleased with what they saw.

There were plenty of exhibitors who offered not only services but equipment for graziers to improve the way they work their property. I saw the latest wind and solar power generation devices that are attached to pumps and all sorts of equipment that is used on grazing properties. The equipment exhibited was cutting edge, and people got a lot out of the fair. There were a range of demonstrations during the day, including a cooking demonstration at which a leading chef from Melbourne cooked a goat. I have no doubt that people can put the skills learned at Agfair to good use as there are plenty of goats roaming the Far West. In recent times they have become the farmer's friend as goat sales have providing a great deal of revenue and supported many grazing initiatives. Agfair was a great event and I congratulate the Rotary Club of Broken Hill.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.29 p.m.]: I thank the member for Murray-Darling for bringing the wonderful Agfair event to the attention of the House. I extend the Government's congratulations to all the organisers, particularly Bruce Church, OAM, whom the member nominated, and Rotary. Similar events are held across regional New South Wales, including National Field Days in Orange, through my good friend and member of The Nationals, Andrew Gee, and in the Tamworth electorate, the Gunnedah and Tocal Agquip Field Days in the electorates of Minister Parker and Minister Souris, and the Henty Field Days. They are just some events where regional New South Wales and everyone associated with the agricultural industries get to showcase and exhibit new technologies and to present investment and enhancement opportunities to those on the land. These events form a big part of the social fabric of our regional communities. As we heard from the member for Murray-Darling, charities as well as many community groups benefit from these fairs. Congratulations.

POLICE NUMBERS

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [7.30 p.m.]: I am proud to represent the people of Lakemba—a community as rich and diverse as any in Australia. I am proud of the sense of belonging that exists in our local area, and I am especially proud of the way that people from all walks of life are prepared to help out others who need a bit of extra assistance. I would say that this is the defining characteristic of the people in our community. So it is unfortunate that today I stand here not to recognise the wonderful spirit of our people, not to praise the efforts of local volunteers and community workers, and not to thank community leaders for their hard work. Unfortunately, I stand here today because hardworking families, young people, the elderly and local businesses want this Government to do something about gun crime and violence. I regret to inform the House that homes in the suburb of Riverwood, a suburb that is home to many families who just wish to go quietly about their daily lives, have experienced the terror of Sydney's newest crime wave: gun violence.

Tragically, the result of this gun violence was the murder of a man in an otherwise quiet suburban street. I visited the residents to listen to their concerns and to express my willingness to do whatever I could to return peace and safety to our community. These residents were disappointed to know that the two police local area commands that serve our community are operating below their authorised strength. In the current climate of gangs and thugs seeking to exert their influence in a territorial battle, this shortage of police makes no sense. In fact, figures indicate that across the Sydney metropolitan area, the O'Farrell Government has allowed police numbers to fall to more than 240 below authorised strength in local commands. This has to end. How can we expect our hardworking police to protect our community when they are so under-resourced?

The former Labor Government worked extremely hard to give our police the toughest laws and the best resources to help them tackle crime and keep our streets safe. For 10 consecutive years crime in 16 of the 17 major categories was stable or falling. Sadly, after just 12 months all this hard work seems to have been wasted. Premier O'Farrell and his police Minister need to listen to the people of Riverwood, the families of my electorate of Lakemba, and urgently increase police resources. We need to help the police win this war by returning our commands to their authorised strength. Residents and businesses are signing a petition that I will present to Parliament to show the community support for making our streets safer again. In just over one week, we have received around 500 signatures.

The Premier would do well to start listening to the people of my community and do everything in his power to make our streets safe again. Safety and security in our communities should be above politics. Local families are not interested in political pointscore; they just want to feel safe, whether they are walking home from the local train station or watching television in the family home. Unfortunately, many families in my community used to feel safe but due to inaction by this Government they now live with fear and anxiety. I call on the Premier and the police Minister to give our streets back to families and to start locking up these gangs and thugs who are terrorising south-western and western Sydney.

MENAI ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [7.35 p.m.]: To commemorate Anzac Day this year, I attended two services. The first was at Woronora RSL, where the community gathered to honour those men who did not come home from war, those who served and those who assisted on the home front, and those who simply, and heartbreakingly, waited for their loved ones to return home. I was joined by my council colleagues Councillor Steve Simpson and Councillor Peter Towell, as well as by my State colleague the member for Heathcote, Lee Evans, and the Federal member for Hughes, Craig Kelly. The Woronora service, held on the Saturday before Anzac Day by the very organised RSL sub-branch, has a wonderful community feel. There is a march and then the community gathers to honour the men and listen to the service. I particularly liked seeing the young children from the surf life saving club listening intently whilst still in their uniforms. I hope this helps to pass on this important tradition to the next generation.

Children from local schools—Woronora River Primary School and The Jannali High School—take an active part in the service by reading prayers and poems. They were well spoken and a true credit to their schools, their principals and their parents, who were there to support them. It is very special also at Woronora to listen to the kookaburras, cockatoos and all the native birds—it made me think about the special country that these men fought for. On Anzac Day I attended the dawn service, with serving and former members of the Royal Australian Engineers from Steele Barracks Moorebank, which is where the School of Military Engineering was established in 1939. With apologies to my year 7 Latin teacher, I shall attempt to say the motto of the Royal Australian Engineers. "Ubique"—which means "everywhere"—is a motto shared with the Royal

Australian Engineers' parent corps, the Royal Engineers. This motto was bestowed by King William IV in 1832 in recognition that both sappers and gunners were not entitled to carry regimental colours and typically served as small detachments instead of a whole unit.

The Royal Australian Engineers adopted the Royal Engineers' practice of calling their private soldiers sappers in recognition of the fact that the very earliest engineers were primarily concerned with driving saps—or, to use the more familiar term, tunnels—towards enemy lines and underneath fortifications. Steele Barracks is known also as the home of the sapper, as this is the area where they receive their initial engineer training and any further specialist training. The dawn service was conducted at the cenotaph adjacent to the barracks chapel. My point of contact on the day was the adjutant, Captain Brendan Creer. In the dark of the predawn as I was looking for the adjutant I happened upon the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Allan Hollink, and his partner, Suzanne Nermutova, together with his sons, Tristan and Nathaniel, who escorted me to my seat. During the service I had the sincere honour of laying a wreath at the cenotaph directly after Colonel Michael Hyde, who laid a wreath on behalf of the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers and sappers everywhere.

Additionally, wreaths were laid by Lieutenant Colonel Allan Hollink, Commanding Officer, School of Military Engineering, on behalf of the School of Military Engineering; Second Lieutenant Simon McDouall, on behalf of the Royal New Zealand Engineer Corps; Major Ian MacFarlane, on behalf of the Royal Engineers; Lieutenant Alex Hengene, on behalf of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force; Major Don Philpot and Warrant Officer Class 2 James Fields, on behalf of the special operations engineer regiment; Major James Taylor and Warrant Officer Class 1 Shawn Goodbody, on behalf of the 17th Construction Squadron; Major Keith Petersen and Warrant Officer Class 1 Michael Bates, on behalf of the 2151 Construction Regiment; Major Ian Lobb and Warrant Officer Class 1 Kym Cheisa, on behalf of the Warrant Officer and Non Commissioned Officer Wing—New South Wales; Mr Frank Fischer, on behalf of the Royal Australian Survey Association, representing engineer units that served in Vietnam; Mr Jack Peel, Mr Hank Reidstra, Mr Doug Maddison, Mr John Pendergast, Mr Allan Reading and Mr Geoff Sies, on behalf of the 17th Construction Squadron Association; and, finally, representing the Liverpool District Scouts were Ryan Pavey, Alexander Rawlins, Chris Collins and Zac Allogia.

The service was attended by more than 1,500 people and, interestingly, almost all of them at one time or another had undergone training at Steele Barracks. I recognise also my electorate officer, Jeff Page, who joined me that morning, and thank him for the service he has given. It was an honour for me to attend the commemoration and to lay a wreath at the cenotaph as a way of recognising the service of the Anzacs. I thank them and their families, particularly those from the Wattle Grove and Holsworthy communities. Lest we forget.

KIAMA ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [7.40 p.m.]: It is a great honour and privilege to record my sincere thanks to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Members would have attended Anzac Day services recently in their electorates. The Kiama electorate has a strong tradition of marking this solemn occasion with many individual communities holding services in the lead-up to and on 25 April. As a member of the Shoalhaven City Council I have for eight years faithfully attended the Shoalhaven Heads Dawn Service conducted by Max Flour, the Bomaderry Morning Service conducted by Bob O'Grady and the Berry mid-morning service conducted by William Bird. Under the stewardship of these individuals, RSLs and their dedicated volunteers who organise these services, I have enjoyed watching the size of these services grow and I am particularly pleased to see the increase in participation by young people as the next generation stops to reflect and remember. As the State member for Kiama, I have the privilege of attending services across my electorate. Before I mention the services I attended, I acknowledge those who represented me at commemorative services I could not attend.

Neil Hartwell represented me at the Berry RSL Morning Service, Jackson Calverley represented me at the Kiama Dawn Service, Deputy Mayor Andrew Guile represented me at the Shoalhaven Heads RSL Dawn Service, Paul Ell represented me at the Bomaderry RSL Dawn Service, Phil Lavers represented me at the Robertson Morning Service, Andrew Patterson represented me at the Kangaroo Valley Morning Service, and Katherine Wood represented me at the Burrawang Morning Service. On Saturday 21 April I attended the Bomaderry Sub Branch 2012 Anzac dinner at Bomaderry RSL Club. The guest speaker was Lieutenant Commander H. A. L. Hall, MBE, OAM, JP, RAN (Rtd), Patron of the Shoalhaven Naval Association who served in the Second World War and Korea. I know that both the Speaker Shelley Hancock and I enjoyed Henry's speech, which was both entertaining and interesting. Henry's service is distinguished and I know how much the crowd appreciated such a detailed and inspiring account of a brilliant naval career.

On Sunday 22 April I attended an Anzac service at Christ Church, Kiama. The welcome was delivered by Reverend Steve Stanis and the sermon was delivered by Archdeacon John Jones, AM, RAN, who was a Navy chaplain from 1967 to 1988 and principal chaplain and archdeacon to the Navy from 1980 to 1988. The Prayer of Commemoration was delivered by Chaplain General Ken Short, AO (Rtd). Later that day, I attended an Anzac Day commemoration service at Gerringong Town Hall organised by the Gerringong RSL Sub Branch. We were welcomed by John Kaehler, the President of the RSL, and the wreath laying was led by Bill Popple. The guest speaker was Mayor Sandra McCarthy, who reflected on her personal connection with military service as her son, Michael, grows and develops his navy career, which began at Creswell on the South Coast. The Commemoration of the Fallen was delivered by local Anglican Reverend Andrew Glover, and I sincerely thank him for his outstanding reflections on that solemn and important day.

Following the Gerringong service, I attended an Anzac Sunday parade at the Darcy King Memorial Garden in Albion Park organised by the Albion Park RSL Sub Branch. The service was attended by the former member for Kiama, Bob Harrison, and Mayor Kellie Marsh. On Wednesday 25 April, I began Anzac Day at the 4:30 a.m. dawn service organised by Deborah Hamilton, Honorary Secretary of the Albion Park RSL Sub Branch. An outstanding commemoration address was delivered by Steven Burgess, the President of the Albion Park RSL Sub Branch. A short address was also given by Captain Kristy Kurth from the Salvation Army. I appreciated the opportunity to join with veterans for a wonderful breakfast following the ceremony lovingly prepared by the RSL women's auxiliary that hit the spot on what was quite a crisp morning. Along with our serving personnel and those who have retired, I was thrilled to see the participation of our local emergency services in this and other marches across our district.

I then joined with the Shellharbour community and attended the commemoration service at Shellharbour City Square. The welcome address was delivered by the former council on the Shellharbour City Council, Don Briggs, the President of Warilla RSL Sub Branch. Heading back south, I then attended an Anzac Day march in Kiama organised by Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub Branch President Dennis Seage, followed by an Anzac Day lunch with the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL members at the Kiama Pavilion. Dennis is a very active participant in the Kiama community and I know how hard he and his team of volunteers work to make the Kiama services a success. Anzac Day is an opportunity for me to remember a grandfather I never knew. Private Charles Isaac Ward served in the First World War in the 53rd Battalion. A farmer from Mount Lamby, Charles joined the war effort, enlisting on 6 April 1916 for what he assumed would be the adventure of a lifetime. Having been shot in the arm in Rouen, France, and having suffered the indignity of having it amputated, he returned to Australia in December 1917 on board the HMAT *Beltana*. He was honourably discharged with a Victory Medal, British War Medal and the 1914-15 Star.

Moving from the past to the present, I acknowledge in the gallery today my friend James Patterson, a constituent who is studying to be a supply officer in the Royal Australian Navy. James is currently studying at the Australian Defence Force Academy and I am proud that so many people like James are still enlisting in the defence and service of our country. I am proud of the contribution he makes along with so many other residents of my electorate who train in the shadow of conflict but who strive in the service of peace. In this Chamber hangs a memorial to Lieutenant-Colonel George Frederick Braund and Sergeant Edward Rennix Larkin, both of whom were killed in action at Gallipoli in 1915. So much has changed in the 97 years since they laid down their lives on the altar of freedom so that we can enjoy the rights and liberties of this great State and country. I pray that the world will learn from its mistakes and I hope that as we remember each Anzac Day, as we remember loved ones lost and those who were maimed and injured in battle, that we also pause to remember what so many brave Australians fought for then and fight for today and that we are not only the custodians of their spirit and memory but also that we remain the vanguard and defenders of a free and confident society. Lest we forget

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.45 p.m. until
Wednesday 9 May 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**
