

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 9 May 2012

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES OSWALD "JIMMY" LITTLE, AO

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [10.07 a.m.], on behalf of Mr Brad Hazzard: I move:

That this House acknowledges the contributions of James (Jimmy) Oswald Little, AO, to music, the community and Australia.

Jimmy Little was "little" in name only. Indeed, Jimmy Little meant a great deal and made a great contribution to the lives of a great many people—his family, his fans, the Aboriginal community and the people of New South Wales and Australia. Therefore it is a great honour to speak to this condolence motion on behalf of the New South Wales Government. But it is also a great challenge to find the right words to sufficiently dignify a dignified and musical man who led a dignified and musical life. Perhaps it is best to start from what we know and love the most about Jimmy Little—his songs. Jimmy Little was all about songs. Songs are very important. They are not just about some words and some music; they are not just about notes, chords, melodies and harmonies. Songs, both as they are written and as they are sung and performed, tell the story of us—the story of who we are as individuals, our joys and our sorrows, and who we are as a community, our hopes and our frailties.

Perhaps Jimmy Little's greatest contribution is that he masterfully told the story of us, as Australians, and about a country with an extraordinary inheritance from its first peoples—Aboriginal Australians. Jimmy Little's own story had many rich and colourful chapters. He was born on 1 March 1937 at the Cummeragunja Mission, New South Wales, about 30 kilometres from Moama and Echuca, on the New South Wales and Victoria border. Jimmy was blessed with a deep knowledge of his country and from growing up in an Aboriginal family, of which he was the eldest of seven siblings. This knowledge was instilled in his mother, Frances, a Yorta Yorta woman, and his father, James Little Snr, who was from the Yuin people. James Little Snr, a capable entertainer in his own right, performed throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Jimmy reflected on his upbringing in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. He said his parents "taught me well about the value of life, freedom, love, respect and all those basic things that we all need".

In 1939, after the Cummeragunja walk off, Jimmy's family moved to his father's tribal land near Wallaga Lake and lived for some years at Nowra and Moruya on the New South Wales South Coast. Tragically, not long after the move, his mother, Frances, passed away. As early as age 13 Jimmy performed at local concerts, and at age 16 the Australian radio waves were graced by his voice on *Australia's Amateur Hour*. His mellow style earned him the nicknames of Balladeer, Gentleman Jim and the Honey Voice. Jimmy began his recording career in 1956 with Regal Zonophone Records, but his career was launched when *Ballads with a Beat* reached the Top 10 in the Australian music charts. Throughout the 1960s a string of extended plays, singles and albums followed, including the chart-topping *Royal Telephone* in 1963, which sold more than 75,000 copies. *Royal Telephone* achieved gold record status and became one of his signature tunes.

Jimmy Little's nationwide profile grew through regular television appearances, radio air play and constant touring. He also began acting in the 1950s. He played a major role in *Shadow of the Boomerang*, followed by performances in stage plays such as *Black Cockatoos*. He was also in the 1991 film *Until the End of the World* by Tracy Moffatt and Wim Wenders. In the 1970s he was acknowledged as one of this country's

premier country music stars but he also remained fond of big orchestral sounds, which were heard in his 1972 album *Winterwood* and *An Evening with Jimmy Little—Live at the Sydney Opera House*. In the 1980s Jimmy diversified into reggae and became known as a role model and mentor for Indigenous youth. In 1999 he was awarded an ARIA—an Australian Record Industry Association award—for *Messenger* in the category of Best Adult Contemporary Album. That album reached the top 10 of the alternative music charts and introduced Jimmy to a new, younger audience. He was also inducted into the Australian Record Industry Association Australian Music Hall of Fame.

It is important to view Jimmy Little's career in its historical perspective. He was a star before the 1965 Freedom Ride and the 1967 referendum. Jimmy Little was an Aboriginal success story in an era when Aboriginal discrimination was still essentially the law of the land. That success was, in part, based on talent and ability, but it was also based on perseverance and hard work. His success in the 1950s and 1960s would have shattered many of the stereotypes held by some in the broader community of the day about Aboriginality. Indeed, Jimmy Little was the personification of a proud and successful Aboriginal man who could walk the path of the broader society without compromising his heritage. This pride came through in his work for his community, not only in his music but also in education.

From 1985 Jimmy taught and mentored Aboriginal music students at Redfern. From 2002 he was an ambassador for literacy and numeracy for the then Department of Education, Science and Training. Partially building on this life experience, the Jimmy Little Foundation was launched in 2006 to help Indigenous Australians succumbing to kidney disease and to promote the benefits to children of healthy eating through the Thumbs Up! program. He travelled throughout Australia and attended community events, schools, health seminars and music festivals to raise awareness about these issues. He also served as patron of the Indigenous Doctors Association of Australia, an ambassador for the Fred Hollows Foundation and Kidney Health Australia.

Jimmy Little was the recipient of the National Aboriginal Day of Observance Committee [NAIDOC] Aboriginal of the Year award for his work in the Aboriginal community. In 2002 he was the New South Wales Senior Australian of the Year and in 2004 he received the Red Ochre Award of the Australian Council for the Arts. On Australia Day 2004 Jimmy Little was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for work with Indigenous health and education programs. The citation for that award stated: "For service to the entertainment industry as a singer, recording artist and songwriter and to the community through reconciliation and as an ambassador for Indigenous culture." In that year he was also voted a Living Australian Treasure—no mean feat.

It was very clear by the community response to Jimmy Little's passing that he was indeed a treasure. Here in this place we speak not for ourselves but, at the best of times, for the wonderful New South Wales community that we all share. It is therefore fitting and appropriate to use this occasion to note some of the comments made by community members on Jimmy Little's life. During the recent commemorative service for Jimmy Little held at the Opera House, Premier Barry O'Farrell said:

He was a man of soul. He had his country in him. He disarmed us, he charmed us and he encouraged us to think beyond ourselves. Jimmy was a straight-up man of action.

The Premier acknowledged Jimmy Little not only as a talented musician, but also as "an ambassador for Aboriginal culture and a passionate advocate for improved Aboriginal health". I was present at that service. I was born in 1967 so my understanding of the great legacy of Jimmy Little is not as great as that of many others. At that service I was enchanted not only by the moving dedications of those who spoke but by how wonderfully his talented children, who are also musicians, sang with dignity and courage in celebration of the life of their father.

As those present listened to the speeches about this great Australian they also watched some video clips of his earlier works, including the Thumbs Up! campaign and how he engaged with the community—the great repertoire of his life. One image stood out for me, and I suspect it will remain with me for the rest of my life. One of the video clips depicted Jimmy turning around with a distinct twinkle in his eye. I remember thinking to myself at that time that everything being said about Jimmy Little is true—he was a gentle soul, a good man. That twinkle in his eye revealed his soul. I encourage others to take a look at that moving footage. The Chairman of New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and Wiradjuri man, Stephen Ryan, commented that Jimmy's beautiful, gentle nature would be sorely missed. He said further:

Jimmy was a man of many talents, and although he dipped his toes into acting, his true love was music and singing.

His daughter, Frances Peters-Little, said that the Little family had enjoyed sharing their "Uncle Jimmy" with his diverse range of fans. She said:

The type of strength that dad had has allowed him to be able to open more doors and cross more boundaries than most people can even imagine.

Anne Kirkpatrick, daughter of Slim Dusty, Northern Territory Aboriginal country singer Warren H. Williams; and John Williamson all recalled "the gentlest Australian song man". Musician Brendan Gallagher, who paired with Little singing some famous Australian songs including *Under The Milky Way*, *Quasimodo's Dream* and *Cattle And Cane* said, "My god, that man could sing." Gallagher described Little as velvety smooth, with great reserves of power and exquisite phrasing. He said also, "Jimmy would summons the magic in the room and take his adoring public out of there with him to somewhere beautiful." Australian musical historian Glenn A. Baker eloquently described Jimmy as an "absolutely delightful human being". Those comments are but a snapshot of what has been said about a wonderful man, a proud and successful Aboriginal Australian man, and his wonderful life. In 2005, Little himself—little in name only—told an ABC journalist how he would like to be remembered. He said:

I just want people to remember me as a nice person who was fair-minded and had a bit of talent that put it to good use.

Jimmy Little passed away in his sleep on 2 April 2012 aged 75. He is survived by his daughter, Frances Claire Peters-Little, and grandson, James Henry Little. He now joins his wife, the late Marjorie Rose Peters, whom Jimmy married in 1958 and who passed away in April 2011. Vale Jimmy Little.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [10.19 a.m.]: I join the Minister and a number of members of this and the other place in recognising the career, the life and, unfortunately, the passing of Jimmy Little. This Parliament often acknowledges the contributions of people from various walks of life, among them present and former members of Parliament and significant members of the community. Jimmy Little was a significant Australian. I recall that only last year the Parliament acknowledged the contribution of another great Australian—Lionel Rose. Members will recall that Lionel Rose was a former world boxing champion and he also recorded a number of songs that became hits, but not as prominently, as in Jimmy Little's favoured country and western category.

Today we pay tribute to another Indigenous Australian—Jimmy Little, who passed away only last month. The Parliament's program would never allow us to do otherwise but it is sad that we focus on the achievements of people like Jimmy Little only after they have passed away. Many people and organisations have recognised Jimmy Little's achievements during his fairly long life. I am not a student of the life of Jimmy Little, and I suppose not many of us are. However, I have known of him for almost 50 years. Like the debate on Lionel Rose, Jimmy Little's passing—as did Lionel Rose's passing—put me in a reflective mood about what he meant not only to me but also to the people of western Sydney and the State.

Jimmy Little was 14 years old when I was born and, of course, I never had the opportunity to meet him. It was not until about 1963 that I first realised he even existed. He had hit records well before 1963, particularly in 1959—which, as rock and roll historians know, was the year that Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper died. Jimmy Little had not insignificant hits in the Australian top 40 of that time—there were virtually State by State top 40s in those days—with the old classic *Danny Boy* and the Marty Robbins hit *El Paso*, both showing him to be a serious contributor to Australian popular music, country music and the cross-over to rock and roll music. Many did not know of him at that time. Certainly my family would not have seen much of him; we did not get our first television set until 1963—from recollection it was an H. G. Palmer model, with four legs and a 23-inch screen. We then got to see re-runs of Johnny O'Keefe's *Six O'clock Rock*, the *Johnny O'Keefe Show* and, of course, the show that everybody would know, *Bandstand*, hosted by the very well-known Brian Henderson.

The music scene in Australia centred around people such as Lonnie Lee, the Delltones, Digger Revell, Noelene Batley, Judy Stone and the kings of Australian popular music, Col Joye and Johnny O'Keefe. Many of their songs were introduced on radio by people such as Ward "Pally" Austin and Bob Rogers, who is still out there doing a great job highlighting the music of the era. The popular music of recording artists in this country—and Jimmy Little was no exception—was greatly influenced by the music of the Americans. For example, Gene Pitney, Roy Orbison, Del Shannon and Elvis Presley were very big in the years from 1959, when Jimmy Little had his first two major hits, to 1963, when he released his signature song *Royal Telephone*.

Unlike in Australia, in the United States of America during the prominent era of popular music there were many black recording artists—African Americans—such as Chuck Berry, Ray Charles, Little Richard,

Johnny Mathis, the Platters and dozens more. Despite the racist overtones in the United States of America at that time, black American artists contributed significantly to the evolution of popular music, rock and roll and country and western music in that country. In Australia, of course, it was somewhat different. Black Aboriginal recording artists were not so prominent. I am not saying there were no Aboriginal recording artists but Jimmy Little; I am saying that other than Jimmy Little none were talented enough to appear on *Bandstand* or the *Johnny O'Keefe Show* or to warrant an introduction by Ward "Pally" Austin or Bob Rogers. They were more or less relegated to perform in country tours of country and western music, which was dominated by people such as Slim Dusty.

All this was in the era of the white Australia policy. Interestingly, Jimmy Little was awarded three gold records at a time when the white Australia policy was in force, and that meant that he probably was not even registered on an electoral roll. He may have had some voting entitlements in New South Wales, but voting entitlements for Aboriginal people were very inconsistent across the country at that time and were not ratified until 1967—the year, I note, that Minister Dominello, the present Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, was born. I do not suggest that Aboriginal artists did not get due recognition, but they certainly were not in the forefront, and it was not until a singer with a captivating smile and a wonderful voice—influenced by the African American singer Johnny Mathis—covered an American song called *Royal Telephone* that anyone paid any attention and people realised that this guy really had talent.

From the sideboards of radio stations and on *Bandstand*, among all the big hits of the day, the catchy tune of *Royal Telephone* boomed out. The song was new to many of us in Australia, although a number of artists, in particular Burl Ives, had recorded it earlier in the United States of America. As I said earlier, *Royal Telephone* was not Jimmy Little's first record, but it was his biggest hit and one of the biggest hits of 1963—a big year for music both in Australia and overseas. Nowadays we equate the award of a gold record with the sale of one million records of a particular song. However, in Australia at that time a gold record was awarded for the sale of 20,000 records. Jimmy Little's hit *Royal Telephone*, of which 75,000 copies were sold, scored three gold records. Many more thousands of copies were sold over the years after it was re-released and re-recorded on other albums. It was a significant time in the career of Jimmy Little.

I should not spend all my time speaking about *Royal Telephone* because it was not Jimmy Little's only contribution. The catalogue of Jimmy Little records lists many hit records and 35 recorded albums. I am very pleased that the Minister highlighted the many other roles played by Jimmy Little in this country, such as his being a mentor to Indigenous people and his involvement in Indigenous education—achievements for which perhaps Jimmy Little would prefer to have been remembered rather than the fact that he was one of our great recording artists. He received many awards. His name has been included on the Tamworth Country Music Roll of Renown, which is Australia's equivalent of the United States of America's Country Music Hall of Fame. It is certainly the highest recognition given to an Australian country and western artist. The album *Messenger*, which he recorded much later in his career, also received one of the highest awards. He recognised gospel music, and he was awarded a Golden Gospel Award. As the Minister correctly acknowledged, he was also awarded the Order of Australia.

I suppose we could say that it is not bad for a kid born on a mission station in 1937. Jimmy Little was recognised at the service in Sydney by Premiers, Opposition leaders, Ministers, community leaders and Indigenous leaders. When Jimmy kicked off his country and western career back in the 1950s I am sure he often wondered whether he would achieve such dizzy heights in various fields. In conclusion, I thank the Minister for breaking into the Government's parliamentary program to bring this motion before the Parliament. Vale, Jimmy Little—mentor, ambassador, singer and actor, family man, Christian and Indigenous Australian. He made a great contribution to so many facets of this community. I am pleased that I have been able to say a few words in recognition of that service.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.30 a.m.]: As the member for Dubbo I am proud to join other members in this condolence motion, and I thank the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the member for Mount Druitt for their kind words. I will not speak about Jimmy Little's long list of achievements because they have already been well articulated; no doubt they will be articulated by those who know him even better than I did. I had the privilege of meeting Jimmy Little, a constituent of mine, primarily through my involvement with the Police Recruitment Our Way project. As we have heard, Jimmy was interested in literacy and numeracy, and he was pleased with the work we were doing in that project to provide literacy and numeracy assistance to Aboriginal people joining the NSW Police Force. I got to meet Jimmy Little in that framework.

I spent a considerable time in Tamworth as a child, and no doubt everyone knew who Jimmy Little was. That he was an absolute country music legend is undisputed. Today I will direct my short contribution to Jimmy Little the man. He was in every way a gentleman. He was in every way an inspiration and a mentor, and he was a role model in everything he did and in how he conducted himself. We lost a great Australian in April this year. I had the pleasure of joining the Minister and my colleague the member for Canterbury, who is in the Chamber, at the State's wonderful tribute to Jimmy Little last week. I do not think I have ever heard anything finer than the eulogies and tributes paid to him. They were befitting of the man and his achievements.

I take this opportunity to express my condolences to Frances Peters-Little, a wonderful woman who is doing extraordinary good work to continue her father's legacy with the Jimmy Little Foundation. I look forward to supporting that foundation and its great work, particularly through programs such as Thumbs Up! I am sure other members who were present at the ceremony will understand when I say that a chill went down my spine when James Henry sang *Yorta Yorta Man*. I could hear his grandfather in his performance, and I do not think I will forget it for a long time. I caught up with James after the ceremony and thanked him for his performance. It was truly inspirational and a great tribute to his grandfather.

Jimmy was the patron of the Indigenous Doctors Association of Australia. That is a big issue and one that I am keen to assist in any way and to see prosper in the future. I am familiar with Jimmy's work with the Fred Hollows Foundation as I have spent time in Bourke, which is the resting place of Fred Hollows. As I said, Jimmy was an ambassador for literacy and numeracy. I believe Jimmy's genuine and sincere approach to everything he did made him stand above many others. His sincerity and genuineness inspired others. I think that is the greatest loss for our State, the Dubbo community and all the communities that Jimmy could call home—and there were many. To come from such humble beginnings and achieve what he did is truly amazing. It is one of the great Australian stories. I endorse the comments made by other speakers. Jimmy Little was and always will be a great Australian. Vale, Jimmy Little.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [10.35 p.m.]: I begin by recognising country, and I thank the Minister for moving this condolence motion in the House today. It is unusual to have a condolence motion of this nature. Most condolence motions relate to people who have served in this Parliament and, on occasions, other Parliaments in this country. To have a condolence motion that recognises an individual who did not serve in the Parliament is unusual and demonstrates the significance of that individual's life. I say this because one of the great honours afforded to my late husband, Rick Farley, was a condolence motion in the Federal Parliament. Of course, he also was a great Australian.

People have spoken about Jimmy Little. I do not have the depth of record of the Minister and I do not think anyone in this Chamber could make a condolence speech like the one made earlier by the member for Mount Druitt who understands the life of James Oswald "Jimmy" Little, or Uncle Jimmy, and the history of the music industry. I also acknowledge the contribution of the member for Dubbo. Jimmy, with his daughter, Frances, spent the last few years of his life in Dubbo. I had the privilege of responding to the Premier's ministerial statement in the House a few weeks ago, and last week the member for Auburn and shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I attended Jimmy's memorial service at the Opera House. It is interesting to chart the life of Jimmy Little against the backdrop of the history of this country.

In my response to the ministerial statement I mentioned that Jimmy was a Yorta Yorta man who was born in and grew up at Cummeragunja Mission. Cummeragunja is near Barmah on the New South Wales side of the Murray River. Members might recall the famous walk off Cummeragunja in 1939. Jimmy was born in 1937. At the memorial service we learnt that Jimmy was carried off the mission in the arms of his mother as a sign of protest by the residents about their treatment. That struck a deep cord with me. I could picture those people making that momentous decision, given the sorts of times they were living in, the absolute degradation of Aboriginal society, the fact that Aboriginal people were forced to live on mission stations, which were called reserves, as well as missions set up under the church.

I find remarkable the fact that the community bravely said, "We aren't going to put up with this sort of treatment any more", picked up their children and walked off the mission. I remember an episode of the series *Women of the Sun* which was about the event known as the Cummeragunja Walkout. The fact that Jimmy was picked up by his mum, put on her hip and walked off the mission because of the terrible living conditions was probably an indication of where his life would lead. It also tells us a lot about the people who raised him. They clearly stood for decency and fairness even though they lived under taxing conditions.

Let us remind ourselves that New South Wales holds the dubious honour of introducing the reserve system under the Aborigines Protection Act 1909. Under that system many Aboriginal people were forced to live on reserves. Many members would know the reserves in their towns which are usually two or three kilometres out of town and often are located near the cemetery or the rubbish dump. In the early days the Aborigines lived under the regime of the mission managers. The schooling that was provided, if any, was not part of the school system. The curriculum was substandard and children were educated only until about third grade. The boys had to clean the yard and were prepared for being apprenticed out to local farms. The girls basically were taught to be domestic servants. That was the beginning of Jimmy Little's life.

As other members have pointed out, it is interesting and quite remarkable that Jimmy achieved mainstream success as a musician before Aboriginal people were recognised by the 1967 referendum. When I think about the attitudes that existed in those times and the fact that Aboriginal people did not enjoy citizenship, I realise it is extraordinary that this man was able to rise above those circumstances and achieve success in that era. We must ask why he was able to achieve such recognition. The answer was provided at his memorial service the other day. Jimmy never forgot where he came from. He was fiercely rooted in his Aboriginal heritage and strongly proud of it. He also was a prominent member of the Aboriginal community. He did not set himself apart; he did not have to. I cannot explain to the House the strength of character that Jimmy needed to achieve his success in that era. It is a testament to the remarkable man he was.

As we heard the other day, during the late 1960s and 1970s the fight for Aboriginal rights was taken to the streets. Aboriginal people used street protests to bring to the attention of the country the conditions that we lived in and the rights that we did not enjoy. The most famous event of the Aboriginal rights movement was in 1972 with the establishment of the tent embassy on the lawn of Parliament House. Whilst Jimmy said he was not part of that street movement he very much upheld the rights debate in his own arena in which he was highly regarded and well respected. Whilst he did not take his advocacy to the streets, his contribution was significant because he raised Aboriginal rights issues as a member of the music and entertainment industry, which we know is a powerful and influential entity. Jimmy also played a part in a movie that was well ahead of its time which I think was called *Boomerang*.

Mr Geoff Provest: *Shadow of the Boomerang*.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: *Shadow of the Boomerang*, of course. Interestingly, the late husband of one of my colleagues wrote the screenplay for that film. I have known Jimmy Little's daughter, Frances, for a very long time. She is an incredibly competent and extraordinarily intelligent woman. She was Jimmy's carer for the last part of his life. At the memorial service she sang the song from *Shadow of the Boomerang*. Before doing so she said she was not the singer in the family but when she got onto the stage she sounded so much like her father it was spine tingling. The musical tribute by Jimmy's grandson, James Henry, was also unbelievably beautiful as he sang *Yorta Yorta Man*. Another wonderful part of the memorial service was when Jimmy's niece, Ester, read a poem that Jimmy had written for his wife, Marjorie, when they first met.

Jimmy Little's funeral was held at Walgett, a town comprising about 1,800 people. I know that the member for Wallsend knows that town well from her experience as a teacher there. The fact that Jimmy chose to be buried in Walgett cemetery alongside his wife, Marjorie, is a mark of the man, which goes back to the point I made about his strength of identity and his status as an Aboriginal man in this State and in this country. When we are debating motions such as this we can truly reflect on the life of a person. I can state with sincerity that the late James Oswald Little was a great Aboriginal man. He was a great Australian who never forgot who he was or where he came from. He did so much to change attitudes and perceptions and eradicate racism in our community. He did not do that out of duty; he did it because it was inherent in him. He also gave us so much joy through his beautiful music and he gave so much of himself for the betterment of young Aboriginal people. We are truly honouring a great Australian in this condolence motion today.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.47 a.m.]: I pay tribute to musician Jimmy Little who passed away on 2 April 2012. Jimmy Little was a legend in the Australian music industry. I extend my condolences to Jimmy's daughter, Frances Peters-Little, to his other family members and to those who were close to him. It is important to pay tribute to somebody with so much talent who chose to use that talent not only for the betterment of his family but also for the betterment of his people and all Australians. As we have heard, Uncle Jimmy came from a humble background. He was a member of the Yorta Yorta people and was raised at Cummeragunja Mission in New South Wales. His career spanned over six decades.

For many years he was perhaps the main Aboriginal star on the Australian music scene. I understand that his music was influenced by people from America such as Nat King Cole and the great country music artist

Jim Reeves. Other members have spoken about the well-known gospel song *Royal Telephone* which Jimmy produced in 1963. In 1999 another of his songs, *Messenger*, peaked on the charts at No. 26. At the Australian Recording Industry Association [ARIA] Music Awards in 1999 Uncle Jimmy was inducted into the Australian Recording Industry Association Hall of Fame and won the award for Best Adult Contemporary Album. On Australia Day 2004 Jimmy was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. The citation reads:

For service to the entertainment industry as a singer, recording artist and songwriter and to the community through reconciliation and as an ambassador for Indigenous culture.

It was wonderful to see Jimmy receive the Order of Australia award. Jimmy Little fitted a lot into his life. In 1960 he played a part in *Shadow of the Boomerang* and in 1991 acted in the film *Until the End of the World*. He also had a part in the theatre production *Black Cockatoos* and even performed in the opera production *Black River*. From 1985 Jimmy served as a teacher at the Eora Centre in Redfern and from 2000 he held the position of guest lecturer at the University of Sydney Koori Centre. I was privileged to meet Uncle Jimmy on a number of occasions. Before I became a politician I worked as an Entertainments Manager at Revesby Workers Club and then at the Tweed Heads Bowls Club. Jimmy was a regular performer at those venues. He was a very humble person and I was humbled in his presence. Jimmy used his talents to convey a message of love and understanding to his audience. Before a performance he would sit quietly in the green room drinking a cup of tea.

Those in the entertainment industry tend to judge a performer by the type of crowd that he or she attracts. Jimmy's magnetism attracted young and old to his performances. If one put the name "Jimmy Little" on the billing sheet his loyal fans would come. Many of them attended all his performances and knew his songs verse by verse and word by word. When Jimmy performed at the Tweed Heads Bowls Club he would take time to meet with the Bundjalung people at the cultural centre on Ukerebagh Island. Ukerebagh Island is the birthplace of Neville Bonner, another famous Australian Indigenous leader. Jimmy was a humble man who used his musical talent for the betterment of society.

In 2006 he established the Jimmy Little Foundation to facilitate nutritional education and to advocate better community health services for Indigenous Australians. He was the patron of the Indigenous Doctors Association of Australia and he worked with the Fred Hollows Foundation and Kidney Health Australia. The Bugalwena Indigenous Health Centre, which recently opened in Tweed Heads, is doing a marvellous job and is supported by wonderful staff. I am sure Jimmy would be proud to be associated with such great work. It is a shame that Jimmy passed away as he lived a tremendous life.

It is not until one starts researching people's backgrounds and looking at what others have said about them that one becomes aware of their achievements and successes. That was the case with Jimmy Little. Jimmy benefited many people and left a tremendous legacy for all Australians to reflect upon—a legacy that will continue in the organisations he established and all the young lives that he touched. Jimmy's legacy will continue to grow and to make Australia and New South Wales a better place. I am honoured to speak in debate on this condolence motion as I was when I spoke in debate on the condolence motion for Lionel Rose, another fine Indigenous Australian. I express sympathy to Uncle Jimmy's family and friends whom I am sure are proud of his legacy which continues today. I commend the condolence motion to the House.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [10.55 a.m.]: As the member for Auburn and shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs I pay tribute to the life of James Oswald "Jimmy" Little. Since Jimmy's death there have been many tributes for him and one common theme is evident in all those tributes. Jimmy was recognised as being a gentle and warm person, a man of many talents, a musician, an actor and an advocate for his people. As the member for Canterbury and Deputy Leader of the Opposition said earlier, Jimmy did not take part in any protests but when he was working he advocated for the things in which he believed. Importantly, Jimmy was an advocate for Indigenous health. Many members of Parliament and I had the honour of attending the State memorial service for Jimmy Little. I was privileged to attend that service with the member for Canterbury, Linda Burney whom I respect as an Aboriginal person and as a role model. Jimmy's memorial service was the first State service I have attended, and what a service it was.

At the conclusion of the service I had the unforgettable experience of standing with over 1,000 people and singing Jimmy's remarkable gospel song *Royal Telephone*, a fantastic song full of inspiration that was written a year before I was born. As we stood and sang in the iconic Opera House I felt it was a fitting tribute to Jimmy Little. At that memorial service I learnt a lot about Jimmy's life. Whilst his achievements were many, I think the ultimate tribute to him is his family. Jimmy was married for over 50 years to Marjorie and it was touching to hear of his deep and abiding love for his wife. His daughter, Esther, read out a poem that Jimmy had

written for Marjorie—a poem full of the love and commitment he felt towards a woman he met as a young man. After viewing an extraordinary photograph of Jimmy and Marjorie, which was taken early in their relationship, I found myself thinking about the commitment that is needed in a marriage and in relationships generally. Jimmy and his wife, Marjorie, were an example of a couple who were totally committed and in love for more than 50 years.

His daughter, Frances Peters-Little, spoke eloquently about him. I agree with the member for Canterbury, Linda Burney: she is a remarkable, intelligent woman. Despite protesting that she was not the singer of the family, she sang a wonderful rendition of one of her father's songs, *Shadow of the Boomerang*. We were all treated to singing by Jimmy's niece and opera singer Deborah Cheetham and his grandson, James Henry. They are another generation of strong role models who are doing remarkable things for the Aboriginal and wider community. In their own way they, particularly Jimmy's daughter, are carrying on Jimmy Little's rich legacy. Jimmy grew up on the Cummeragunja Mission on the Murray River, and he was a gifted musician. As the member for Canterbury pointed out earlier, his parents took a remarkably brave step at a time when things were extremely challenging for the Aboriginal community, but also at a time when people in this country were not thriving economically.

Jimmy's parents made a decision, in protest, to walk off the mission. That speaks volumes about Jimmy's rich history and the strength and resilience of his family, which clearly was carried on to him and is now carried on to his descendants. He contributed so much when there were barriers and prejudices towards Indigenous Australians. Unfortunately, some of those barriers and prejudices remain today. However, in the entertainment industry, Jimmy was supported. When Jimmy was not allowed into bars or other places to perform, the other performers said that they would not perform unless Jimmy was allowed in. In Jimmy's own quiet way of standing up through his music, he did a lot to break down the barriers of racism in this country.

After moving to Sydney in 1955, Jimmy released many singles. His song *Royal Telephone* became a top 10 hit, which of course made him a household name. He was a popular performer at the Tamworth Music Festival and he released very successful albums over the span of his very long career—a career in which he kept reinventing himself. That is pretty difficult to do in the entertainment industry, or in any industry, but Jimmy Little had the incredible ability to do it. His *Messenger* album won the Australian Record Industry Association [ARIA] award for best contemporary album in 1999. In 2006, Jimmy had a kidney transplant. With his manager, Buzz Bidstrop, who was so emotional at the Opera House tribute when he spoke, Jimmy set up the Jimmy Little Foundation to assist Indigenous communities to combat kidney disease. His foundation has done some outstanding work in educating us all about the prevalence of kidney disease in Indigenous communities as well as building capacity for dealing with the disease and supporting transplant programs.

In some remote communities, kidney failure is 30 to 50 times the national average, with overall Indigenous kidney failure being eight to 10 times that of non-Indigenous Australians. Jimmy also did some outstanding work as an ambassador for literacy and numeracy for the Department of Education. There were some incredible photographs at the Opera House tribute, showing him in rural communities encouraging young children. I am pleased to say that Jimmy was rightly recognised by many awards. Most importantly, he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2004 and was named a National Living Treasure. Jimmy is survived by his daughter, Frances, his grandson, James, and his wider family. I offer my sincerest condolences to his family. Jimmy Little's legacy will live on through them. We are seeing that now; we saw that at the Opera House when we honoured him with a fitting State memorial service. I am so grateful to have been part of that incredible tribute to Jimmy Little.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.04 a.m.]: I speak in debate on this significant motion about a significant gentleman who made an immense contribution to Australia and to how we perceive ourselves in Australia today. For 11 years I was the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. During that time I met an incredible number of wonderful Aboriginal people, and I came to a better understanding of the struggles of Aboriginal people over the history of this country. Jimmy Little was a man who brought a gentle approach, a gentle style and a gentlemanliness to the way he lived. That would not have been easy.

He was born in 1937 on the banks of the Murray River, and he was a Yorta Yorta man. He was one of seven children and he was born into poverty—a situation that certainly was not unusual for Aboriginal people. It behoves us as a Parliament, particularly one with a great number of younger members, to acknowledge that when Jimmy Little was born we were decades away from Aboriginal people being given the same rights as non-Aboriginal people. It was not until Jimmy was approximately 30 years old that a referendum took place and

gave recognition to the entitlement of Aboriginal people to all the rights enjoyed by other Australian citizens. Jimmy came from a circumstance of poverty and a family in difficult circumstances, but what he came from, which I think directed his life, was a family of great love and music.

His father and mother both had extraordinary musical talent and that talent was passed on to Jimmy Little. As we grow we all need something to give us a sense of our own self in the universe. I remember seeing a video of Jimmy Little speaking about the years when he was growing up. I remember him when he was a very young man saying words to the effect that music gave him a reason for his place in the universe. It would have been a very challenging time for him. He was in his early teens when his mother passed away from tetanus. I recollect that she was injured on a rock oyster. In those days and in the circumstances in which Jimmy's family lived, the chances of survival were remote. Indeed, Jimmy's mother passed away within a few days of injury.

So we have a young Aboriginal man, who was born into a life of poverty in a part of the State that is quite remote and whose mother passed away, trying to find his way forward. Jimmy's way forward was wrapped around the legacy that his mum and dad gave him, which was the beauty of music. He managed to grasp that, which some young people fail to do, as his way of dealing with life. He left school when he was approximately 15 years of age and was taking part in the community and making people smile with his music, which in the early stages was largely country music. As he worked through his lifetime of music he had different styles at various stages, but country music underpinned his life.

Jimmy Little also had a faith in God. I have read that he said he was not one to align himself with a particular church or religion but he was a God-fearing man. His songs often reflected the interest he had in God, a greater force, and his ballads led him to a much greater awareness in Australian society. The song I particularly remember as a young fellow was *Royal Telephone*. I remember the song being played and the words, "You can talk to Jesus on the Royal Telephone." I believe for that song he won a number of gold record awards, which reflected on his acceptance in the broader community. The gospel side of his music was important to him and his family.

I also recollect the gentle way he described how he met Marge, his wife. She came to one of the venues at which he was playing and they got to know each other. Their engagement was quite funny the way he described it: He bought a ring, he took it to show her, she tried it on and it never came off. It was a reflection of his relationship with Marge, as we just heard from another member, which lasted for more than 50 years. It was a love that surmounted all challenges and problems in life. He did not have an easy life, even when he was an established musician. The life of an artist in those days, let alone an Aboriginal artist, was very challenging. The life of an artist, a singer, today is very challenging. He had his ups and downs and Marge was there for him through all of it. Again, that reflects on the type of person that Jimmy Little was.

It took a while for the broader Australian community to become aware of Jimmy Little as a singer first and foremost and as a gentle human being. It was at a time when Aboriginal people did not have the right to vote or other rights enjoyed by most Australian citizens. He was a person who on any evaluation, no matter the views at the time, should have been and was treated as an equal. Of course, he was not always treated in this way. Over the years he made comments about the racism he experienced. But the racism he experienced, because of his music, was much less than that suffered by a lot of other Aboriginal people.

In the 1970s when a radical response was being called for to address Aboriginal issues—such as Aboriginal people not being given the same opportunities as were other Australians—many people, whom I have spoken about in this House before, expressed their concerns in a far more radical approach. To my recollection, Jimmy Little never did that. Jimmy Little always had a quiet, gentle but assertive nature. He could achieve much through that gentlemanly approach. Perhaps that attitude, married with the more radical forces at the time, eventually achieved a lot—although not as much as it should have.

Jimmy Little had a grandson, James. From the time James was born, Jimmy was almost like a father to him. Jimmy expressed his incredible giving nature by looking after his grandson. I recollect hearing his grandson talking about his grandfather and the fact that they were more like mates. It was a giving, two-way relationship between grandson and grandfather that allowed both of them to grow. I would like to think that that is a metaphor for the relationship between Indigenous Australians and the Australian community generally. Jimmy Little's giving contributed to the growth of the Australian community, particularly those of us in New South Wales who grew up with his music and followed him as he became more successful, received various accolades for his records and eventually was recognised through formal artistic awards.

At the end of that period, when his popularity had waned, Jimmy Little attended the Eora Centre at Redfern where he mentored young Aboriginal people. I do not know for how long he did that. I read or heard that he talked about passing on through music the Aboriginal spirituality to the young people he was mentoring. When one talks to Aboriginal people, that common theme is often repeated. When their young people face challenges, if possible, they try to give them a sense of their place in the universe by telling them about the spirituality of the land. In this way, hopefully they will have a better outlook on life and a greater capacity to go out and achieve.

Jimmy was still doing that work in his late fifties. His was a life of giving from his very first days, a life of being prepared to work not only with the Aboriginal community but also with the broader community. It is entirely appropriate that the New South Wales Parliament, the mother Parliament of Australia, passes this motion to record our very high esteem for James Oswald Little and to acknowledge his immeasurable contribution. His contribution not only to his immediate family and extended relatives, the aunts and uncles in the Aboriginal community, but also to the aunts and uncles in the broader non-Aboriginal community, has left us with an incredible legacy. I thank his family for sharing Jimmy Little with us all. I give thanks that Jimmy Little shared his music and his life with us. We are a better nation as a result of his time with us on this earth.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [11.18 a.m.]: I make a contribution to this motion on the passing of James Oswald Little, better known, famously, as Jimmy. I have fond childhood memories of my days in regional and rural New South Wales when my dad, who was a drover, my uncle and I would camp out at night after droving cattle on the road. Each night, after we set up around the campfire, we would listen to country and western music on the radio. Jimmy Little often featured on 2TM, which was the station to listen to for country music. On those nights as a young child I would lay in a swag under the stars listening to the greats such as Slim Dusty, Smokey Dawson and, of course, the great Jimmy Little.

I recall that as we grew older we were taught to dance in our grandparents' house. They played a collection of records on a radiogram, as it was known in those days—an expensive, flash piece of furniture. Of course, Jimmy Little songs were played in our house, including *Royal Telephone*. So when I attended the memorial service at the Opera House, as did many members of this Parliament, it was easy for me to join in singing *Royal Telephone* because I knew every word after listening to his music for much of my young life. A State memorial service was a wonderful tribute for the life of Dr James "Jimmy" Oswald Little. It was held in a place of much significance to everyone on a point named after a proud Aboriginal man—Bennelong.

I met Jimmy Little, as did many people, when he travelled the country playing his music bringing much joy to people. Importantly, in his later life, he travelled the country helping youth by delivering his strong message. I had the great honour of meeting him at a function organised by Flo Grant. She invited Jimmy to perform and he said yes. I attended the concert and saw that man mesmerise the crowd with his singing. I had never met him, although I knew about his music. When I did meet him, he looked me in the eye when I shook his hand and I thought, "There's something special about you." Of course, the crowd just warmed to him when he performed his music and delivered his message.

In life we do not meet many people with that special power and an aura we instantly like. Jimmy Little was one of those people. His message was about doing the right thing and providing opportunities for young Aboriginal people. Exhibited at this particular event was magnificent clothing that had been crafted and designed by young Aboriginal youth. It was wonderful to see. Jimmy Little was proud of Aboriginal youth and he encouraged them to do better. Jimmy Little was a quietly spoken man, but his message was strong. Some recollections during the memorial service were so powerful about messages he delivered throughout his lifetime. The service was a beautiful tribute to a great man. Jeff McMullen was the master of ceremonies and other guests performed. The national anthem was sung by Deborah Cheetham, a great Australian performer, and the Premier led the tributes. Frances Peters-Little, Jimmy's daughter, gave a tribute and also sang. She said, "I'm not the singer in the family" but I could have been fooled: she performed a beautiful rendition.

Of course, Jimmy's grandson, also named James, sang at the service. James Henry performed *Yorta Yorta Man*, a beautiful song penned by Jimmy Little and performed by him on many occasions—again, it was a faultless presentation. The member for Canterbury attended the memorial service and would agree that it was a magnificent presentation. Many kind words were said about Jimmy Little, with much reflection on a life well lived. Jimmy continued to contribute even though he was unwell. He suffered through illness for a long time. A reflection was given about Jimmy meeting his wife and his life in the early days, and much has been said in the speeches today about the challenges Aboriginal people faced then and face now. Jimmy always said that whilst those challenges remained it was important to look ahead.

I pay tribute to Jimmy and say to his family, all his fans and the Aboriginal people that he was a great Australian and one about whom we are very proud. The memorial service was a fitting tribute and he will be missed, but he leaves a great legacy that will benefit many through his foundation, the Jimmy Little Foundation; through his music of course—*Royal Telephone*, *Baby Blue* and all the songs we sang as youngsters in the sixties; certainly for me—and through the many honours given to Jimmy in recognising his enormous contribution. He worked very hard and never asked for those accolades but he deserved them. I am pleased to be able to say a few words about the life of Jimmy Little.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! I was not aware that Jimmy Little's resting place is Walgett, but I am pleased that is the case. Many of my long-time friends will be proud to have Jimmy at their home in Walgett.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [11.26 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on the condolence on the life of Jimmy Little. Last year I met Jimmy at an event organised at a Penrith Panthers football game when he came to talk about his foundation and its work regarding diabetes in Indigenous communities. Jimmy was guest speaker and brought his guitar to entertain the crowd thoroughly with his music. He brought also an important message about healthy lifestyles for people across the country but, particularly, for his Indigenous population. I have attended a number of functions at Panthers games over the past few years. Jimmy's attendance stands out as one from which most regular attendees, or even those one-off attendants, walked away feeling as though they had just engaged with someone extremely special.

In 2004 Jimmy was given an unusual honour of being named a National Living Treasure. Everyone in the room that day at Penrith walked away knowing that they had just met a truly living treasure, someone who was able to weave together an infectious smile and contagious positive attitude and command attention just by being present in the room and who blended truly soulful music with an important message. People left that room knowing that they wanted to go home and eat healthy but, equally important, to ensure that schoolchildren had an opportunity to engage with Indigenous populations and also carry that message.

After that day I followed closely some of the work of the Jimmy Little Foundation. It would be fitting in this condolence motion to talk a little about that work. The Thumbs Up! program is having a significant effect throughout the Indigenous community. This program has its own seal to help people identify the most appropriate food choices. This program reflects the man who recognised that people need to take some responsibility for their actions, but that a little bit of guidance and a helping hand never went astray. The foundation's work in providing information setting up programs across the country, particularly in Indigenous communities, has gone a long way towards improving people's health.

Thumb Up! is about choosing, in Jimmy's words, "good tucker" and ensuring that we make good choices around food and healthy lifestyles. I encourage every member to look at the Jimmy Little Foundation website and at what the foundation is doing. Jimmy Little was an extraordinary human being. This country will truly miss him. Various members have spoken about some of his musical feats and the 1963 chart-topping hit, *Royal Telephone*. I listened to that song as a child while my grandmother hummed along to the record that was playing on the record player. Jimmy participated in a number of films, plays and stage performances such as *Shadow of the Boomerang* and the more well known *Black Cockatoos*. Jimmy received countless awards. In 1989 the Australian Recording Industry Association [ARIA] awarded his album *Messenger* the adult contemporary album of the year.

I discovered Jimmy Little as a recording artist who did not belong to the era of my parents or grandparents but who belonged to a generation of music that I grew up listening to, such as *Messenger*. Jimmy brought his music to my generation by playing alongside bands such as The Church, Crowded House, and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. His longevity in the music industry should be acknowledged. Australian performing and recording artists acknowledged his outstanding contribution to music by bestowing their own awards upon him. I encourage members to look at the websites that have displayed tributes to Jimmy Little. The Sydney Opera House website has an extraordinary tribute to an extraordinary Australian. In this way members will have a glimpse of how important and rare someone such as Jimmy Little is. I encourage all members, and anyone who reads through these condolence motions, to take the opportunity to understand and project some of the positivity that Jimmy Little was able to project. If everyone does that there is no doubt Australia will be just that little better as a country.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [11.32 a.m.]: I support the condolence motion for Jimmy Little. I will speak very briefly about the extraordinary contribution that Jimmy Little made to Australia and the

great role model he was for Indigenous people and for all Australians. As we have heard, Jimmy Little was born in 1937. As the member for Canterbury so eloquently said, he grew up in an era when Aboriginal people experienced discrimination and disadvantage. Following that experience Jimmy had every right to be bitter. By all accounts Jimmy was a man who was extremely generous, kind and wise; those who knew him well speak of his wisdom, kindness and generosity. Jimmy Little was an inspiration for all Australians, not just Aboriginal people. He broke down barriers and achieved success in his chosen field as a musician.

My encounter with Jimmy Little occurred at a small event showcasing his accomplishments throughout his life. He was a regular performer at seniors' concerts—not every year but on a regular basis. In my former role as Minister for Disability Services I would speak with seniors at those concerts. The seniors loved those concerts and they loved Jimmy Little performing. I had the opportunity to meet Jimmy in that environment. He kindly gave me an autograph on one of the seniors' concert programs. I still have that autograph and it is something I treasure. To see the way those older people reacted to Jimmy Little was an exhibition of his power to communicate with audiences through song and music.

Many people have spoken of the success of the song *Royal Telephone*. I concur with the member for Penrith: my exposure to Jimmy Little as a musician was through the *Messenger* album in which he performed great Australian contemporary music such as *Cattle and Cane*. Through that album and through his performances with many contemporary Australian musicians he achieved what many musicians aspire to achieve but are not always able to achieve, that is, to remain relevant and reinvent themselves for a second, third and fourth career. Jimmy achieved that. It is a testament to Jimmy's love of music, his skill and passion that people throughout the generations were able to connect with him. I pay tribute to Jimmy Little and express my condolences to his family. I appreciate this opportunity to place on record my thoughts about a great Australian, a great man and a great role model for Australians.

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [11.36 a.m.], in reply: The tributes from members for Jimmy Little have been extensive and there is little that remains to be said. As the member for Canterbury, Linda Burney, said, he had a tremendous generosity of spirit which many Aboriginal people of his generation managed to maintain despite growing up in an era of great prejudice that we cannot imagine today. The treatment meted out to such a wonderful young man would be unconscionable today. Despite all that he remained generous towards everyone. His charm and beautiful manners were an inspiration to young Aboriginal people. I saw Jimmy at a youth initiative in Goulburn when he was successful in encouraging an audience of school kids to participate in the performance. He was fantastic. His capacity to engage, make a fool of himself and draw them all in made him a fantastic performer. What everybody loved about Jimmy is that it was not all a performance—there was a lot of the real person involved.

Jimmy's generosity of spirit evoked pride in Aboriginal people and enabled non-Aboriginal Australians to celebrate his success. It would not be taking it a step too far to say that he made Australians feel a level of reconciliation about the way Aboriginal people were treated and continue to be treated. He made us all proud of him and his contribution to the community. He enabled non-Aboriginal Australians to see the capacity of our first people to contribute to the community. In many ways Aboriginal people have contributed in the modern era—as was demonstrated by Jimmy's great career. Jimmy showed Australia yet another field in which Aboriginal people can excel. I loved the day I spent in Goulburn. Jimmy, at 70 years of age, was still engaging, performing, entertaining and loving people. All Australians will mourn his passing and his desire for reconciliation that went further than words: It went to what was in his heart.

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

Motion agreed to.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BIOSECURITY) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 8 May 2012.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.39 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak in the debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. I commend the hard work of the Minister for Primary Industries, who has a very strong background in rural and regional

matters and understands biosecurity issues as they relate to New South Wales. The bill aims to better enable New South Wales to respond to biosecurity emergencies. 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 this debate about biosecurity it is appropriate to reflect on the 2007 outbreak of equine influenza, or horse flu, in Australia, which was a timely reminder of the benefits of biosecurity measures and why they are necessary.

Owners of both large and small properties are responsible for keeping their plants and crops free from weeds, pests and disease. Biosecurity is relevant not only to large-scale producers but also to hobby farmers and even those who keep pets in their backyards. Biosecurity is about protecting the economy, the environment and the health of the people from pests and diseases. Biosecurity aims to prevent new pests and diseases from arriving in this country, and to help control outbreaks when they occur. While many robust arrangements have been introduced in the past, we must not be complacent about dealing with new threats to biosecurity. These amendments address some concerns about pest and disease incursions that may occur. Biosecurity does not have to be complex; nor does it have to be expensive to implement.

The bill is concerned with addressing two main areas. First, it sets about addressing gaps and limitations in our legislation that may prevent an effective response to a biosecurity emergency. Secondly, it will improve compliance by New South Wales with four national biosecurity agreements to which this State is a signatory. The bill provides a framework for better protecting not only our primary industries but also our natural environment and our lifestyle. New South Wales is relatively free from many pests and diseases that may plague other States. However, this State cannot be complacent; we will not remain relatively free of those pests and diseases forever. These amendments are necessary to combat any threats that occur in New South Wales. Some threats to New South Wales biosecurity are becoming more complex. Changes in climate, trade and travel as well as population increases are all putting pressure on our ecosystems and driving competition for resources.

New South Wales has a strong obligation to ensure it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond to emergency biosecurity incidents. Reviews of New South Wales biosecurity-related legislation, such as that to deal with the equine influenza outbreak and recent outbreaks of the Hendra virus, have revealed a number of limitations and gaps in our legislation. This bill seeks to address those gaps and limitations. The bill can be divided into four categories—those that relate to pests and diseases of animals, plants and fish, and the threats posed by noxious weeds. Emergency animal pests, as defined in the bill, are animals that are not indigenous to a particular area and that are declared by the Minister to be an emergency animal pest. An example of an emergency animal pest is the imported red fire ant, which is currently found in Brisbane. These ants severely damage the environment, are a threat to agriculture and tourism, and certainly threaten our outdoor lifestyle because of their bite and sting—not enjoyable when one is having a picnic.

Being able to declare emergency animal pests will greatly assist the capability of New South Wales to respond to animal pests that may impact the environment, the community and business activities as well as primary production. Biosecurity is important for everyone who owns or works with animals—not just livestock and poultry. In fact, simple biosecurity measures can protect the family's bird, dog or other pets from pests and diseases. Biosecurity can also protect humans. Some animal diseases are known as zoonotic, which means they also can affect humans. It is important that people who deal with animals wash their hands with soapy water before and after handling animals. This is one of the easiest biosecurity measures that people can take. It is particularly important when dealing with animals suspected of being unwell. Keeping equipment is another important biosecurity measure. Not sharing an animal's gear or equipment with others is a biosecurity safety measure.

When animals from different properties use the one vehicle, the interior of that float or truck should be washed out and disinfected before loading new animals. Storage areas should be kept clean, dry and tidy, and lids on feed bins should be secure. This will assist in deterring wild birds, rodents and other pests. It is important to clean out water troughs regularly, and not place them under trees or where birds or bats perch. Feral pest animals, such as wild dogs, cats and foxes, are known for attacking livestock, causing losses and injuries. The spread of pests and disease by feral animals is a major biosecurity risk. Where possible, people should not allow their stock to mix with feral animals. Those with poultry and other birds should adopt measures that will keep wild birds away from domestic birds. Simple things like netting over the chook run are highly recommended. Feed and water should be positioned so as not to attract wild birds.

The bill introduces a new part to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests. The new part contains a duty to notify; powers to declare and regulate infested places, restricted areas and control areas; and provisions

relating to permits to enter and exit those areas. The provisions in the Act dealing with inspectors' powers will be extended with respect to emergency animal pests, including powers relating to seizure and impounding, collecting verbal and documentary information, and search and entry and requiring assistance. There will be a new offence with a maximum penalty of \$110,000, or two years imprisonment. Inspectors will now be able to take photographs when researching and collecting information as part of an investigation dealing with biosecurity threats.

The bill also amends powers for the destruction of animals. The Act will be amended to provide the Minister with the power to order the destruction of wild and feral animals if they are infected or reasonably suspected of being infected, or they are in a declared area and the Minister considers it is reasonably necessary to do so to prevent the spread of a disease. The Act also will include a provision that the Minister will consult with the Minister responsible for the National Parks and Wildlife Act if the destruction of animals is proposed. The bill includes other amendments that are aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Act. It provides the Minister with the power to authorise inspectors to take specified measures when it comes to preventing the spread of an emergency animal disease or emergency animal pest.

The final amendment relates to animal diseases such as the Hendra virus outbreak in New South Wales. As we all know, the Hendra virus is a deadly disease. Since June 2011 it has caused the death of 10 horses on eight properties in New South Wales. Hendra virus is a zoonotic disease: it can be transferred to humans. To help prevent the spread of this virus between horses on the same property, horses must be separated. Part of the bill addresses plant pests and diseases by proposing changes to the Plant Diseases Act 1924. The Act will be amended to define and recognise emergency plant pests and emergency plant diseases.

The Minister will have power to declare, by order, an emergency plant pest or an emergency plant disease. Finally, the bill contains amendments to the Act aimed at improving both administrative and operational efficiencies. The bill will extend the life of control orders from six to 12 months and increase the quarantine period from 21 to 40 days. The Noxious Weeds Act also is being amended to improve our ability to control and eradicate weeds in certain situations. I congratulate the Minister for Primary Industries on her efforts and on introducing this common-sense bill. It is pleasing to note that this is yet another necessary measure introduced by this Coalition Government.

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [11.49 a.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. The aim of the bill is very straightforward: to improve and enhance the capability of New South Wales to respond to biosecurity emergencies. The focus of the bill is on addressing gaps and limitations in our legislation that mitigate effective responses to biosecurity emergencies and on improving our State's compliance with the four national biosecurity agreements to which we are a signatory. Pests, weeds, and animal and plant diseases and their detrimental flow-on effects to the State's economy, environment and community are an ever-present threat. Our geographical location means that we have been free of many harmful pests, weeds and diseases that affect other parts of the world adversely. For example, foot and mouth disease, which causes devastation in Europe, and rabies, are not present in Australia. New South Wales is free from pests and diseases that plague other States, such as fire ants in Queensland, chestnut blight in Victoria and the European borer in Western Australia.

We must remain on guard always, and continue to review and improve our preventative measures and our ability to deal with any disease outbreak. Last year we became a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity [IGAB], which is underpinned by two response agreements and one response deed that set out how responses to biosecurity emergencies will be managed and how costs will be allocated between government and industry groups that are signatories to the agreement. As a signatory we have an obligation to ensure that we have appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond to emergency biosecurity incidents. A review of existing legislation—taking into account the 2007 equine influenza outbreak and the recent Hendra virus—has exposed a number of limitations and gaps in the legislation. The bill amends four Acts that cover: the Noxious Weeds Act 1993, the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Plant Diseases Act 1924 and the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991.

When this bill was discussed in the House initially I remember quite vividly the member for Mount Druitt speaking about the outbreak of Newcastle disease that affected the Central Coast several years ago. At that time he was the Minister for Agriculture and I was the Mayor of Gosford City. It was a very difficult time for the Central Coast. When Newcastle disease hit, it affected our poultry industry, which, at the time, was worth about \$1.4 billion. New South Wales had 40 per cent of the national poultry industry and the Central Coast was a very big part of that industry. We received an amazing response: 43 different agencies came together and more than 1,000 volunteers assisted.

I remember vividly the nearly 300 Queensland firefighters and more than 130 defence personnel who came into our community to assist in the removal of the poultry. Approximately one million birds were euthanased and it was the council's responsibility to ensure that it was able to provide assistance. At first the carcasses were burned, but it was soon realised that all that was doing was spreading feathers throughout the environment; we had to find another solution very quickly. That solution was to bury the carcasses. The council assisted in this task by acting quickly to make land available for use as burial pits. The birds were enclosed in large metal containers that were then buried. To this day the department is still monitoring that land for any leakage, any seepage or any impact it may have on the environment.

At the time one of the hardest things was not only the economic impact on our poultry industry but also the impact on families. The outbreak of Newcastle disease affected not just poultry, but also pet cockatoos and budgerigars—all pet birds had to be euthanased. It was very difficult explaining to the community why their pet budgerigars would have to be put down. They did not understand. Young kids were upset, as were elderly people whose pet lorikeet, galah or cockatoo was part of the family. Some difficult decisions had to be made both at a State and council level. That example is all the more reason for changes to the legislation and greater protection: We do not want to go through that again.

The first amendment applies to the control of emergency animal pests, which are defined as animals that are not indigenous to a particular area. An example of what could be declared an emergency animal pest is the red imported fire ant, which is currently found in Brisbane. The ants severely damage the environment, they are a threat to agriculture and tourism, and they threaten people's outdoor lifestyles because of their bite and sting. The bill will introduce a new part to the Act, which contains a duty to notify; powers to declare and regulate infected places, restricted areas and control areas; and provisions relating to permits to enter and exit those areas. Eradication, control and management tools already exist within the Act. However, existing provisions relating to importation orders, destruction orders, quarantine orders and disinfection orders will be extended so that they also apply to emergency animal pests.

Provisions dealing with inspectors' powers will also be extended in this regard, including powers relating to seizure and impounding; collecting verbal and documentary information; search and entry; and requiring a person to give assistance. There will be a new offence with a maximum penalty of \$110,000 or two years in prison for the intentional or reckless release of an emergency animal pest. The bill will extend the powers for the destruction of animals to include wild and feral animals if they are infected or reasonably suspected of being infected or are in a declared area to prevent the spread of disease. It also requires that consultation takes place with the Minister responsible for the administration of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, which will be amended to allow the director general rather than the Minister to determine the means by which a general permit may be granted, such as entering or leaving a restricted area. In emergency situations this will reduce red tape and quicken up the process where a speedy response is essential.

The bill also provides for the director general to delegate his or her functions under the Act, which will also reduce red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy. Inspectors' powers will be extended to include the power in a quarantine order to restrict the movement of any animal onto, within or out of a quarantined area. Similarly, the Plant Diseases Act will be amended to recognise emergency plant pests and emergency plant diseases. The Minister will have the power to order the destruction and disposal of plants, the covering of plants and other property if the Minister believes it is necessary to eradicate or prevent the spread of an emergency disease or pest. This includes the ability to create a buffer zone that effectively isolates the disease or pest and prevents its spread. Another amendment will remove an individual's right to object to a control order on his or her property. As is currently the case, that amendment would ensure that action to control emergency plant pests and diseases can be taken quickly to minimise the opportunity for such pests and diseases to spread.

At the time of the outbreak of Newcastle disease we had to work within the legislative framework. The response from Government, both at a State and local level, was quick. But we do not want to see that happen again in any of our communities. We need to act quickly in these circumstances, and we need only look to the Newcastle disease that so devastatingly affected the Central Coast region not that many years ago to know that. This bill proposes sensible amendments that will ensure a consistent approach to animal and plant pests, and diseases and weeds. It provides more efficient and effective operations and it ensures New South Wales compliance with the four national biosecurity agreements to which we are committed. More importantly, it will greatly improve the capability of New South Wales to respond to emergency pests, weeds and diseases that affect our economy, our environment and our community. I commend the bill to the House.

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

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jillian Skinner, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)
[12.01 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring before the House the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill makes a number of minor amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009, the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 and the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966. The amendments will help ensure the continued smooth operation of these Acts. I will turn first to the amendments to the Health Records and Information Privacy Act set out in schedule 1.2 to the bill. The Health Records and Information Privacy Act regulates the collection, use and disclosure of health information and applies to both the public and private sector. The private sector in New South Wales is also bound by the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988.

Genetic information is considered health information and is regulated by the general principles in the Act. However, genetic information poses some specific issues of concern in today's world. A patient's genetic information, including whether the patient has a genetic disease or has a genetic predisposition to a disease will often be of significance to the patient's genetic relatives. This is because the patient's genetic relatives often carry the same genes and therefore face the same genetic risks as the patient. Because of the relevance genetic information may have on a patient's relatives, genetic services in New South Wales advise individuals during pre-test counselling that there may be a need for them to inform other at-risk family members of genetic test results. While most patients agree, a small number of patients fail or refuse to disclose their genetic information.

These types of cases cause complex ethical issues. When a patient's genetic information indicates the patient either has a genetic disease, or has a strong genetic predisposition to developing a serious disease, there are ethical arguments that clinicians should be able to disclose health information to a genetic relative even without the patient's consent. These arguments are particularly strong when providing the information would allow a genetic relative to take steps to identify his or her own level of risk and take any appropriate preventative action, such as regular screening for the particular disease in order to allow for early diagnosis and treatment. In some cases, such early treatment can be lifesaving. However, while there are possible benefits to disclosing such information without consent, there are other interests to take into consideration. These include the need to protect the patient's privacy and confidentiality and the need to recognise that negative impacts may flow from such a disclosure. This may include adversely impacting on family dynamics or causing distress to relatives if they have knowledge of a genetic risk that they would prefer not to be made aware of, particularly if there is no current treatment or preventative options available.

While the disclosure of genetic information to a genetic relative without consent is a serious and contentious ethical question, the form of privacy law in New South Wales as currently drafted does not enable the complexities of the question to be addressed. Rather, genetic information is treated in the same way as any other health information. This effectively means that such disclosure without consent can occur only when there is a serious and imminent threat to life, health or safety. However, the serious and imminent test will rarely, if ever, allow disclosure of genetic information to a genetic relative without consent. While many treatable and serious genetic disorders may pose a serious, and potentially fatal, risk or threat of harm, they are likely also to have a slow onset of many years and so are unlikely to meet the requirement that the threat be imminent.

This contrasts with the position at the Commonwealth level under the Commonwealth Privacy Act. The Commonwealth Act allows, but does not mandate, an organisation to use and/or disclose genetic information without the patient's consent if and only if the organisation reasonably believes that the use or disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to the life, health or safety—whether or not the threat is imminent—of a genetic relative of the patient; the use or disclosure is conducted in accordance with guidelines approved by the Commonwealth Privacy Commissioner; and in the case of disclosure the information is disclosed to a genetic relative of the patient.

The Commonwealth Privacy Commissioner has approved guidelines which were developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC]. The guidelines impose a number of conditions on

clinicians when they are deciding whether or not to disclose the information. Thus, the authorising clinician is to first take all reasonable steps to obtain consent from the patient. The clinician is required also to consider all the ethical issues and to consult with other experienced clinicians. Further, the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines make clear that if a disclosure occurs, only information that is necessary to communicate the risk of harm should be disclosed and, where possible, the patient should not be identified.

By recognising the ethical issues associated with genetic information and by establishing a limited but appropriate framework in which genetic information can be disclosed without consent, the Commonwealth Act is considered the better model to deal with the contentious ethical issues associated with genetic information. The bill therefore seeks to amend the Health Records and Information Privacy Act to establish a similar framework in New South Wales in respect of genetic information. The amendment to the Act will allow, but not require, an organisation to use and disclose a patient's genetic information without consent only if the organisation reasonably believes that the use or disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to the life, health or safety—whether or not the threat is imminent—of a genetic relative of the person to whom the information relates; the use or disclosure is conducted in accordance with guidelines approved by the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner; and in the case of disclosure the information is disclosed to a genetic relative of the individual.

This amendment will bring New South Wales into line with the Commonwealth Privacy Act. The Office of the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner has been consulted and supports the proposed amendment. The decision to use or disclose a patient's genetic information to a genetic relative without consent will always be a difficult one for clinicians as they try to juggle the competing interests of a patient's desire for privacy and confidentiality and a relative's possible need to be provided with important and possibly lifesaving genetic information. The amendment to the Health Records and Information Privacy Act recognises these sometimes competing interests and establishes an appropriate framework in respect of the use and disclosure of genetic information without consent.

I turn to the amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act, which are set out in schedule 1.1 to the bill. The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (New South Wales) is set out in the schedule to the Adoption Act and provides for the implementation in New South Wales of the National Accreditation and Registration Scheme for health professionals. In implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, New South Wales agreed to adopt national registration for health practitioners, but elected to retain its own State-based complaints scheme involving health professional councils and tribunals and the independent Health Care Complaints Commission. It is to the New South Wales specific provisions relating to the complaints management scheme in the Adoption Act and the National Law that the bill makes a number of minor amendments.

The first amendment is to section 6A of the Adoption Act, which is amended to remove an "Impaired Registrants Panel" from the definition of an "adjudication body". An adjudication body is a body that can impose conditions on the registration of a health professional, or cancel, or suspend a health practitioner's registration. However, an Impaired Registrants Panel is not a body that can impose conditions on the registration of a health professional, or cancel, or suspend a health practitioner's registration; rather, the panel recommends the imposition of conditions. As such, it is not appropriate for the panel to be included in the definition of the "adjudication body". The remainder of the amendments relate to New South Wales specific provisions of the national law and are designed to ensure that the complaints management scheme continues to operate smoothly and effectively in New South Wales.

The amendments include inserting, at proposed section 3A, a new objectives and guiding principles provision. The new section 3A will ensure that the protection of the public is the paramount consideration when complaints management functions are exercised in New South Wales. The bill amends sections 150 (7), 169B(1) (c), 172B (1) (b) and 174A (2) (b) of the national law to provide a consistent criteria of the qualifications of a lay or community member of a New South Wales specific body under the national law. The bill will amend these sections to provide that, to be eligible as a community or lay member for New South Wales bodies, a person must be a person who is not, and has never been, registered as a practitioner or student in the relevant profession, but may be a person who is, or was, registered in another health profession. The amendment will bring the eligibility criteria for community members for New South Wales bodies into line with the eligibility criteria for community members of the national boards.

The bill will insert a new section 143A into the national law to clarify that a mandatory notification under the national law is taken to be a complaint for the purposes of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993.

Amendments also are made in the bill to division 8 of part 8 of the national law to strengthen and streamline a number of the review processes under the New South Wales specific provisions of the national law. The bill amends sections 146B, 148E, 149A and 152I of the national law to clarify that the Professional Standards Committee, a health profession council, a health profession tribunal or an Impaired Registrants Panel can direct a health practitioner or student to undergo psychological counselling, and amends clause 2 of schedule 5 to clarify that a notice of intention to enter premises of a registered health practitioner can be given either by the assessor or by a person on behalf of the assessor. Section 244A is also amended to allow a health professional council to issue an evidentiary certificate relating to a person's historical registration status.

Finally, I turn to the amendments to the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act, which are set out in schedule 1.3 to the bill. Following the commencement of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, consequential amendments were made to the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act to ensure that nurse practitioners, optometrists and midwives, who were appropriately endorsed under the national law, were able lawfully to possess, use, supply or prescribe appropriate scheduled medicines under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act. Podiatrists should have been included in the consequential amendments but were inadvertently omitted. To rectify that oversight, the bill amends a number of sections of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act to ensure that podiatrists who are endorsed under the national law are able to possess, use, supply or prescribe appropriate scheduled medicines under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Dr Andrew McDonald and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BIOSECURITY) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [12.16 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012, which states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the *Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991*, the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* and the *Plant Diseases Act 1924* as follows:

- (a) to provide for mechanisms to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests, such as the declaration of infested places, restricted areas and control areas and accompanying restrictions on movement, and orders relating to control and eradication of animal pests,
- (b) to prohibit interim court orders that might prevent or delay emergency measures in circumstances where there is an emergency outbreak of notifiable weeds or plant diseases or pests,
- (c) to provide for the use of quarantine areas to control the spread of noxious fish and noxious marine vegetation and to make other provision with respect to noxious fish and noxious marine vegetation,
- (d) to enable various orders relating to fish and marine vegetation quarantine areas, noxious weeds and plant diseases and pests to be published urgently in newspapers or on a government website,
- (e) to require the appropriate authorities to be notified by persons who, while acting in a professional capacity, become aware of the presence of an emergency animal disease or pest or a notifiable weed or a notifiable plant disease or pest,
- (f) to make other provision with respect to biosecurity measures under those Acts,
- (g) to enable regulations containing savings or transitional provisions to be made as a consequence of the enactment of the proposed Act.

I congratulate the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business on introducing the bill. In September last year the Minister visited the Central Coast, accompanied by me and my colleagues the member for Wyong, the member for Gosford, and the Minister for the Central Coast, to open the new Central Coast Primary Industries Centre at the Ourimbah campus of the University of Newcastle. We have some extremely intelligent and excellent researchers at the university campus on the Central Coast. The arrangement allows them to come under the university's banner and to do some fantastic work on biosecurity measures for New South Wales, such as the excellent work they are doing in relation to fruit flies.

Mr Geoff Provest: I would like to hear more on that.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE: I will update members on that matter in future. Between 30 June and 28 August 2011, 10 horses on eight properties died due to the Hendra virus. This exceptional situation raised questions and presented our scientists with a number of challenges. I will inform members of the key facts relating to biosecurity measures and the reason why this bill is important. Seventy-five per cent of new diseases in humans have arisen from animals. An outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Australia would cost the economy between \$8 billion and \$13 billion. Forty per cent of flying foxes have been exposed to the Hendra virus, which led to the death of four people in Queensland. In 2011 eight cases were confirmed in horses in New South Wales and 10 cases were confirmed in Queensland.

The eradication of fruit fly has cost Australian horticultural industries more than \$6.9 billion. An additional 36 species of fruit fly are still exotic to Australia. From 1995 it took 44 months and \$34 million to eradicate a papaya fruit fly incursion in north Queensland. The exotic Pierce's disease has devastated the Californian wine grape industry but Australia is one of the last remaining places where the insect that transmits the disease is not yet found. That is pertinent to my area which includes the wine grape growing industry in the Hunter Valley. It is important for the wine grape growing industry in the Hunter Valley and in other areas to ensure that that disease is not introduced to Australia.

In July last year the New South Wales and Queensland governments, through Premier Barry O'Farrell and Premier Bligh, announced an additional \$6 million in funding over three years for Hendra virus research. Members would be aware that a serial pest in Queensland was removed earlier this year. This research will focus on why the virus spills over from flying foxes, how horses and other animals are exposed to the Hendra virus and why there was such a spike in cases from June 2011. These research projects are being coordinated by the cross-border Hendra task force, which includes chief veterinary officers, chief health officers and chief scientists from New South Wales and Queensland in addition to CSIRO representatives.

The world-renowned Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute in New South Wales is conducting a \$900,000 study into virology issues using new state-of-the-art testing techniques to establish how various animals, including horses, dogs and cats, contract and respond to this deadly disease. The project will provide vital intelligence to government authorities, the horse industry and private veterinarians on the risk factors that lead to transmission and how we can take steps to prevent infection of humans, horses and other animals. An epidemiologist from the Wollongbar Primary Industries Institute in New South Wales, who is closely involved in these research projects, is examining the transmission of the virus from flying foxes to horses and the impact of flying fox dispersal on virus infection levels.

The research teams bring together some of the world's leading thinkers in the fields of epidemiology, virology, veterinary science, zoonosis and human health. These critical new research projects that are aimed at getting to the bottom of last year's spike will examine ways of reducing future cases and ultimately minimise the risk of human infection. Hendra is a deadly virus. The New South Wales Government is taking every precaution possible to protect the health of our community and this State's valuable horse industries. I take this opportunity to thank veterinarians, scientists and staff at the Department of Primary Industries for their ongoing work and dedication in this critical area. I also encourage horse owners to remain vigilant and to continue to take steps to minimise the exposure of horses to this disease. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [12.23 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 and commend members for their admirable passion for this legislation which is important for the biosecurity of New South Wales. This bill will bolster the ability of New South Wales to respond to a biosecurity emergency. Biosecurity is close to the hearts of people in the Central West, an important contributor to this State's food basket. I note that the Department of Primary Industries is based in Orange which places that electorate at the frontline of biosecurity in New South Wales.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Do you get fruit flies in Orange?

Mr ANDREW GEE: The member for Coffs Harbour raised an important issue to which I will refer later. I thank the hardworking staff of the Department of Primary Industries in Orange and also in Sydney for putting together this legislation. I am sure that staff members, such as Vicki Eslick at Orange, will be listening to or watching this debate today. They worked tirelessly through all stages of this legislation. Hardworking veterinarian Ian Roth is also closely following the progress of this legislation. This is an important day for the Department of Primary Industries at Orange.

The importance of bolstering our biosecurity became evident in 2007 when there was an outbreak of equine influenza in Australia—an outbreak confirmed by the Department of Primary Industries at Orange in

August 2007. Equine influenza, or horse flu as it is often called, is a damaging disease that can have a severe and detrimental impact on the health of animals and on the horseracing and breeding industries in New South Wales, which is what occurred in 2007. Members will recall that the outbreak was first identified at Eastern Creek Quarantine Station, which itself was quarantined in 2007. The disease spread slowly around New South Wales and new areas were quarantined as further instances of the outbreak were identified.

Federal agriculture Minister Peter McGauran, a man well versed in horseracing, took action straightaway and ordered a 72-hour ban on all horse and harness racing in Australia. Recently when I attended Saddle-Up Sunday in Wellington I saw Peter McGauran at the Wellington Boot Racing Carnival. He is doing a sterling job for Racing NSW. Getting back to the issue at hand, in 2007 all horse movements in New South Wales were halted, the Australian Capital Territory was quarantined and Victoria was declared a control zone. I am sure that many members have vivid recollections of this whole episode.

[Interruption]

The member for Wollondilly is seeking additional information, which I will provide to him. I inform the member for Wollondilly that horse movement bans were imposed in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. Sydney's Randwick racecourse was quarantined—something with which many members will be familiar. Equine influenza also affected horse events at many agricultural shows, including Grenfell, Narromine, Barmedman, Lake Cargelligo, Finley, Manildra, Minto, Woodstock and Parkes. Horse flu resulted in the cancellation of a qualifying event for the 2008 Olympics and cattle mustering activities in Queensland were not permitted for some time.

The Spring Racing Carnival in Sydney was cancelled. This outbreak of equine influenza, which had a major impact on a number of industries across New South Wales, highlighted the need for a solid and rapid biosecurity response. I am pleased to say that we received a response from the Department of Primary Industries at Orange, which got onto the job straightaway. In 2007, 100 staff members from other sections of the Department of Primary Industries at Orange were seconded to work on containing this dangerous outbreak.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Name them.

Mr ANDREW GEE: I can name most of them. In Orange a team of 100 people, including the chief veterinary officer and 20 specialist veterinarians, worked 24 hours, seven days a week to contain this outbreak. Over 250 Department of Primary Industries staff, supported by Rural Lands Protection Board staff and industry representatives, were involved in that effort to contain this dangerous disease. A free-call number was listed to report outbreaks and provide further information. At one point the Department of Primary Industries was receiving three calls a minute on that hotline. I pay tribute to the men and women who worked so hard in 2007 to bring that outbreak under control. It was a watershed moment in the development of the Department of Primary Industries because it highlighted the importance of that department being at the front line of biosecurity in New South Wales and the importance of a fast response. It highlighted also what the department could do in such a situation.

Mr Andrew Fraser: It did an excellent job.

Mr ANDREW GEE: As the member for Coffs Harbour said, the department did an excellent job, a sterling job. It is appropriate when this bill passes through the House today that we remember the efforts of those men and women, the unsung heroes of the Department of Primary Industries, who worked so hard to restore biosecurity in this State in 2007. The omniscient member for Coffs Harbour mentioned fruit flies earlier. The Central West has had its share of fruit fly issues. In January 2006 Taiwan banned the export into its market of any Australian fruit with the potential to host Queensland fruit fly. This closed an important market for New South Wales producers. No-one can remember any outbreak of Queensland fruit fly in Orange, but this ban certainly closed off an export opportunity for our hardworking primary producers. In this age orchardists battle hard against the elements—hail, excessive rain, fruit bats, over-regulating bureaucrats, you name it.

I am pleased that again in Orange those hardworking men and women from the New South Wales Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, came to the fore. They worked with local cherry growers and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and found a way around the problem to restore our fruit export trade to Taiwan. Orange is famous for its cherries, apples and other fruit and now the fruit will be put into cold disinfestation for 18 days during which the coolroom cannot be opened. I was pleased that the Deputy Premier visited Orange recently. We visited the Caernarvon orchard, which is operated by

Bernard and Fiona Hall, primary producers working hard at the vanguard of their industry to restore this important trade for the growers of the Central West. Again this highlighted the important need for increased biosecurity measures to protect our industries and enhance our export markets. I fully support the bill, as I am sure all members of this House do. I commend it to the House.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [12.33 p.m.]: I shall make a brief contribution in the debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. The bill aims to improve New South Wales's capability to respond to a biosecurity emergency. 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. The bill will address gaps and limitations in our legislation that may prevent an effective response to a biosecurity emergency. The bill is important because it will provide a framework for better protecting not only our primary industries but also our natural environment and our lifestyle. As New South Wales is a signatory to four national agreements, it has an obligation to ensure it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond to emergency biosecurity incidents. The national agreements were subject to significant industry consultation prior to their commencement.

The broad meaning of biosecurity literally means "security from transmission of infectious diseases, parasites and pests". Biosecurity protocols on the farm and during transport are now more important than ever. All livestock can be affected by a loss of biosecurity. The swine and poultry industries have had biosecurity protocols in place for many years with good effect. Effective biosecurity protocols allow large-scale intensive production to occur on a single site. Biosecurity is a mindset or philosophy that must be developed by producers. The focus is on maintaining or improving the health status of livestock and preventing the introduction of new disease pathogens by assessing all possible risks to animal health. The biosecurity mindset must ultimately maintain itself as tangible measures—for example, locks on gates, showers, disinfection points, policies and protocols. We must always consider the question, "What would I do if something went wrong?"

Australia is well known for its rich mining resources, but our greatest asset is the production of clean and safe food. If we fast-track the next 10 or 20 years, I am sure the most sought-after commodity from an international perspective will be not just our coal or iron ore, but our ability to produce safe and clean food. Our country's advantage is to have best biosecurity practices. It is important to stress the significant threat that pests, weeds and animal and plant diseases pose to the New South Wales economy, the environment and the general community. Due to Australia's geographic location, we remain free from many harmful pests, weeds and diseases that affect other parts of the world. However, we certainly cannot afford to be complacent. The risk and threats to New South Wales's biosecurity status are becoming more complex. A changing climate, globalisation of trade and travel and population increases are putting pressure on natural ecosystems and driving competition for resources.

New South Wales has an obligation to ensure that it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond to emergency biosecurity incidents. We need to protect our clean safe image because it is important to our economy and regional jobs. In the Monaro electorate, the following example will explain the importance of a strong demand for local, safe and clean produce. The Cooma saleyards were a sea of cattle and in April buyers travelled from interstate to southern New South Wales for the latest in the series of eastern Australia's young cattle sales. The four annual Monaro weaner calf sales are held at Bombala and Cooma each autumn in the high country of south-east New South Wales. The annual beef cattle sales are a multimillion dollar major agricultural income earner for the grazing region as 8,000 to 10,000 calves are sold with other regional spin-offs, such as fuel, accommodation and services bought by cattle buyers from other States.

Every calf of every breed attracts a buyer in the strong market and market price must be paid at the Monaro sales. The action in the saleyards is buoyant optimism matching buoyant prices while there is scarce supply and high demand for Monaro cattle. The strong Cooma cattle sales were watched by a farmer from West Wyalong after driving five hours to the feature sale. Many people say that Monaro cattle survived the drought better than western stock because the hard conditions in which they are reared mean that they can cope with conditions anywhere in Australia. We need to protect our reputation by putting in place the right mechanisms, protocols and legislation to guarantee a strong future. The bill's provisions can be divided into four categories: pests and diseases of animals; plants; fish; and threats posed by noxious weeds.

The bill contains many amendments and the Minister and her office should be complimented on the extensive and detailed review of such an important piece of legislation. I shall touch on only a few points generally. The bill will introduce a new part to the Act that includes a mechanism to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests. The new part contains a duty to notify; powers to declare and regulate infested places,

restricted areas and control areas; and provisions relating to permits to enter and exit these areas. To make sure all relevant powers in the Act are available to respond to such outbreaks, existing provisions relating to importation orders, destruction orders, quarantine orders and disinfection orders will be extended so that they apply also to emergency animal pests.

Provisions in the Act dealing with inspectors' powers will also be extended with respect to emergency responses to animal pests, including powers relating to seizure and impounding, the collection of verbal and documentary information, search and entry, and the requirements for assistance. The bill will amend the Plant Diseases Act 1924 to improve the powers for control and eradication of plant pests and diseases. Preventative measures, such as spraying crops, reduces the chance of a plant pest or disease entering, spreading or establishing itself in New South Wales. The bill amends the Fisheries Management Act 1994 relating to fish and marine vegetation so that a quarantine area can be declared because of the presence or suspected presence of noxious fish or noxious marine vegetation. The Act will be amended to allow a quarantine order to prohibit or restrict the movement of fish or marine vegetation into, within or out of a quarantine area.

I turn now to amendments to the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. Emergency weed control orders and quarantine orders are two tools for declaring areas infested under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. The bill will extend the period for which orders are valid, because the existing periods are too short to ensure that all necessary control actions can be completed. The bill will amend the publishing requirements and in urgent situations the bill will provide the Minister with the power to declare land to be a quarantine area if the Minister thinks that class 1 or class 2 noxious weeds are reasonably likely to spread to the land. For those that are familiar with the Monaro electorate, weeds are a significant problem that impacts primary-producing land.

The agricultural industry in the Monaro mainly comprises fine wool, prime lamb and beef cattle, plus cattle and sheep breeding. New farming industries have developed, including deer, goat, lavender, rabbits, herbs, vegetable produce, alpaca breeding, yabby, trout, native flora nurseries, fodder crops and a cool climate boutique grape industry. There are other medium-sized industries that are related to the agricultural industry. These include an export meatworks, wool brokers and saleyards. Estimates of the value of our regional industry suggest it generates over \$350 million per year. We must do whatever it takes to protect this very valuable industry. The bill proposes sensible amendments that will provide a consistent approach to animal and plant pests, diseases, and weeds; provide for more efficient and effective operational and administrative arrangements; and greatly improve the capability of New South Wales to respond to emergency pests, weeds and diseases that affect the economy, the environment and our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [12.42 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill. I wish to point out that the electorate of Coffs Harbour has an array of fruit, vegetables, livestock and equine industries that have been and can be affected by biosecurity incidents in this country. I commend the member for Orange for his dissertation in relation to the equine influenza outbreak that occurred in 2007-08. I commend the Department of Primary Industries for the great job they did to control that outbreak. Many people were more than inconvenienced by that outbreak, including one young mother living at Nana Glen. She and her daughter were affected by the lockdown in the north of the State which was in place for a considerable length of time.

The quarantine measures at the time did not allow the movement of persons or horses and also affected the racing industry and the cancellation of regional shows. Even though the inconvenience was great, the community understood that any movement of persons or horses could create greater problems than were experienced. If my memory serves me correctly, Wingham show was cancelled, as were the majority of country shows, because country shows hold pony club events. The children and young adults who enter those events travel up and down the east coast of Australia and inland and the risk of the spread of equine influenza was high. I commend the Department of Primary Industries and all those who assisted for their management of the outbreak.

Other major issues that affect the fruit and vegetable industry on the North Coast are the introduction of exotic pests, such as bunchy top and Black Sigatoka, which are leaf-borne diseases in bananas. These diseases can be brought into the country from overseas. I have been disappointed by the current Federal Labor Government and Biosecurity Australia for the continual push to import bananas and apples into this country. There is the risk of fire blight in imported apples, which could destroy the apple industry just as bunchy top and Black Sigatoka could destroy the banana industry. We would then have an unwelcome international reputation that would take away any opportunity to export our products. Australia is presently recognised as a country with

a strict regime of biosecurity for our meat and livestock exports as well as our fruit and vegetables. The fruit and vegetable industry on the North Coast of New South Wales is a great income earner not just for individuals but for the community in general.

The previous New South Wales Labor Government removed the State border tick controls. The member for Tamworth, who is present in the House, will confirm that there has been an outbreak of cattle ticks in Quirindi. That has not happened for 20 or 30 years. The lack of local biosecurity does not allow for the examination and tracking of cattle from Queensland, where the cattle tick is a problem. The operation of examining and tracking cattle from Queensland was severely diminished because of the removal of the tick gates at the State border. The proposed amendment to the Act pertaining to weeds, plant diseases and animal diseases is a step in the right direction.

For a number of years I have been disappointed about the management of fruit bats or flying foxes and the Hendra virus. Another disease carried by flying foxes is the lyssavirus. The definition of "lyssavirus" indicates that it is commonly referred to as another form of rabies—or as close to rabies as one can get. The newspapers recently reported do-gooders saying that fruit bats cannot be shifted out of the Royal Botanic Gardens even though they are destroying the gardens. I would like the House to be informed as to whether the fruit bats in the Royal Botanic Gardens have been tested for the lyssavirus. It has been said that fruit bats are an endangered species but anyone who drives from Melbourne up the length of the east coast will see dozens of colonies of fruit bats that contain up to millions of fruit bats. My understanding is that the lyssavirus is rife amongst those fruit bats.

There is also the problem of the Hendra virus. The Hendra virus not only has killed horses in Queensland and New South Wales, it has taken human life as well. Until such time as we understand the way the Hendra virus and lyssavirus are transmitted through the colonies of flying foxes, the community has to err on the side of caution. I will paraphrase Dr Chris Tidemann, a visiting fellow at the Australian National University, who said that colonies of fruit bats and humans should not cohabit. Far too often we cohabit with colonies of fruit bats, such as the one in the Royal Botanic Gardens and the colony on Mackays Road, Coffs Harbour. That colony was not there 15 years ago. A house that was being used as a refuge for young abused Aboriginal children had to be vacated due to the hundreds of thousands of flying foxes inhabiting the surrounding yard and trees. The stench was deplorable.

The local council advised the community to cover their cars because if the fruit bats defecated on the car it would remove the enamel and not to hang clothes outside to dry as the clothing would be ruined. The bat colony, despite its effect on the community, has not been moved. Some people consider that these fruit bat colonies deserve to be there. I reiterate Dr Chris Tidemann's statement: do not cohabit with them. On the North Coast the fruit bats travel into town to feed on fruit and vegetable crops and bring disease with them. Further investigation is needed as to how the diseases are spread before a puritanical view is taken that colonies cannot be shifted because the fruit bats may abort fetuses as they fly away.

That was the argument used over the last week in relation to the colony of fruit bats at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. This bill gives Department of Primary Industries officers and others authority, in the event of an outbreak of equine influenza or any other biosecurity incident, to address the issues prudently and quickly. This will go some way to protecting fruit and vegetable and livestock industries not only on the North Coast but throughout New South Wales. I commend the Department of Primary Industries for the work it has done on this amending bill. I commend the Minister for bringing the legislation before the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [12.50 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. Before I go to the specifics of the bill as they relate to the Tamworth electorate, I would like to give an overview of the bill. The object of the bill is to amend the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991, the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 and the Plant Diseases Act 1924. New South Wales is a signatory to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity and its complementary emergency response agreements: the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement; the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed; and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement. Those agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of and cost-sharing arrangements between 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 it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to effectively respond to a biosecurity emergency in a timely manner. A number

of Acts in New South Wales contain powers that can be used in response to an outbreak of an animal disease or plant pest or disease. An analysis of this legislation has identified a number of limitations and gaps in relation to the capacity of New South Wales to respond to emergency biosecurity incidents in accordance with the national agreements. That is why these amendments are being introduced.

Biosecurity covers a wide range of issues in New South Wales, including controls regarding wild dogs, weeds, fish, cattle, horses and poultry. The Tamworth electorate has a large equine industry and a major centre, the Australian Equine, Livestock and Entertainment Centre, one of the premier centres in New South Wales in which to hold equine events. Participants and competitors come from all parts of Australia and internationally to take part in the National Cutting Horse Association Futurity, camp drafting, rodeos and a number of other events. That leaves us potentially exposed to the introduction and spread of disease in this area. However, diligent observations and excellent work in control measures put in place by the management of the Australian Equine, Livestock and Entertainment Centre have ensured that the area is kept disease free and healthy.

In the past couple of days we have noted that cattle movements across the State can result in the transportation of some diseases and pests. Recently, at Quirindi, 22 cattle that were identified as carrying ticks were secured and isolated, with the remainder of the herd being checked and cleared. Local stock and station agents are baffled as to how those ticks came to be in the area and how the cattle came to have the ticks on them. Due to the great observations of our cattlemen and those in the saleyards, the cattle ticks were quickly spotted, and the cattle were treated and isolated from the rest of the herd. The Tamworth electorate has some of the largest cattle yards in New South Wales. Gunnedah—which has the second largest after a little town called Dubbo—is quite the emerging cattle centre in northern New South Wales. Upgrading of the Kamilaroi Highway has enabled road trains to use that highway, and that has increased cattle payloads as well as the number of cattle moving in and out of our region.

We must not only be vigilant about the cattle on the backs of those trucks; noxious Parthenium weed and other weeds that cause a lot of damage to an area can be carried on trucks that go onto properties to pick up cattle. I know of this from experience as my father-in-law has a property at Willow Tree. Road trains come to the gateway and trucks come onto the property to pick up cattle. So property owners need to be vigilant about controlling weeds that could be introduced by vehicles travelling onto and around their properties. The debate has touched on the equine industry and cattle movements. The Tamworth region has a major emerging industry, the chicken meat and egg industry, which employs in the vicinity of 700 people. I note that the member for Kiama has a deep interest in the poultry industry. This most likable member works very hard for his area, becoming quite noxious on some issues.

Mr Gareth Ward: I don't have foot-in-mouth disease.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: The member does not have foot-in-mouth disease; but the hits just keep on coming. I return to the Tamworth chicken meat and egg industry and its employment of some 700 people. I personally have helped local farmers to transfer chickens from one shed to another. That is a very interesting exercise; it requires 20 to 30 people working fairly quickly to transfer chickens from a shed of about 10,000 poultry. As the chickens grow they need to be transferred. There are biosecurity issues in the transfer of those chickens from one shed to another, so one has to be appropriately dressed, with shoe covers, hairnets and so on. I know only too well that the poultry industry is quite susceptible to disease; poultry are affected by a variety of diseases and parasites. The two most serious diseases that must be kept out of poultry flocks are Newcastle disease and avian influenza. Although these two devastating diseases are not present in commercial poultry in Australia, the poultry industry is at risk if they are introduced. That is why we need to be ever vigilant to ensure our biosecurity measures are watertight. The freshness, cleanliness and health of chickens in our region, particularly in the Tamworth area, have long been trumpeted. I can say with hand on heart that we probably have the best biosecurity practices in the region.

The chicken meat and egg industry in the Tamworth area has significant opportunity to expand. A drive in and around the Tamworth region will reveal the number of chicken sheds already there; but the industry has the potential to expand. We look forward to that expansion. The advent of the pipeline providing fresh, clean water to the town of Barraba is looked at as providing investment opportunity for the poultry industry. So we need to be ever vigilant there as well. Of course, Barraba, a great little town in my electorate, is one of the main cattle-breeding regions in northern New South Wales, with the famed Ironbark Herefords. Biosecurity risks are increasing as a result of more people taking the opportunity to travel overseas, the greater opportunity for global trading both into and out of Australia, increasing populations and urban growth, and changing climate conditions.

I will leave global warming and climate change as a conversation for another day, and so too the carbon tax—the great myth of 2012. The Department of Primary Industries is doing some great work, and the Callala Agricultural Research Centre in Tamworth—the sensational team up on the hill overlooking the beautiful Peel Valley—also does some magnificent work. The centre is to be commended for its great research and development. I congratulate also all those involved in our equine, cattle and poultry industries on making sure that we are biosecurity safe. It is incumbent upon them to provide that safety and they know that they have the support of a fantastic Minister for Primary Industries—a regional person who understands regional New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

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

[The Acting-Speaker (Mr John Barilaro) left the chair at 1.00 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills was reported:

Coroners Amendment Bill 2012
Noxious Weeds Amendment Bill 2012
Police Integrity Commission Amendment Bill 2012

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I advise the House that the Treasurer will answer questions relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Fair Trading, who is absent from the Chamber today.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (for Private Members' Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that a bkie war is playing out on Sydney streets, and families in south-west and western Sydney are living in fear, why is the Government giving money to a television series that glorifies bkie gang violence?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am happy to get the substance of the member's question looked at. I will not accept the question on its merits but I will get it looked at and we will see whether or not the processes have changed since the change of government.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: But I want to mark this red-letter day. I think it would be fair to say that we have not seen as much activity from the State Leader of the Opposition on an issue since January as we have on this issue—that is, of a gang war amongst bikies across Sydney and of targeted shootings across Sydney that may well, because of a stray bullet, end up injuring, maiming or killing an innocent victim. But, this is the first time that the Leader of the Opposition has asked a question on the matter. He has not asked one question since Parliament resumed in February on an issue that is of concern for every member of Parliament—not just those with electorates in western and south-western Sydney.

Mr Nathan Rees: Rubbish.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: "Rubbish", say those opposite. It is good to see that the member for Toongabbie does not believe it is an issue of concern for every member of this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. The member for Keira will cease interjecting.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We must contrast this one question on the targeted shootings across Sydney with 37 questions that were asked on another issue. The Leader of the Opposition asked 37 questions on an issue about which counsel assisting the Furness commission of inquiry said that nothing done by the Minister for Tourism or his staff or by me was relevant.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was specific as to why money is being put into funding a program that glorifies bikie gangs. It was not about The Star casino.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order. The Minister is being entirely relevant to the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: This shows the priorities of Opposition members. They have asked one question in relation to the biggest issue that has been raging in this city for most of this year, and they have asked 37 questions on an issue that has nothing to do with it and about which most people outside this Chamber have no interest.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: However, it is good to be asked this question by the Leader of the Opposition because it allows me to set the record straight about the so-called record number of shootings in this city. The record is not held by this Government. As the Leader of the Government, and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, explained to the upper House yesterday while speaking on another piece of legislation put forward to address bikie crime in this city, the record is held by those opposite. The record is held by the member for Toongabbie when he was Premier. People are dreaming if they believe that drive-by shootings, targeted shootings and discharge of firearms suddenly started happening once 26 March clicked over last year.

In Goulburn on Friday last I, along with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Commissioner of Police, the member for Goulburn and Minister for Family and Community Services, and the member for Terrigal and Minister for Resources and Energy, saw another 310 police officers graduate from the Goulburn Police Academy. Seventy per cent of those officers will mostly be stationed across western and south-western Sydney to tackle this issue. The Government's record is of giving police the resources and powers they need to tackle this issue. That stands in stark contrast to the record of those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Toongabbie have repeatedly criticised the efforts of police in dealing with targeted shootings. Ten days ago we saw the Assistant Commissioner of Police take the extraordinary step of slapping down the member for Toongabbie for his lack of support for police.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Toongabbie to order. I call the member for Keira to order. The member for Terrigal and the member for Maroubra will come to order. If members continue to interject, I will not hesitate to have them removed from the Chamber.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND PACIFIC HIGHWAY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: My question is directed to the Premier. What impact will the Federal Labor budget have on the Pacific Highway upgrade?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question and for recognising that this is a significant issue in her electorate. It is also of great concern, interest and importance to this State and nation. Yesterday I described the Federal Government as shameless because it tried to pass off the re-announcement of \$200 million as some solution to the \$20 billion roads infrastructure backlog that we inherited due to the inaction of those opposite. Sadly, today it is clear that I sorely underestimated the capacity of the Federal Labor Government to distort history.

Overnight the intent of the Federal Government to put the screws on New South Wales taxpayers and damage New South Wales motorists became clear from its announcement in relation to funding for the Pacific Highway. We know the history of the highway. We know we must build that dual carriageway to stop people being killed and maimed on the highway, and we understand that it is a massive undertaking. But last night the

Federal Government put in jeopardy the 2016 deadline for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. Despite the well-known record of the Federal Government for deceiving the public it made another outrageous claim that there never was an 80:20 funding split with the New South Wales Government for the Pacific Highway upgrade.

[*Interruption*]

I am pleased that our friend the Ferrari-driving member for Lakemba—

Mr John Barilaro: Lamborghini.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier needs no assistance from Government members.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: My apologies. I am pleased the Lamborghini-driving member for Lakemba has interjected because today the Prime Minister, the Federal infrastructure Minister and the Federal Treasurer have been telling bald-faced lies about the funding deal for the Pacific Highway. I just happen to have the documents that prove that there was an 80-20 funding split. I am pleased to say that the documents do not belong to this Government; they belong to the previous Government. The first document is a letter dated March 2009 from the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Mr Anthony Albanese, in which he expressed pleasure that New South Wales had signed up to the Nation Building Program memorandum of understanding.

The second document is the memorandum that is signed by the aforesaid Mr Albanese—who is known to at least one member opposite—by the then New South Wales Minister for Roads, the member for Maroubra, who is still a member of this House, and by the former New South Wales Minister for Transport, David Campbell. That memorandum set the Federal-State funding split for the Pacific Highway at, not 80-20 but 83-17. That is the second piece of evidence. But to be fair, just a couple of months after that agreement was signed, an amendment was made. In the interests of truthfulness I should disclose, firstly, that that amendment was signed by the same Ministers—the member for Maroubra, the then Federal infrastructure Minister and the not-much-lamented former member for Keira—and I should also confess that under that revision, the funding model was changed to 80-20.

I should also point out that the memorandum, which was signed by the member for Maroubra on two occasions on behalf of the Government of New South Wales to represent the public interest of people across New South Wales—but particularly those who live along the Pacific Highway or who use the Pacific Highway—was an agreement that was meant to last from 2009 until 2014. Over the lunch break, my office did some research that took a couple of hours. This year is 2012, which is halfway through the agreement—an agreement signed with the Federal Government for 80:20 funding for the Pacific Highway. [*Extension of time granted.*]

This Government wants the same deal with the Federal Government that the former State Labor Government had. That is only fair.

Mr Nathan Rees: Good luck.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Toongabbie said, "Good luck", and I will come back to that. Today the people of New South Wales have every right to feel angry with the Federal Government. It is bad enough when a Federal Government shirks its responsibilities. It has become common for Labor to lie and renege on its promises, but what is absolutely extraordinary and outrageous is for Labor members to go out and publicly disown legally enforceable documents and tell porkies about them. By reneging on that memorandum of understanding and its 80:20 funding split, the Federal Labor Government is trying to shift \$3.2 billion in costs onto New South Wales taxpayers. As our Treasurer can tell us, that is happening at a time when last night's Federal budget also revealed reduced GST revenue of more than \$5 billion. Yet Labor members opposite actually support their Federal colleagues. They are happy for New South Wales taxpayers to again be clobbered. They refuse to speak out on behalf of taxpayers or North Coast residents.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The challenge for Labor members opposite is this: What projects do they want cancelled to pay for this \$2.3 billion that should have been funded by the Federal Government?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Is it the Blacktown Hospital? Is it the Gerringong section of the Princes Highway? Is it the Great Western Highway at Bullaburra? Is it Central Coast roads? Labor should tell us how Labor would fund it. [*Time expired.*]

BIKIE WARS: BROTHERS IN ARMS TELEVISION SERIES

Mr NATHAN REES: I direct my question to the Premier. Given that thousands of taxpayer dollars were granted to the producers of *Bikie Wars*, can he guarantee that no consultancy fees were paid to bikies in the making of the *Bikie Wars* miniseries?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: As I stated in response to the first question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, I will have the details checked. I will also have checked whether or not the system of grants has changed at all since the change of government in March 2011. I take the opportunity presented by the question asked by the member for Toongabbie to again highlight the hypocrisy of Labor members opposite. They are people who are concerned enough on a daily basis to try to beat up fear about the targeted shootings across Sydney, and today they had the Leader of the Opposition ask his first question about that.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Today Labor members went to the police conference saying that they support the police, but each time there is a targeted shooting in Sydney they get out there and attack the efforts of the police.

Mr Nathan Rees: Rubbish.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Toongabbie to order for the second time. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. The member for Toongabbie will refrain from waving a document around.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Toongabbie said "Rubbish", yet two weeks ago he referred to the Operation Spartan exercise, which resulted in 555 charges being laid, as a charade. Two weekends ago comments made by the member for Toongabbie drew an extraordinary response from Assistant Commissioner Frank Mennilli—a man who, along with other police officers, has been battling long and hard since January to try to get a hold on this issue. Assistant Commissioner Mennilli said that Mr Rees can play politics with this while he and other police officers get on and try to resolve the issue. Assistant Commissioner Mennilli stated on television recently that there is no finish line in policing and that the effort never stops. That is what this Government understands.

Whether it is through laws we have passed relating to ammunition, consorting, or increased penalties that will apply to those who engage in criminal organisations and drive-by shootings, we will continue to support the police. Whether it is through the availability of police resources, such as the 310 police officers who graduated last Friday, the Government will continue to give the police the resources and powers they need to deal with this issue. Labor members opposite have a lot to learn. Labor members must understand that they cannot come into this House and pretend to stand up for police when each time they appear on television they undermine the efforts of police. The Leader of the Opposition must understand also that whether in a motion for urgent debate in this House or in a speech to the police conference yesterday, he cannot cry crocodile tears about death and disability provisions but not commit to repealing the laws.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition attended the police conference and joined in concern expressed about death and disabilities provisions, but ignored the fact that without those changes the scheme would have become financially unsustainable, therefore providing no protection to any police officer across this State. But he did not say that if given the opportunity he would wind back the changes made by this Government. In my lexicon, that is known as political cowardice.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is similar to the Leader of the Opposition going to the police conference yesterday and saying, "New South Wales needs more police", but without committing to additional police. I welcome the question. I will get the facts. I particularly will check to see whether the way in which the grant or assistance that is provided has changed between the former Labor Government and our Government, and I will be pleased to inform the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. There is too much interjection during answers given by the Premier and Ministers.

[Interruption]

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

FEDERAL BUDGET AND PACIFIC HIGHWAY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. How does the Federal Labor budget break the Prime Minister's promise to complete the Pacific Highway upgrade by 2016?

Mr ANDREW STONER: This is a very good question from the member for Clarence. A little more than 18 months ago the Prime Minister declared in Federal Parliament, "... the Government is committed to duplicating the Pacific Highway by 2016 ..."

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: She went on to say:

We will continue making this work a key priority in the next funding program and we will deliver the Pacific Highway by 2016.

As we have since discovered in the Federal budget yesterday, that promise was worth as much as another one she made to the Australian people in 2010, "There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead."

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. Members will cease their continual interjections during answers.

Mr ANDREW STONER: As I revealed in the House yesterday, in March 2009 Anthony Albanese wrote to the then Minister for Roads, Michael Daley, committing to an 83 per cent Federal, 17 per cent State split of funding for the Pacific Highway. The mediocre member for Maroubra, minder of middle managers, pipes up again. Just as voters relied on the Prime Minister's promise not to introduce a carbon tax, her commitment on 21 October 2010 to duplicate the Pacific Highway by 2016 under existing funding arrangements allowed the New South Wales Government to plan its expenditure on this massive project. But Julia Gillard's budget is yet another broken promise, which rips \$2.3 billion out of the Pacific Highway and renders the 2016 completion date unachievable. Whose brilliant idea was it to scuttle the completion of the duplication of the Pacific Highway by 2016?

Perhaps it was John McTernan, the spin doctor brought out from the United Kingdom in a last-ditch attempt to save the ailing Gillard Government. This is a man who was quoted in the weekend newspaper as saying, "If you get to senior positions, you have to be able to kill your opponents." What good advice. It is obvious that he has been advising Anthony Albanese, who has been trying to spin his way out of this betrayal by muddying the waters and referring to Federal contributions made in the early years of the joint-funded upgrade when the Pacific Highway was classified as a State highway. But Anthony Albanese and those opposite know that this changed in 2005 when the Pacific Highway north of Hexham was incorporated as an integral part of the National Land Transport Network.

As has been revealed in this place and in the other place, it was former New South Wales Minister for Transport David Campbell who, in December 2009, confirmed in reply to Minister Albanese that the National Land Transport Network arrangements were applying, and confirming the 80:20 funding split for the Pacific Highway. In fact, as the Premier said, 83:17 at the time. It is only reasonable for the Federal Government to continue to fund 80 per cent of the Pacific Highway upgrade in line with the national status of the route. That

was confirmed on ABC radio today by that great friend of Joe Tripodi's, Keith Rhoades, the Mayor of Coffs Harbour and a member of the Pacific Highway Task Force. Today on ABC radio he said, "The Commonwealth should pay the lion's share of the highway upgrading. The Pacific Highway is a national highway." That is not us saying that; that is a friend of the Labor Party—and a friend of the member for Coffs Harbour as well, I think.

Those opposite are now saying we should find the funds anyway to enable the 2016 deadline to be met. This means we would have to cancel or defer major roadworks in western Sydney, like the upgrade of the Camden Valley Way, the Richmond Road upgrade, the Narellan Road upgrade, the Schofields Road upgrade, the Werrington arterial upgrade, the replacement of the Windsor Bridge, or the pinch points program aimed at easing congestion in Sydney. Cancellations of projects on the Central Coast would have to include the West Gosford interchange upgrade as well as key projects at Ourimbah and Wyong. Those opposite want the Government to abandon the Shortland to Sandgate section of the bypass as well as the New England Highway upgrades at Maitland, and to put off into the never-never the Nelson Bay Road widening at Anna Bay—projects in the Hunter—not to mention the Princes Highway in the Illawarra and the South Coast. Shame on them.

BIKIE WARS: BROTHERS IN ARMS TELEVISION SERIES

Mr GUY ZANGARI: My question is to the Premier. Why did his Government put money into the Bikie Wars television series and then argue that our hardworking police do not deserve a pay rise in return for driving down crime rates?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I can now inform the House that Screen NSW contributed 2.21 per cent to the budget of the six-part series to be shown on Channel 10 from 15 May.

[Interruption]

I thank the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for the interjection. He contributed 7 per cent. Of course the bulk of the funding came from Channel 10. *Bikie Wars: Brothers in Arms* tells the story behind the fatal feud between two outlaw motorcycle clubs that resulted in the Milperra massacre. I am advised, more importantly, that Screen NSW's process for funding these sorts of series, whether for small amounts like this—2.1 per cent—or for larger amounts, is to use an independent assessment committee and to make recommendations to its board.

It does not go to the Minister or to the Government, and it is important to note that the system has not changed. I thought there was something familiar about this question when I was asked it the first time and again the second time, and I am grateful for the third question because that has absolutely jogged my memory. If I had not received the third question I would not have these facts to hand. In June 2010, under precisely the same arrangements but under the former Government—under Premier Keneally and whoever was then the arts Minister—the Government of the State was revealed to be a sponsor of an *Underbelly* DVD launch at one of John Ibrahim's Kings Cross nightclubs.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will contain their excitement.

Mr Nathan Rees: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. If the Premier has an issue with John Ibrahim, arrest him.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The Premier has the call. Government members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Remarkably, the person who has an obsession with the name "Ibrahim" is the member for Toongabbie. Last week when I was answering a question about these issues he jumped up and said "Ibrahim". I was happy to tell him that the police offensive that he described as a charade has seen Sam Ibrahim back behind bars. Many Ibrahims are involved in outlaw activities and if the police want to lock them up they have my full support. I say again, the process engaged in, whether in the launch by those opposite of a series of *Underbelly* at an Ibrahim nightclub at Kings Cross or the 2 per cent funding of Screen NSW, independently assessed and decided upon by the board of Screen NSW, has not changed.

If my recollection is right the question tried to connect the funding for this series with police wages. I can say if we had not funded this series, if the money had been directed to police wages, it would have provided less than \$10 per head. Those opposite have again been caught out with hypocrisy. Last time it was

political cowardice, now it is hypocrisy. They presided over the very same scheme. The record is clear: We support the police. We give them the resources and the powers to lock up criminals. Those opposite continue to talk them down and trivialise issues surrounding the bikies in this city and continue to put offside those hardworking police who are out there day in, day out, 24/7, dealing with crime across Sydney.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: My question is directed to the Treasurer. How will decisions taken in last night's Federal budget impact on programs and services in New South Wales?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Port Stephens for his question, a member who managed to turn a very tight margin from the previous State election—I think his family got him over the line—into a landslide win at the 2011 election as a result of his hard work in his electorate. It is important that the House understands what was delivered in the Federal budget. We have heard the key concerns of the O'Farrell Government regarding infrastructure, particularly the Pacific Highway, but the Federal budget demonstrates the stark economic reality facing the people of New South Wales. Global conditions have hit revenues around the world. Considerable uncertainty undoubtedly remains over the future of austerity measures in Greece as a result of the outcome of its election, and in the European Union overall. The New South Wales economy will not be, and is not, immune from downturns in Europe and the United States.

The Federal budget confirmed, and we raised this in the House last week, that goods and services tax revenue will collapse nationally by \$14 billion over the four years to 2014-15 compared with the forecast 12 months ago. New South Wales goods and services tax revenue will collapse by more than \$5 billion over the next four years. Even those opposite will understand the challenges that brings to this State. National growth is forecast at 3.25 per cent and unemployment is forecast to rise to 5.5 per cent. The New South Wales budget is under intense pressure from the global downturn. While some of our indicators are holding up, the national and international economies paint a gloomy picture. Indeed, members will know from talking to their local businesses that they are doing it tough. The uncertainty remains. We cannot deny that the goods and services tax writedowns will have significant impacts on the State budget, but we will make decisions in the interests of the people of New South Wales. The O'Farrell Government has demonstrated that it has the capacity to get on with the job of improving services and building the infrastructure we need despite the challenges we face.

Mr Michael Daley: The usual deficits.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I love it when the member for Maroubra, the middle managers' hero, pipes up. I know he reads the classifieds looking for middle managers. When he is not doing that, he is watching *The Office* at home. If he actually read the newspapers he might understand that there has been a global financial crisis and there is a European financial crisis; he might also understand that those global events have an impact on us. He has not yet reached those pages in the newspaper. I hope he takes out a subscription to the *Australian Financial Review*. Last night the Federal Labor Government short-changed the people of New South Wales with some shifty accounting practices.

Those opposite know about those practices—a bit here, a bit there and everywhere—and what do you end up with? You end up with whatever you want. Federal Labor has reduced our budget by \$1 billion and taken \$2.3 billion from Pacific Highway funding. We heard the Premier and the Deputy Premier on that issue, and we know the role of the member for Maroubra in that. He knows the truth. There is further uncertainty about the national partnership agreements and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which is incredibly important. I am sure the Minister will take the opportunity to talk about it in due course. We are disappointed about the lack of detail and funding certainty from the Federal Government. Wayne's budget attracted a bit of a response, not only from me and the Premier but also from a few notable commentators. Alan Kohler said:

It is the budget of an unpopular Government approaching an election, not one that's tightening the belt.

That is a fair assessment. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said,

[It] lacks vision for the broader economy.

There is no sign of broader based tax reform on the horizon

The Business Council of Australia said:

[It] has not fully grasped the opportunity to set a clear direction for the future that will build business and community confidence.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia said:

Australian business confidence was already sitting at low levels, but tonight the government's announcement will push that confidence to a new low with their decision to walk away from the commitment to deliver a lower headline corporate income tax rate.

The NRMA said:

NSW motorists will tonight be shocked by a Federal Budget that slashes spending on the state's roads by almost half to an alarmingly low \$1.2 billion.

Importantly, as we heard from the other side:

There are no new funding announcements this year for any NSW roads.

Infrastructure Partnerships Australia said:

This is not an infrastructure budget

When this nation needs infrastructure and leadership, New South Wales missed out under Federal Labor.

POLICE DEATH AND DISABILITY SCHEME

Mr RYAN PARK: My question is directed to the Premier. Given his earlier statements that he supports the State's police, why has he cut payments in half for police officers totally and permanently incapacitated in the line of duty?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am not sure where the member for Keira was during the debate on changes to the police death and disability—

Mr Michael Daley: We were all here.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am not sure the member for Keira was here, but the member for Wollongong was famously having lunch during the teachers' protest last year. Time and again we explained that the changes made by those opposite had made the scheme financially unsustainable. It may be okay for those in the Federal Government going into election campaigns to pretend that schemes are okay for the long term when they are not, and it may be okay for those opposite and the Federal Labor Government going into election campaigns to pretend that if they are voted for again all will be rosy in the garden, but that is not real life. Treasury made very clear that the police death and disability scheme could not continue to be sustained financially if changes were not made.

There have been a number of former Labor police Ministers, and I happened to meet one during that debate who said he had told the Minister who made the changes that he was courting disaster. This former police Minister had resisted the Police Association's demands to make changes because he understood the threat to the financial sustainability of the scheme. We on this side of the House want to guarantee to those who serve on the thin blue line across this State that should they be injured—and to their families in the case of their being killed—they will, whether today, next week, next year, or in 10 or 20 years' time, get the support to which they are entitled. I repeat what I said during the debate: notwithstanding the difficult and serious changes made by this Parliament, New South Wales police still have access to the most generous police death and disability scheme in the nation.

Mr John Robertson: They haven't forgotten you.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I acknowledge again the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition, who says they have not forgotten me. That is what leadership is about. Leadership is about making tough decisions that are in the long-term interests of the public. Leadership is not going to the Police Association wringing your hands about changes to death and disabilities and saying, "We need more police"—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —and not putting a single commitment on the table.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: And not telling those 16,500 police officers across the State or the people they represent what you would do, God forbid, if you ever have the chance to govern this State.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: When we came to office we were given briefings by Treasury on a number of issues. In the briefing about death and disability we were told that without the reforms the predicted costs of death and disability and workers compensation payments in 2011-12 would be \$781 billion.

Mr Brad Hazzard: How much?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier does not need the assistance of the Leader of the House.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It would be \$781 billion, almost 50 per cent of the total police salaries bill. We are supporting these reforms with \$15 million. The reforms we made were about making the scheme financially sustainable and ensuring that we did not pretend to those risking their lives on behalf of the community that the scheme would, without change, protect them in years to come. More importantly, as I have said before in this place, we also have put money on the table to assist police who are injured on the job to come back to do the job they want to do, as sworn police officers. Those opposite found it far too convenient to pay those officers out and leave their rehabilitation and repair to their families and to the private sector.

Mr John Robertson: Wrong.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is not wrong. The Police Association told us during those discussions that we needed to use the skills of those police who could recover to assist the policing effort across New South Wales, not to do what those opposite did and heartlessly kick them out of the force, and pay them to take their psychological, physical and other problems to their families and others in the community. Tough decisions are part of leadership. Tough decisions are part of setting this State up for the future it deserves. There are 310 reasons to say we have it right; the 310 new graduates from the Goulburn Police Academy who are taking up positions this week.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. How will Federal Labor's budget announcement of start-up funding for a National Disability Insurance Scheme impact New South Wales residents with a disability?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank the member for Swansea for his question. It is a good question. I acknowledge the enormous amount of time he has dedicated to saleability in his electorate and his commitment, which he has demonstrated today by asking the question. The O'Farrell Government has given in-principle support to a National Disability Insurance Scheme. It has also given a clear sign about bipartisan cooperation to ensure the scheme is delivered. The Government makes no apologies for wanting to hold the Commonwealth to account when it comes to the funding arrangements and governance of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Last night the Treasurer allocated \$1 billion in the Federal budget over four years towards the scheme. We must remember that the recommendations of the Productivity Commission make it crystal clear that a national rollout would require \$3.9 billion over the forward estimate periods for which Wayne Swan announced \$1 billion last night. It goes to show how hopelessly inadequate last night's budget announcement truly was. Over the next four years New South Wales will spend some \$9.3 billion on disability services, while the Federal Treasurer announced \$1 billion over four years with \$85 million being spent next year, which shows how badly Australia has been let down.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Overnight the Carers Alliance described the announcement in last night's Federal budget as a cruel hoax. Every member in this House knows how serious a National Disability Insurance Scheme is to meeting the requirements of people with a disability.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What I heard out of the Federal Treasurer's mouth last night was nothing short of an absolute disgrace. The Productivity Commission made it crystal clear that \$900 million should be allocated towards launch sites, \$600 million should be allocated towards bedding down the administrative arrangements of the scheme and \$3.9 billion net should be allocated in this four-year period.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: For the Federal Treasurer to announce \$1 billion over four years clearly demonstrates that the Federal Government does not want the Productivity Commission recommendations enacted. What makes it worse is that the Commonwealth has said that the States must make a contribution. There was no consultation, no engagement with State treasurers as to what that allocation should be, and yet New South Wales Treasury has costed the launch sites at somewhere between \$1.4 billion and \$2 billion. That leaves a shortfall for the States in the order of \$400 million to \$650 million, or thereabouts. What this Government wants to know, considering it is providing \$2 billion of growth money, is what that means in terms of cost to the States. The Government wants to work towards a scheme in a bipartisan way but we make no apologies for holding Federal Labor to account for a substandard scheme that does not meet the needs of people with disabilities. The reality is that the Commonwealth has not engaged with the States on governance and has not engaged with the States on where the launch sites will be.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It was not announced last night despite the fact that this Government has said it wants to see the Hunter and western Sydney as the launch sites. The Government has not had any indication from the Commonwealth as to the time frame for the national rollout of the scheme. What is the Commonwealth talking about—10, 15 or 20 years? Not one dollar was allocated in the Federal budget towards a national rollout of this scheme. Australia has seen the Gillard Government playing with the lives of people with disabilities in this State. It is no wonder that the Carers Alliance described the budget last night as a cruel hoax.

NATIVE VEGETATION REGULATIONS

Mr RICHARD TORBAY: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. Given the current review into the State's native vegetation regulations, will she consider a moratorium on prosecutions, as has occurred in Queensland, until the review is completed?

Ms ROBYN PARKER: That is a sensible question from the member for Northern Tablelands. I know the member supports the farmers in his electorate passionately, particularly farmers who do the right thing. This Government is reviewing the native vegetation regulation—not the Act. New South Wales farmers needed a change of Government to enable them to do what they need to do without all the red tape that has tied them up for years. This Government will make sure that farmers can do that. Farmers are integral to protecting the environment and making sure that farming practices are sustainable. The regulations provide protection for the environment against salinity, erosion and broadscale clearing.

The Government is consulting with environmental groups and farmers across New South Wales on how to streamline the regulations to make it easier to farm and to self-manage. At the same time the Government must ensure that protections are in place to prevent broadscale clearing in the meantime. When the draft regulation is produced the Government will consult further before finalising the regulations. There will not be a moratorium. The Government knows that farmers want to do the right thing and it must make sure that those that do not do the right thing feel the full effect of the law.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND CARBON TAX

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: My question is directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy. What did last night's Federal budget reveal about Federal Labor's carbon tax?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: It will come as no surprise to discover that last night's Federal budget had nothing to do with economics, it was all about politics.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will contain themselves.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The budget went for 27 minutes, it contained 3,300 words and yet two words were never mentioned—"carbon tax". In 27 minutes and 3,300 words those two words disappeared from the lexicon. We can only commend Wayne Swan for his imaginative approach to taxation. As Miranda Divine reported in today's *Daily Telegraph*:

Labor's plan is to neutralise the carbon tax with as many sweeteners as can be thrown at it, so people are so deliriously happy with all the free cash they forget their fears about the carbon tax.

I also quote to the House from an outstanding journalist named Peter Hartcher, who wrote in today's *Sydney Morning Herald*:

The Prime Minister is seeking forgiveness for her broken promise of the carbon tax and doing it with money—a sure token of sincerity.

It is hard to be more sincere when one has a broken a promise than to hand out money! As has been said by the New South Wales Treasurer on a number of occasions, as a result of the introduction of the carbon tax from 1 July, New South Wales will be taxed \$1 billion a year and will lose 31,000 jobs; and electricity customers will, after 1 July, pay an additional \$315 a year on the average electricity bill. Yet the Federal Labor Government was too scared to even mention those two words in the budget it delivered last night. Ninety per cent of the increase in the price of electricity in western Sydney is attributable solely to the carbon tax.

Mr Clayton Barr: Untrue.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The member for Cessnock, who lives a long way from western Sydney, says, "Untrue." The member has in his electorate a whole aluminium industry that is in peril because of the high price of electricity—brought about by the carbon tax. Federal Labor has wrought, in the words of Tony Abbott, a wrecking ball through the economy of New South Wales; yet New South Wales Labor is silent. Miranda Devine made an even more appropriate comment about the carbon tax when she said:

The carbon tax is a dog that just won't sell, no matter how dressed up it is.

The Leader of the Opposition said on 9 August 2011:

I support the position of the Prime Minister out there and that she is putting a price on carbon—a significant economic reform.

The loss of 31,000 jobs, a \$1 billion impost on New South Wales and \$315 added to everyone's electricity bill—to John Robertson, that is significant economic reform. He said:

I support putting a price on carbon, and that's what the Prime Minister is doing.

I commend the member for Heffron, who is not in the House today, for saying:

... [the Prime Minister] really has to deal with the question of what she's going to do with the carbon tax. She has to dial it back somehow.

So the voice of the people to Kristina Keneally is, "Please come back; all is forgiven."

Question time concluded at 3.12 p.m.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report

Mr Jonathan O'Dea, as Chair, tabled the report entitled "Report on the follow-up of repeat recommendations from the Auditor-General's Financial Audits 2010", dated May 2012.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Jonathan O'Dea.

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**.

Animals Performing in Circuses

Petition requesting a ban on exotic animals performing in circuses, 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**.

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**.

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

Pittwater Fishing

Petition requesting the Government buy out commercial fishing operators within the Pittwater to help to ensure a sustainable future for this invaluable natural asset, received from **Mr Rob Stokes**.

The Clerk announced that the following Minister had lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson—Neonatal Pup Tail Banding—lodged 3 April 2012 (Mr Troy Grant)

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

By leave and pursuant to resolution the Speaker identified that General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 347, 349, 351 to 359, 361 to 364, 368, 370 to 373, 375 to 378, 380, 381, 384 to 389, 392 to 394, 396, 398, 399, 402 to 405, 407 to 414, 416, 418 to 426, 428 to 430, 432, 434 to 436, 438, 440, 441, 444 to 449, 451, 453, 454, 457 to 459, 461 to 464, 466, 467 and 469 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.

GREATER PORT MACQUARIE BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS PRISCILLA AND GARY TURNBULL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House congratulates Priscilla and Gary Turnbull from East Port Veterinary Hospital on winning the prestigious Excellence in Business Award at the 2011 Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Bush Fire Awareness Week is from 24 September to 1 October 2011.
- (2) Notes the Rural Fire Service Open Day will be held on 24 September 2011.
- (3) Encourages communities to visit their local brigade to learn about the Rural Fire Service and the services it delivers.
- (4) Thanks the Rural Fire Service volunteers and management for their spirit and dedication to the community especially at times of natural threat.

AUSTRALASIAN FIREFIGHTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House congratulates our firefighters on their service to the community and wishes all participating teams well in the upcoming Australasian Firefighter Championship to be held in Port Macquarie from 14 to 16 October 2011.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE CENTRE FOR CHEMICAL BIOLOGY

Ms SONIA HORNERY—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Adam McCluskey and researchers at the Centre for Chemical Biology at University of Newcastle who have developed a technique to stop viruses and bacteria multiplying in the body.
- (2) Notes this technique could be used to fight diseases such as HIV, cancer, hepatitis C and neurological disorders.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY COMPETITION AND GLENMORE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes the participation of 6,691 year 10 students from 141 schools in the inaugural Australian History Competition held on 21 June 2011.
- (2) Congratulates the 27 students from year 10 Glenmore Park High School on competing in the competition.
- (3) Congratulates the following Glenmore Park High School students on their achievements: Carl Ramirez (equal first place); Jarrod Robinson and Emily Adams (top 5%); Emily Duncan and Victoria Roberts (top 10%); Riley Brewis (top 15%); and Keighly Smith, Andrew Flores Castillo, Karina Nicholson, Brad Colling, Nathan Milgate and Sarah Crittenden (top 20%).

FROCK ON! FASHION DESIGN COMPETITION

Ms SONIA HORNERY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates "Frock On", which was held on 3 September 2011, on raising \$50,000 for the Aspect Hunter School for children with autism.
- (2) Notes that the fashion design competition provides a professional platform to showcase the work of designers and to raise the profile of Newcastle as a fashion destination.

PAINT PENRITH REaD PROGRAM

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Penrith City Council's Children's Services Team, Mission Australia Bronte House team, Rotary friends, Penrith Panthers, Centro Nepean Management and businesses and Nepean High School students on a successful "Paint Penrith REaD" convention on 1 and 2 September 2011.
- (2) Encourages all members of this House, local councillors, business and community members to get involved and support this early intervention literacy program in their local communities.

SURF LIFESAVER MATT BANTING

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House congratulates Matt Banting, of Port Macquarie, on winning the Open Men's Title at the Australian Surf Festival at age 17 and wishes him well for the upcoming World Junior Championships.

ST MARYS SPRING FESTIVAL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the St Marys Development Committee, with the assistance of Penrith City Council, on delivering the St Marys Spring Festival on Saturday 3 September 2011.

- (2) Notes the St Marys Spring Festival attracts over 15,000 visitors.
- (3) Thanks the St Marys Development Committee, specifically, Phil Martin, Tom and Norma Thorburn, Tony Biddulph and other volunteers.

TRIUMPH MOTORCYCLE RIDE FOR CHARITY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House acknowledges the hard work of Jo Nixon and David Saunderson and the organising committee of the Triumph Motorcycle Ride for Charity in Port Macquarie that raised \$11,500 for prostate research in 2011.

PENRITH PANTHERS BMX CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Penrith Panthers BMX Club on its successful open race meeting held on Saturday 3 September 2011 at Creek Road, St Marys.
- (2) Commends the club for fostering a family friendly atmosphere where riders from all age groups can race in a competitive, yet supportive and fun environment.
- (3) Thanks Olympian Luke Madill, World Champion Jordan Lecher as well as the club's own Pro riders.
- (4) Thanks President Lynne Docherty, Secretary Deanne McNair and all other committee and parent volunteers for their excellent organisation and delivery of a successful meeting.

COLYTON HIGH SCHOOL ART EXHIBITION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Commends Colyton High School students for making the ceramic art story stacks in the Library Atrium.
- (2) Congratulates Colyton High School Principal, Cheryl Dwyer, and art teachers on initiating this creative project.
- (3) Encourages the local community to participate in the upcoming opening of their art exhibition "Story Stack".

WALLSEND YMCA YOUTH PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATIVE REBEKAH OUTERIDGE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Rebekah Outeridge, youth member for Wallsend, on her contributions in the YMCA Youth Parliament program.
- (2) Notes that since being selected, alongside 88 other young people, Rebekah has been working with the committee investigating education and training in New South Wales.

NEPEAN AREA DISABILITIES ORGANISATION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes the support provided to clients and their families by the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation (NADO).
- (2) Congratulates NADO employees of the year: Gity Shariati, winner of the Peer Award; and Jacki Long, winner of the Community Award.
- (3) Thanks local businesses for supporting NADO with work placements and employing the workers who come through NADO training programs.

PROFESSOR TRISH DAVIDSON APPOINTMENT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the appointment of Professor Trish Davidson, of John Hunter Hospital, as the Director of Children, Young People and Families in the Hunter Children's Health Network.
- (2) Notes this role will draw together diverse services to ensure they are of a consistently high standard throughout the Hunter region.

WALLSEND RED CROSS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Wallsend branch of the Red Cross on its continued community assistance.
- (2) Notes the appointment of its new executives: Julie Urquhart, President; Elaine Plessiant, Secretary; Sue Stein, Treasurer; Karen Rose, Assistant Secretary; Pat Watson, Vice President and Gary Rose, Publicity Officer.

MCGRATH FOUNDATION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates the McGrath Foundation on its fundraising efforts which enabled the financing of a cancer nurse to support breast cancer sufferers at the Calvary Mater Hospital.

TRIBUTE TO RACHEL "RAE" BUDGEN

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of Rachel "Rae" Budgen.
- (2) Notes her dedication to community work in the region, founding the Camden Society of Artists and being one of the first telephone councillors for Macarthur Lifeline.
- (3) Congratulates a life of community service and volunteering and pays respect to Rachel Budgen's life and to her family.

IRISH FAMINE REFUGEES COMMEMORATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH—That this House notes the annual commemoration of the arrival of the "orphan girls" in Sydney as refugees from the Great Irish Famine and congratulates the Great Famine Commemoration Committee on its ongoing work.

24 HOUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER CHARITY WALK

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Notes the upcoming 24 hour Fight Against Cancer Charity Walk on 15 to 16 October 2011.
- (2) Congratulates the organising committee on its successful events in the past and the money it has raised for the Wollondilly region.

MUSIC: COUNT US IN PROGRAM

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House commends the community of York Public School in Penrith on its participation in the "Music: Count Us In" program and the role music plays in building both language and performance skills into a student's further education.

ST MARY MACKILLOP

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the recent celebration of the first feast day of Australia's first Saint, Mary MacKillop.
- (2) Notes the spirit of community engendered by this special feast day, particularly in Catholic schools of the Oatley electorate involved in community service.
- (3) Congratulates students of St Joseph's Oatley who took up the spirit of the day by helping out in the local community.
- (4) Commemorates the important example of St Mary MacKillop for all Australians, regardless of faith, as an ordinary person who lived every day to help others.

NEPEAN DISTRICT TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Nepean District Tennis Association on 90 years of service to the Penrith community.
- (2) Commends the work of the Association's office bearers in Neil Renaud, Chris Woodland and Dennis Sales for the decades they have contributed to the Association.
- (3) Supports the future endeavours of the association including the introduction of clay courts and the ongoing development of tennis facilities in the Penrith region.

RIPPLES SWIM CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ripples Swim Club on finishing ninth out of 117 clubs at the 2011 State Swimming Titles.
- (2) Congratulates Mania Betham, Nathan Robinson, Molly McNamara, and Cameron Slaughter on winning medals at the titles.
- (3) Congratulates coach Jenny Pilgrim and the club on its outstanding achievements.

WESTS TIGERS RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that Wests Tigers is a great rugby league team.
- (2) Notes that Wests Tigers will play against St George in the National Rugby League final series on 9 September 2011.
- (3) Wishes Wests Tigers all the best in its attempt to beat St George.
- (4) Looks forward to seeing Wests Tigers winning the 2011 Grand Final.

CHILD OF COURAGE MEDAL RECIPIENT VANESSA SMITH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 11 year old Vanessa Smith of St Clair was only two years old when both her legs and her fingers were amputated after contracting meningococcal disease.
- (2) Notes that at the age of five Vanessa had to undergo a liver transplant.
- (3) Commends Vanessa Smith on her outstanding courage in the face of these personal adversities and in being awarded the Child of Courage Medal at the 2011 Pride of Australia Awards ceremony.
- (4) Commends Vanessa and her mother for continuing to visit The Children's Hospital, Westmead to speak with families affected by meningococcal disease.

CHILD OF COURAGE MEDAL FINALIST ALEX SHORTLAND

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates local Tahmoor resident Alex Shortland, on his selection as a finalist for the 2011 Pride of Australia – Child of Courage Medal.
- (2) Notes the difficult circumstances of Mr Shortland's early childhood and the subsequent achievements he has made despite initial setbacks.
- (3) Congratulates Alex on his nomination, which allows his story of courage and progress to be told to Australia.

CRICKETER KASEY WRIGHT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kasey Wright of St Marys Wolves Indoor Cricket Club, on being selected in the national Indoor Cricket Women's squad.
- (2) Commends Kasey on being a positive role model for other girls and women in western Sydney especially as she is the sole female in the St Marys Wolves Men's 3s team.
- (3) Extends to Kasey and the Australian team best wishes for the Indoor Cricket World Cup being held in South Africa during October 2011.

MEN'S SHEDS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the fantastic Men's Shed initiative and commends the great work they do in both the Wollondilly region and New South Wales.
- (2) Notes the importance of Men's Sheds in the community and the support network it provides.
- (3) Commends the community spirit and charitable nature of the Wollcom Men's Shed.

DANCER ABBEY MCPHERSON

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 10 year old Abbey McPherson of Luddenham on winning the National level 5 Glenn Wood Tap Choreography competition.
- (2) Congratulates Abbey on her first place in dance school for the last two years and her high distinction in ballet with the Royal Academy of Dance.
- (3) Commends Abbey on her drive, enthusiasm, and on recently ranking 30 out of 1,000 applicants at auditions for the Sydney production of "Annie".

ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA DRAGONS RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the St George-Illawarra Dragons will play the Wests Tigers in the National Rugby League final series on 9 September 2011.
- (2) Wishes the St George-Illawarra Dragons all the best as they enter the finals.
- (3) Looks forward to the St George-Illawarra Dragons winning back-to-back titles.
- (4) Notes that St George-Illawarra Dragons are the most outstanding team in the competition.

ILLAWARRA STINGRAYS FOOTBALL TEAM

Ms NOREEN HAY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Illawarra Stingrays on their third successive Football New South Wales Women's Premier League grand final win.
- (2) Acknowledges the outstanding leadership and expertise of coach Brett Wallin, captain Michelle Carney and club president Rob McKie in taking the team to victory.
- (3) Remembers the contribution to the team's success of Ash Connor who recently passed away in a car accident.
- (4) Wishes the team all the best for next season and into the future.

NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES STATE LEAGUE FOOTBALL GRAND FINAL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Broadmeadow Magic's stellar season, culminating in winning the minor premiership and the Northern New South Wales State League Football Grand Final.
- (2) Commends the performance of South Cardiff Gunners in the grand final with the match decided by a penalty shoot out.
- (3) Congratulates South Cardiff coach, Steve Piggott and Broadmeadow Magic coach, Damien Smith, the players and the volunteers of all the teams in the Northern New South Wales League.

J. H. MILNE TROPHY PREPARED SPEECH COMPETITION

Dr GEOFF LEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the NSW Police Force prosecutors for conducting the prestigious J. H. Milne Prepared Speech Competition for 50 years.
- (2) Notes the highly competitive and professional performances of Luke Johnston, David Anderson, Gabrielle Combes, P. J. O'Brien, Andrew Kingston and Stephen Soars.
- (3) Acknowledges the competition winner Andrew Kingston with his speech "The Johnnies and the Mehmts".
- (4) Congratulates Leah Argent on winning the Trainee Prosecutor of the Year.

PROSTATE CANCER

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.
- (2) Commends men in the Hunter for raising awareness of prostate cancer, and increasing testing levels from the previous lowest in NSW to the highest.

GALSTON SCARECROW GATHERING

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Shirley Clarkson and the organisers of the Galston Scarecrow Gathering taking place on 18 September 2011 as a part of the Bushland Shire Festival to be held at Fagan Park.
- (2) Acknowledges the work done by the organising committee to promote arts and crafts in the Hornsby district.

TOUCH FOOTBALL WORLD CUP

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 11 players and one referee from Wallsend were recently selected to play for Australia at the 2011 Touch Football World Cup in Scotland.
- (2) Notes that Australia has now won its fifth World Cup title, with the Men's Open, Women's Open, Mixed Open, Men's 30s and Men's 35s teams taking out their respective titles.
- (3) Congratulates Wallsend representatives Stephanie Halpin, Kylie Hilder, Holly Smith, Amy Smith, Nathan Jones, Joshua Sparke, Jason Toby, Matthew Stanton, Darren McSpadden, Brad Squires, John Clarke and Beau Newell.

DOT COM WOMEN FOUNDER MICHELLE GRICE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes Glenmore Park mother Michelle Grice, starting her own home-based graphic and web design company Dot Com Women.
- (2) Congratulates Michelle on founding Dot Com Women to connect women in all stages of business and entrepreneurial activity.
- (3) Notes that the website enables women in business to promote their enterprises, forge strategic alliances and become critical thinkers.
- (4) Commends Michelle Grice for her leadership and inspiring other women to believe in themselves and each other.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI FESTIVAL

Dr GEOFF LEE—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Krishna Janmashtami is an important Hindu festival that celebrates the birth of Krishna, an avatar of the god Vishnu.
- (2) Conveys its best wishes to the Parramatta Hindu community, in particular followers of the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami.
- (3) Congratulates Yogi Savania and the organisers of this year's Krishna Janmashtami on their efforts in putting on the event.

COLON EXHIBITION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates Calvary Mater Hospital and Rotary Australia on funding the \$6,000 colon exhibition in Newcastle to highlight colon cancer facts and increase public awareness.

PROUILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ELLA NICOL

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ella Nicol of Prouille Primary School, Wahroonga for being cast in the lead role of the stage musical, Annie.
- (2) Wishes Ella every success in the upcoming production.
- (3) Acknowledges the support of her parents and the staff at Prouille Primary School.

HEADSTART ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY SERVICE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes the Hunter's Headstart Acquired Brain Injury Service, established 25 years ago, to help people suffering from brain injuries.
- (2) Acknowledges the Service's Acquired Perspective Photo Exhibition, created by 10 students all of whom have suffered from brain injury and have attended photography classes run by Headstart.

HUNTER ACADEMY OF SPORT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the 27 talent development squads of the Hunter Academy of Sport who were acknowledged at their annual presentation night on 6 September 2011.
- (2) Congratulates the Academy and all participants for their tremendous efforts.

WINDSOR RSL SUB-BRANCH EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY—That this House:

- (1) Notes the Windsor sub-branch of the Returned Services League will celebrate its 80th anniversary on 18 September 2011.
- (2) Notes that the sub-branch has faithfully commemorated the sacrifice of Windsor district members of Australia's armed forces.
- (3) Commends the members of the sub-branch, past and present, for their dedication.

JIM MILLS MENSWEAR AND SWIMWEAR

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that after 56 years of operating in St Marys, clothing store Jim Mills Menswear and Swimwear is closing down.
- (2) Congratulates Paul Mills, son of the original storeowner Jim Mills, for working in the store since he was four years old.
- (3) Congratulates John Smythe, the owner for the past 35 years, for expanding the business.
- (4) Extends to Mr Smythe and Mr Mills best wishes in their retirement.

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN FORUM

Dr GEOFF LEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the contribution made by the Australian-Chinese community to the growth and development of modern Australia.
- (2) Notes that the Chinese Australian Forum is a non-partisan body established in 1985 to provide the Chinese community with a voice in the Australian political process.
- (3) Congratulates President Tony Pang and the office bearers and management committee members for their contribution to building a harmonious and socially cohesive Australian society.

WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR BO SEO

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bo Seo for his selection in the Australian debating team which recently competed in the world schools debating championships in Scotland.
- (2) Congratulates Bo for his success in the competition which saw him achieve a ranking fifth in the world.

HEARTKIDS MAD HATTERS TEA PARTY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the greatest killer of young Australian children under 5 years of age is childhood heart disease.
- (2) Congratulates Stephen Snowden, a teacher at Penrith Christian School in Orchard Hills, for organising a Mad Hatters Tea Party to raise funds for HeartKids.
- (3) Thanks Mr Snowden for his community leadership for this critical children's health issue.

PARRAMATTA CITY BAND CENTENARY

Dr GEOFF LEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the award-winning Parramatta City Band for a century of outstanding service to Parramatta and New South Wales.
- (2) Notes that 2011 is the 100th anniversary of the Parramatta City Band, and that a centenary dinner was held on 20 August 2011.
- (3) Congratulates musical director Jonathan Gatt, secretary Gillian Howell, and all past and present members of the Parramatta City Band for being part of this treasured cultural institution.

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Leading Senior Constable Chayne Foster for his work in raising funds for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.
- (2) Notes that prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Australian men claiming the lives of close to 3,300 each year.
- (3) Supports the work of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and the vital role it plays in the fight against prostate cancer and towards reducing the impacts of prostate cancer.

JACK AND JILL KINDERGARTEN FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jack and Jill Kindergarten Hornsby on celebrating 50 years of quality teaching in the Hornsby area.
- (2) Thanks the dedicated and hard working teachers, directors and staff who have made Jack and Jill Kindergarten such a special part of the Hornsby community, and acknowledges the work of the teaching director Shelly Laycock and special needs teacher Helena Van Breda for their outstanding service.
- (3) Acknowledges the contribution of the parents and friends who volunteer to serve on the management committee and social committee in organising the 50th anniversary celebrations, including the family fun day.

GOOD START BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Red Cross, and the Wallsend Branch of the Red Cross, for their continued support of the Good Start Breakfast Program.
- (2) Notes that Plattsburg Public School and Shortland Public School in the Wallsend electorate participate in this program by providing breakfast to its pupils.

HUDSON FAMILY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Hudson family who are celebrating 30 years of business in Port Macquarie.
- (2) Notes that Peter Hudson has also contributed 30 years, his sons Grant and Wayne 10 years each, as surf coaches on the Mid North Coast.

CHILE COUP THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr PAUL LYNCH—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 2011 is the 38th anniversary of the coup in Chile that overthrew the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende.
- (2) Acknowledges that the coup and the resulting deaths of President Allende and thousands of other Chileans were commemorated in Fairfield on 11 September 2011.
- (3) Congratulates the members of the Salvador Allende Monument Committee for their work in organising the commemoration and maintaining the statue of President Allende.

B'NAI YACOV SCHOOL

Dr GEOFF LEE—That this House:

- (1) Notes that western Sydney is home to an active and growing Jewish community based around the Parramatta and Districts Synagogue in the Parramatta electorate.
- (2) Notes that the B'Nai Yacov School is in its second year of operation and offers an education grounded in the teachings of Judaism for Jewish families in western Sydney.
- (3) Conveys its supports to Rabbi Wernick and the Parramatta Jewish community in striving to maintain the warmest, most inviting and family friendly synagogue in Australia.

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the Mid-Autumn Festival hosted by Ovideo Media and the Chinese Students Association was held on 10 September 2011.
- (2) Notes the importance of the Mid-Autumn Festival in the Chinese calendar as one of the most important traditional Chinese holidays.
- (3) Notes that the festival symbolises the arrival of luck, joy and harvest and family time.
- (4) Congratulates and expresses best wishes to the Chinese community as it celebrates the Mid-Autumn Festival.

TRIATHLETE AARON ROYLE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Aaron Royle for being selected to compete at the U23 International Triathlon Union World Championship Series in Beijing.
- (2) Notes that Aaron finished in 45th place at the World Championship Series race in London in August 2011.

HASTINGS CHORISTERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Hastings Choristers for entertaining the community with 80 concerts in the past 21 years.
- (2) Congratulates president John Thompson and musical director Robyn Ryan for their contribution to the choir.

FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL AND GARDENING AUSTRALIA EXPO

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Fairfield High School year 11 students for their floral arrangement display at the Gardening Australia Expo.
- (2) Commends the principal and teachers for the introduction of the floristry course as part of the work skills curriculum.

AUSTRALIAN HOKKEIN HUAY KUAN ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK COURE—That this House congratulates the Australian-Hokkein Huay Kuan Association for hosting the Mid-Autumn Festival banquet and moon cake "Bo Bing" function held on 11 September 2011.

GLASSHOUSE ARTS, CONFERENCE AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the cultural benefits of the Glasshouse Arts, Conference and Entertainment Centre in Port Macquarie.
- (2) Notes that the Glasshouse was named the best cultural and heritage tourism attraction on the North Coast, as well winning an honourable mention award for best presenter at the Drovers Awards, conducted by the Australian Performing Arts Centre Association.

MATER DEI SCHOOL

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the success of the fundraising dinner held on 10 September 2011 that raised \$250,000 for the Mater Dei special school.
- (2) Acknowledges the work done by the school to assist children from Wollondilly, Camden and Campbelltown.
- (3) Thanks the organising committee for its dedication and hard work in planning the dinner.

R U OK? DAY AND LORI DWYER

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lori Dwyer for her courageous efforts in telling her story of how suicide in her family inspired her to help others.
- (2) Congratulates Lori Dwyer for blogging her story which won the Best Australian Blogs Competition 2011 in the personal/lifestyle category.

- (3) Congratulates Lori Dwyer for promoting R U OK Day.
- (4) Encourages the community to participate in R U OK Day.

KANAHOOKA HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the staff and students at Kanahooka High School on the opening of a new language centre, funded as part of the Building the Education Revolution initiative.
- (2) Acknowledges that the BER policy locates schools that require special support due to low socio-economic status and provides them with financial support.
- (3) Notes that this centre provides an added opportunity to support students interested in studying a language.
- (4) Notes the partnership between the school and the University of Wollongong provides students studying languages into year 12 with favoured status for tertiary language courses.

WATER AND IRRIGATION STRATEGY ENHANCEMENT THROUGH REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GROUP

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledge the importance of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River Catchment to all of Sydney.
- (2) Recognises the work undertaken by the Water and Irrigation Strategy Enhancement Through Regional Partnership Group chaired by a former Speaker of the House, the Hon Kevin Rozzoli, AM, to assist stakeholders develop better strategies for water usage and quality.
- (3) Notes the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding by the mayors of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Liverpool and Penrith, the University of Western Sydney and the WISER Group to enhance the co-ordination of programs and research.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS ORGANISATION

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates "Dress for Success" on officially opening its show room in Marrickville on 31 August 2011.
- (2) Notes the great work of "Dress for Success" in assisting disadvantaged women with clothes and career advice so they can gain employment.
- (3) Thanks "Dress for Success" founder and chair Megan Etheridge, the board and their volunteers for their outstanding work in supporting women in New South Wales.

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLBOYS RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM MEMBER SAMISONI LANGI

Mrs BARBARA PERRY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Samisoni Langi on his selection in the Australian Schoolboys Rugby League team.
- (2) Notes Samisoni's achievement in becoming Vice Captain of Trinity Catholic College, Auburn.
- (3) Notes that Samisoni is the first student of Tongan heritage to be selected to a senior leadership role at the school.

APRON STRINGS BOOK LAUNCH

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the success of the function launching the book 'Apron Strings' held at the Oaks Heritage Centre and Museum on 11 September 2011.
- (2) Commends the work done by Jenny Wood and the Oaks Heritage Centre and Museum.
- (3) Congratulates Jenny and the entire team on the publication of the book.

ROTARY DUCK RACE

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Rotary Club of Kurrajong North Richmond for its organisation of the annual Rotary Duck Race at the Penrith Whitewater Stadium on 10 September 2011.
- (2) Notes that 3000 rubber ducks were sold, raising over \$15,000 to support the work of local schools, sports clubs and other community based organisations.

- (3) Commends the Rotary Club for allocating some of the funds raised to build new class rooms and educational facilities at the Umoja Centre in Tanzania for disadvantaged students.
- (4) Thanks the Penrith Whitewater Stadium and other businesses who donated money and prizes to the event.

MOUNT COLAH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Mt Colah Neighbourhood Watch Association on celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.
- (2) Notes the positive impacts that Neighbourhood Watch groups have had in helping reduce local crime and improve the safety and wellbeing of the local community.
- (3) Thanks the hundreds of volunteers, including Mick Gallagher, who have been instrumental in the continued operation of the neighbourhood watch and contribution to the Mt Colah community.

TAHMOOR COMMUNITY GARDEN DAY

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates George Kruger for organising the Tahmoor Community Garden Day on 17 September 2011.
- (2) Notes the Tahmoor Community Garden is a great community program enabling people to grow flowers, plants and food.
- (3) Encourages everyone to attend the Garden Day.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S BOXING TOURNAMENT COMPETITOR KAYE SCOTT

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kaye Scott for her efforts and achievements, representing Australia at the third International Women's Boxing Tournament held in the Ukraine during September 2011.
- (2) Notes the contribution of both the local community and in particular the Hornsby Police Citizens Youth Club in supporting the talents of members of the community.

WORK CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Ms ANNA WATSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Disability Trust on its transition to work program, 'Work Connections', based at Oak Flats, which provides local residents who have a disability with assistance into employment.
- (2) Acknowledges that Work Connections is a two year program that works primarily with school leavers to get them ready for employment.
- (3) Notes that each person's plan is based on their individual interest, skills and experiences to build a pathway to employment.

BANKSTOWN CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the 13th annual Children's Festival will be held on 24 September 2011 at the Bankstown City Paceway.
- (2) Congratulates the President of the Children's Festival Organisation Incorporated for his dedication to the thousands of children and their families who have enjoyed the activities of the festival for more than a decade.
- (3) Notes the aim of the Children's Festival is to develop an Australian society based on shared knowledge and a common understanding.
- (4) Notes the work of the New South Wales Chapter of the Vietnamese Community in Australia and numerous other organisations and individuals for their support of the festival.

BEROWRA WALLABIES JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Berowra Wallabies Junior Rugby League Club for its effort this season in claiming four grand final victories.
- (2) Congratulates the efforts of Club President Wayne Dickerson, Secretary Lisa Jeffries, all of the coaches, managers and committee members, parents and volunteers in supporting their community sporting club.
- (3) Notes the benefits that community sporting clubs have in bringing together the local community, in encouraging active and healthy lifestyles and in developing and fostering the talents of these players.

WORLD DISABLED WATER SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR BELINDA SIDMAN

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Belinda Sidman in winning a bronze medal at the World Disabled Water Ski Championships held recently in the United States of America.
- (2) Congratulates Mrs Sidman for equalling the Australian record for tricks and for setting a new Australian record for slalom.
- (3) Congratulates Mrs Sidman in being accepted into a nursing course with Sydney South West Area Health Service.
- (4) Acknowledges that despite her setback in losing her right leg when she was 16, Mrs Sidman is an inspiration to the Wollondilly community.

RABOBANK FARM INDUSTRY LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD FINALIST LYNNE STRONG

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lynne Strong of Jamberoo on becoming one of two finalists in the Rabobank Farm Industry Leader of the Year Award.
- (2) Notes that Lynne is a sixth generation farmer of Clover Hill Dairies, an industry leader providing milk to more than 50,000 Australians.

ST MARYS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that St Marys Rugby League Club, formed in 1908, is the oldest club in the Penrith District.
- (2) Congratulates the teams, coaches and managers of the 2011 season for having a record breaking season and winning 19 grand finals in the junior and senior rugby league competitions.

SCOUTING MOVEMENT

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Oscar Sheppard and Robert Slater on their recent appointment by The Queen, as Queen's Scouts.
- (2) Recognises the contribution made by scouts and the scouting movement to the Australian community for more than 100 years.
- (3) Commends the 2nd Baulkham Hills Scout Group for its development of youth leadership in the Hills Shire.

BASKETBALLER KATE BELLAMY

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kate Bellamy of Cambewarra on being selected into the All Australian Schools' Shadow Basketball Team.
- (2) Notes that Kate captained the NSW All Schools Basketball Team to victory in the gold medal game against Victoria earlier this year.
- (3) Extends our best wishes for Kate's continued success when the Australian Schools side travels to America later in 2011.

VOLUNTEER CLAIRE ENGLISH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the return of Claire English of St Marys, who recently arrived back from Puka Urku in Ecuador, where she was part of Volunteer Eco Students Abroad program.
- (2) Encourages Claire to complete her studies in human rights.
- (3) Commends the University of Western Sydney on its donation to help Claire to travel to Ecuador as part of the volunteer program.
- (4) Commends Claire on her inspirational journey and for being a positive role model to other young men and women in western Sydney.

TRIBUTE TO DR JIM TAGGART, OAM

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dr Jim Taggart, OAM, on his recent election to the board of the Asia Pacific Financial Services Association.
- (2) Commends Dr Taggart's contribution to various charities in the Hills District, including the Salvation Army, St. Michael's Parish and the Hills Community Engagement Organisation.
- (3) Acknowledges Dr Taggart's passion for the Hills community as an advocate for youth development and as a promoter of family causes.

FOOTBALLER MICHAEL PELDA

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Michael Pelda of Bomaderry on being awarded the joint winner of Ray Tunbridge Medal for Best and Fairest in the South Coast Australian Football League.
- (2) Notes that Michael has been a standout performer for the Nowra Blues all season and extends best wishes to Michael and his family.

ST CLAIR STRIKERS SOCCER CLUB AND GRANT AND TRISH CULLEN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Grant and Trish Cullen of the St Clair Strikers Soccer Club for their hard work in coaching, managing and running the canteen for the club.
- (2) Acknowledges the long association of the Cullen family with the St Clair Strikers Soccer Club, which was founded by Ross Cullen in 1981.
- (3) Congratulate Grant and Trish on their nomination in the Service to Sport category in the Mt Druitt St Marys Standard's Junior Sports Awards.

CONSTITUTION HILL RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Constitution Hill Retirement Village for its commitment to improving the lifestyles of seniors and retirees.
- (2) Congratulates the committee and management for its successful Annual Spring Fair held on 10 September 2011.
- (3) Applauds the Village for the variety of active pastimes made available to residents.

JEWELLERY DESIGNER MATTHEW ELY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Matthew Ely on winning the International Showcase Jewellers Design Awards in the creative division and the People's Choice Award.
- (2) Congratulates Matthew's father, Robert Ely, on his support and encouragement.

SMALL BUSINESS SEPTEMBER

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 2011 is the eleventh year of Small Business September.
- (2) Acknowledges the efforts of the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce, Penrith Business Alliance, Glenbrook and Brooklands Chamber of Commerce, the Kingswood Traders and Citizens Association and the Penrith Business Enterprise Centre in the ongoing advocacy and commitment to the development of small businesses in the Penrith electorate.

ROTARY PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITOR CHRISTIE ARTHUR

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Christie Arthur of Gerringong on her recent success in the Rotary District 9710 public speaking competition.
- (2) Extends best wishes to Christie in Canberra for the finals competition to be held at the District Conference in October 2011.

FOOTBALLER CARLIN SIMON

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Carlin Simon of Kiama Downs on his recent selection into the Australian Indigenous under 16s rugby union team.
- (2) Extends best wishes to Carlin and the team when they travel to New Zealand on 18 September 2011 to compete in matches to be held before the National under 16s Championships in Sydney.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills)**

The SPEAKER: Order! I advise the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 105 (3), General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 1 either not having commenced or not having been completed will lapse tomorrow.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY**Pacific Highway Upgrade**

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [3.16 p.m.]: The motion that I seek to be accorded priority is as follows:

That this House:

- (1) notes that the Prime Minister promised on 21 October 2010 that "the government is committed to duplicating the Pacific Highway by 2016";
- (2) notes that the Pacific Highway upgrade and other key upgrade projects on the National Land Transport Network in New South Wales have generally been funded at least 80 per cent by the Federal Government;
- (3) notes that the Federal Government's bid to cut its funding of the Pacific Highway upgrade by around \$2.3 billion makes the 2016 completion date unachievable; and
- (4) calls on the Opposition to join the call in demanding the Federal Government meet its commitment to fund 80 per cent of the Pacific Highway upgrade.

No member of this House could argue that the upgrade of the Pacific Highway is a matter of urgency and that the Federal Labor Government has stated it will assist with the funding of the upgrade so that the works will be completed by 2016. The Pacific Highway is the most notorious highway in New South Wales. Over the years the Pacific Highway has been the scene of more deaths than any other highway in Australia. Over the past four or five years Pacific Highway works have been funded 80-20 by the Federal and New South Wales Government. All we are asking is that the Federal Labor Government continue that funding arrangement. All we are asking is that members on the other side of the Chamber join members on this side and the rest of New South Wales in calling on the Federal Government to fund the Pacific Highway 80:20, as it has done in the past.

Of course, the Federal Government collects all the substantial taxes: income tax, GST, fuel excise, mining taxes and the flood tax, and from 1 July this year the carbon tax. The Pacific Highway is a Federal highway; it is part of the national network. The Federal Labor Government should honour the Federal commitment to fund 80 per cent of the cost of upgrading the Pacific Highway—the arrangement that existed in the term of the previous State Labor Government in New South Wales. I hear Opposition members saying, "Why don't you fund it? You are in government now." Why should the people of New South Wales go without in other areas when the Federal Government can quite easily fund this road 80:20, as it has always done?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease their interjections.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: What projects in New South Wales will not be proceeded with? Will it be the Camden Valley Way duplication, the Erskine Park link road, Narellan Road and all those other parts of western Sydney?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will not start cheering in the Chamber.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: What about the Central Coast? Will the interchange and Wyong Road upgrade not be proceeded with? [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who wish to have private conversations should do outside the Chamber. I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times.

Police Resources

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.20 p.m.]: My motion asks the House to call on the O'Farrell Government to support our State's police by increasing officer numbers, by guaranteeing a fair and decent death and disability scheme, by reversing its decision to impose a cap on police wages and by not removing the role of the Industrial Relations Commission in resolving pay disputes. This

motion deserves priority because a decent society and a decent government always get behind their police. For 150 years the NSW Police Force has kept the peace and kept us safe and it has earned the right to a bit of respect from this Government. Unfortunately, the O'Farrell Government is giving our police nothing.

Yesterday I spoke at the Police Association conference, an issue about which the Premier made great play. Our police officers have not forgotten what the O'Farrell Government did to their death and disability scheme. They have not been fooled into believing that their wages have not been capped by this Government at 2.5 per cent in the future like the rest of the public sector. The Premier continues to purport that he supports police officers in New South Wales but I state clearly that they are not buying it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Terrigal will resume his seat.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Police officers in this State do not believe that the O'Farrell Government supports them. I know that from talking to police who have seen what this Government has done.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: This Government has put them through the wringer. Police numbers are down by 302 in Sydney and we have had the highest spike in gun crime in more than a decade. Police officers in this State know that the Government does not support them because it intends to cap their wages. They know that this Government does not support them because it has gone before the Industrial Relations Commission and said that police do not deserve a pay increase as they have done nothing to drive down crime in New South Wales. That is not a government that supports police; that is a government that takes police for granted. The Government wants to cap their wages, it wants to cut them out of the Industrial Relations Commission in the future and it wants to ensure that their wages are capped at 2.5 per cent.

The greatest demonstration that the O'Farrell Government has no respect for police officers in this State was when Premier O'Farrell did not have the courage yesterday—he talks a lot about the courage of leadership—to front up to the Police Association conference. He did not front up to the conference for two reasons: first, because he took an axe to the death and disability scheme that led to 5,000 uniformed police officers demonstrating outside Parliament House, which they have not forgotten; and, second, because he did not have the courage to explain why their wages would be capped at 2.5 per cent. [*Time expired.*]

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 66

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

Noes, 23

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE**Motion Accorded Priority**

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [3.30 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that the Prime Minister promised on 21 October 2010 that "the government is committed to duplicating the Pacific Highway by 2016";
- (2) notes that the Pacific Highway upgrade and other key upgrade projects on the National Land Transport Network in New South Wales have generally been funded at least 80 per cent by the Federal Government;
- (3) notes that the Federal Government's bid to cut its funding of the Pacific Highway upgrade by around \$2.3 billion makes the 2016 completion date unachievable; and
- (4) calls on the Opposition to join the call in demanding the Federal Government meet its commitment to fund 80 per cent of the Pacific Highway upgrade.

The completion of the Pacific Highway upgrade is probably the most important roadwork project in Australia. Over the years the Pacific Highway has become notorious for deaths. When I was a police constable and a detective, and before the upgrade was completed between Bulahdelah and Taree, there were about 28 deaths a year. For every death there also were about six accidents that caused serious injuries. Since that section has been upgraded the deaths have decreased to about one or two a year. Before the upgrade that section of the highway was akin to a killing field in the eyes of the Police Force, the State Emergency Service, the Volunteer Rescue Squad and the Rural Fire Service.

Emergency service personnel were called out night after night to deal with death and mayhem and all sorts of things that people should never have to see. That killing field has now been moved north. It is imperative that the Northern Road upgrade be completed. When members opposite were in government there was an 80:20 split in funding. The Government now asks Opposition members to call on the Federal Labor Government to commit to the same funding arrangement. In March 2009 Anthony Albanese wrote a letter to the Minister for Roads, Michael Daley, regarding the funding split, which at the time was 83 per cent Federal and 17 per cent State. Anthony Albanese said:

I am pleased NSW has taken the decision to sign up to the agreement and I look forward to deliver (sic) this important infrastructure program in partnership with NSW.

In December 2009 David Campbell, the then Minister for Transport, in a letter to Anthony Albanese, had this to say about the delivery of the Pacific Highway upgrade:

I will 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 pre-construction for Frederickton to Eungai.

Let us look at the funding over the years. On 11 November 2008 the New South Wales mini-budget announced that the New South Wales Pacific Highway contribution for the period 2009-10 to 2013-14 would be reduced from \$800 million to \$500 million. That was done by those on the other side which demonstrates their commitment to the Pacific Highway. In February and March 2009 the National Partnership Agreement signed by Minister Albanese confirmed a funding percentage of 83 per cent Federal and 17 per cent State. In March

2009 an additional \$48 million commitment was announced by the Federal Government, which again was an 83:17 funding split. In May 2009 there was a Federal budget commitment of \$618 million from the Building Australia Fund for the Kempsey bypass, which was an 86:14 funding split.

In September 2010 there also was an 86:14 funding split. Finally, in May and September 2011 the Federal and State budgets committed to an additional \$720 million and \$468 million respectively during the Nation Building 1 period which was an 80:20 funding arrangement. It is wrong for anyone to argue that while in opposition The Nationals or Liberals said that there should be a 50:50 funding split. That argument is false and has absolutely no substance. That argument says that, notwithstanding previous arrangements, because something has been said we should let the killing fields remain and not do anything to address the problems. That is wrong. New South Wales needs Federal Government assistance. We cannot upgrade the Pacific Highway on our own. I implore members of the Labor Party to speak to their Federal Labor colleagues.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [3.35 p.m.]: One issue and one issue alone must be considered today, that is, what this Government will do to honour its commitment to complete the Pacific Highway upgrade by 2016. The Leader of The Nationals said:

Only the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are committed to completing the upgrade of the Pacific Highway by 2016.

Those are not my words and nor are they the words of the Prime Minister; those are the words of the Leader of The Nationals in which he made a cast-iron commitment. Mr Stoner did not say that only the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are committed to completing the upgrade of the Pacific Highway by 2016 on the basis of an 83:17 or an 80:20 funding split. He also said:

Both Barry O'Farrell and I are absolutely committed to getting the job done on the Pacific Highway.

It seems that they are not really committed or concerned. They cry crocodile tears every time they talk about the Pacific Highway. They stand in this House and say that it is a bad road and that we must get it fixed. The Liberals and Nationals are in government. If they want the road fixed it is quite simple. There is \$3.56 billion on the table today and all the Government has to do is stand up to the promise it made while in opposition, make some hard decisions and fund the road as it said it would. In regard to the talk of a 50:50 funding split and matching funding, even the current roads Minister made it clear in the past that matching funding was the appropriate way to go. When former Treasurer Roozendaal was talking about this issue, Minister Gay said:

I would hope this time he would have been a statesman and say, "Yes I will match that money and save the lives of people in NSW that have to use this highway."

The roads Minister is on record as saying that matching funding is appropriate. But this is not a Labor creation; it is a policy introduced by former Liberal Prime Minister John Howard. It was his program. The AusLink white paper released in June 2004 set the target of 2016 for construction of the highway and the manner in which it would be funded. "The Howard Government's objective is to duplicate the Pacific Highway by 2016 in partnership with the New South Wales Government. The New South Wales Government will be expected to at least match this level of funding." That is what the Liberal Prime Minister, the Liberals' and Nationals' mate, offered as a funding source for this program. But all this must be put into context.

The Government talks about 80:20 funding. When John Howard was the Prime Minister of Australia between 1996 and 2007—those dark years that we do not like to think about anymore—he contributed \$1.3 billion to the Pacific Highway upgrade. What a great achievement that was! In the same period the New South Wales Labor Government delivered \$2.5 billion. My mathematics may not be so good, but that is not 80:20 as between the Federal and State governments. Rather, it is two-thirds from the State and one-third from the Federal Government. When Government members talk about an 80:20 funding split, they are not talking about what actually happened.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order.

Mr Ryan Park: There are new standing orders.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira should read the new standing orders. Before I hear the point of order, I will clarify the standing orders. A point of order may be taken during debate on the motion, but not during debate on consideration of which motion is to be accorded priority. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Andrew Fraser: My point of order relates to relevance. I point out that the Federal Treasury allocated no new money in yesterday's budget.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I cite the Leader of The Nationals, Mr Andrew Stoner, in his media release dated 10 October 2007. He stated:

The State Labor Government has primary responsibility for the Pacific Highway and for too long it has lagged on converting the highway to dual carriageway.

If the State Government has primary responsibility for funding the Pacific Highway, why is the Deputy Premier now calling for an 80:20 funding share from the Federal Government? He went on to state:

The State Labor Government must join with the Federal Government and match the \$2.4 billion commitment for the vital upgrade.

If he is calling on the State Government to match funding of the Federal Government, surely he should honour his commitment and deliver on his promise. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [3.40 p.m.]: It saddens me that again I must speak in this House on the Pacific Highway upgrade, in particular the so-called historic funding of \$3.56 billion in last night's Federal budget. I say "historic" because that is what the member for Lyne, Robert Oakeshott, claimed in his media release relating to the budget. I am sorry, but somehow I think I have missed Mr Oakeshott's point. This is a sad day for the people of New South Wales and for the people on the mid North Coast, but it is a particularly sad day for the people all the way up the coast and for parents such as me.

Like thousands of parents, I have a daughter who travels along the notorious Pacific Highway to attend university. For some parents that means their children travel to Lismore or Armidale, but in my case my daughter travels to Queensland. I ask all members of the House who are parents to consider what it is like to wait for the phone call that confirms your child has arrived home safely or to imagine getting that dreaded call or that knock on the door to be told that yet another tragic accident has occurred on this dreaded Pacific Highway and this time it is actually about your family. The budget papers state:

The Government will make provision in the Nation Building Program of an additional \$2.6 billion over the period 2013-14 to 2016-17 as funding available to enable further major infrastructure projects.

That funding could be allocated towards the Pacific Highway duplication if the New South Wales Government requests further additional funding on a 50:50 shared basis. The interesting words in the budget are "could be"—not will be, but could be. It is all smoke and mirrors from a Federal Government that is desperate to do anything to balance its budget, even if that means sacrificing more young lives on the Pacific Highway. The Pacific Highway could be completed by 2016 if the Federal Government honours the funding commitment it brokered with the former Labor State Government. Prior to the 2011 State election, the Federal Labor Government was happy to fund 80 per cent and the State Government would fund 20 per cent.

As the Premier stated earlier in the House today, that memorandum was signed, sealed and awaiting delivery. The member for Myall Lakes already has pointed out the other percentages that were agreed to. But no, that has not been forthcoming from the Federal Government. What we see is yet another backflip. Shamefully, the Federal member for Lyne, who already has walked away from his community on other issues and sided with the Federal Labor Government, is doing that yet again. The Prime Minister, her Treasurer and the ringmaster, Mr Oakeshott, are trying to con the community with claims that the Liberals and Nationals somehow have walked away from their responsibilities, but we are committed to getting the job done. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [3.43 p.m.]: Here we are again, talking about the Pacific Highway and an election commitment by The Nationals—one that they are not going to fulfil. Previously in this House I have spoken about promises and commitments made and the deception and deceit that go on, and then we come into this House and pass legislation that is anything but what was taken to the public of New South Wales at the last election. I will commence my speech by offering a quote from the Liberals-Nationals campaign:

Only the ... Liberals and Nationals are committed to completing the upgrade of the Pacific Highway by 2016 ...

If the Liberals and Nationals were being honest and transparent with the community, one would think that promise would be taken to the wider constituency in this type of statement, "The Liberals and Nationals are committed to the campaign, if they get the funding from the Federal Government", or, "if the Federal Labor Government supports us", or, "if the Federal Government at the time supports us." But they did not say that. They said:

Only the ... Liberals and Nationals are committed to completing the upgrade of the Pacific Highway by 2016 ...

I wonder what the people on the North Coast think about the ongoing debate in this House and attempts to push, poke, prod and move the blame around so that it does not land with the State Government? My answer to that question is that they are probably sick of it. They are probably sick of Liberals and Nationals members whingeing, moaning, groaning and trying to push the blame somewhere else. At the March 2011 State election it was the Liberals and Nationals who went to the election stating:

Only the ... Liberals and Nationals are committed to completing the upgrade of the Pacific Highway by 2016 ...

The Liberals and Nationals of New South Wales made that promise and commitment. There was no paraphrasing "if something else happens" and no context about reliance upon a split funding of 80:20, 50:50, 70:30 or 90:10, or whatever number one wants to choose. It was a categorical commitment to the completion of the upgrade by the Liberals and Nationals. Let me delve a little into the historical data that has been bandied about the House in relation to funding of the Pacific Highway upgrade.

Let us not forget something that occurred in 2009 called the global financial crisis. As a result of that global financial crisis, a significant number of projects were given urgent funding or funding was brought forward. The Hunter Expressway is a classic example. It involved a \$1.7 billion project for which \$1.4 billion was made available up-front for no other reason than that the global financial crisis had occurred and we needed shovel-ready projects, projects that were ready to go. That has certainly distorted the figures. Let me return to the fact that at the last State election the members opposite, who are now members of the Government and who are in control of the Treasury books, made a promise and a commitment from which they are back-peddalling and walking away, yet they sit on the Government side of the House and hypocritically throw mud. [*Time expired.*]

[*Interruption*]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Lakemba has had his opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr Robert Furolo: The member for Coffs Harbour interrupted me.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I place the member for Lakemba on three calls to order.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [3.46 p.m.], in reply: The Federal budget, which was delivered last night, was a bitter piece of news for the people of New South Wales. They are very disappointed. That \$2.3 billion not delivered by the Federal Government means a \$2.3 billion hole in the Pacific Highway upgrade budget. That means the people of New South Wales will have to come up with the money. Projects such as the Camden Valley Way duplication, the Erskine Park link road and the Narellan Road upgrade will have to be postponed. So many infrastructure projects will have to be postponed as a result of that budget. One would think that Opposition members would be crying out to try to help the people of New South Wales and the people of western Sydney, but they have wiped western Sydney. Labor is no longer the party that represents western Sydney and the workers, unlike the Liberal Party and The Nationals. We are fighting for the people of New South Wales. The member for Lamborghini is obviously playing politics because he raised the issue of the Howard Government agreement.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: Members are entitled to be referred to by their correct title, not as the member for Lamborghini.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Myall Lakes will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The memorandum of understanding relating to the Howard agreement was pre-2009. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the New South Wales Government and the

Federal Government in 2009. The 2009 agreement has precedence over any agreement prior to that date. Anyone who knows anything about the law or contracts would know that is the case. The member conveniently or mischievously forgot that. He does not let the truth get in the way of an argument. The member did not address the memorandum of understanding; he never once spoke about it or explained it. He knows it exists and what it means. He is condemned by his silence, as is the Labor Opposition.

I will not even talk about the contribution by the member for Cessnock. The New South Wales Government urgently needs the Federal Government to assist us to deliver the Pacific Highway upgrade so that we can deliver on other services in western Sydney, on the Central Coast and down in the Illawarra. I wonder what the member for Keira and the member for Wollongong think about the deferment of infrastructure projects in their areas because of the lack of funding from the Federal Labor Government. We have committed to upgrading the Pacific Highway. We can get it done by 2016 if the Federal Government abides by its promises. We need the money and the Federal Government is the collector of taxes. The Labor members opposite know that. I ask the House to support the motion.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 67

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

Noes, 19

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

SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (BOARD MEMBERS) BILL 2012

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

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT (ADJUSTMENT OF AREAS) BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Robyn Parker, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [3.59 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill amends the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to achieve a number of positive outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Each outcome balances protection of our State's environment with the need to support essential public infrastructure development, improve public safety and support economic growth. The first proposal will give outstanding conservation value to the Berowra Valley—a protection that valley deserves. The bill will upgrade the protection of approximately 3,876 hectares of land currently included in the Berowra Valley Regional Park and create the O'Farrell Government's second national park in its second year of office, the Berowra Valley National Park, which may also have the joint name of a locally identified Aboriginal name. The second proposal will enable urgent highway upgrades by revoking around 38 hectares of land from reservation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. This will make it possible for essential safety upgrades to occur on the Pacific Highway and the Princes Highway. The O'Farrell Government is getting on with the business of building the infrastructure we need.

We will make sure that we do not create more roadblocks—a bad choice of words, I know—to important road infrastructure in contrast to what we heard last night when the Federal Government reneged on a 2009 funding commitment of 80 per cent to the Pacific Highway and no funds for the Princes Highway. The previous 80 per cent commitment has changed with the Federal Government dudding us by taking \$2.3 billion from funding for the Pacific Highway and telling us to front up with the money first and then it will fund a meagre amount of money. Of course, that is no surprise to this side of the House because we do not believe the Federal Government; it has been caught lying too many times. The revocation of land proposed in this bill is sensible as it will ensure that we can build the Pacific and Princes highways.

The third proposal in the bill will correct a boundary error when the previous Government mistakenly included a quarry in Bogandyera Nature Reserve in 2001. To fix this mistake, this bill will excise about seven hectares from the park so that the quarry can again be used by Tumbarumba Shire Council as a source of local road repair materials. The council told me that it was important for it to have access to that quarry, which was included in the nature reserve in error by the last Government. We are rectifying that error. The final proposal contained in this bill is about sensible changes so that infrastructure can proceed. I shall address each aspect in more detail. This bill recognises the outstanding conservation values contained within the existing Berowra Valley Regional Park and the desire by many in the community to ensure these values are afforded the highest level of protection.

The local member, Matt Kean, has been in my office advocating on behalf of his residents to protect the valuable biodiversity and conservation of wonderful species in the Berowra Valley Regional Park by having it classified a national park to ensure it has the highest level of protection. The Berowra Valley Regional Park is around 20 kilometres north-west of the Sydney central business district and covers 3,884 hectares. The park was managed by Hornsby council before being reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act in 1998. Since then, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the council have worked collaboratively to manage the park and provide high-quality facilities for the community. This first occurred through the Berowra Valley Trust and more recently through shared management arrangements. A plan of management will outline how we will manage this park into the future while taking into account Aboriginal cultural heritage as well as the biodiversity and diversity of access that this Government offers with national parks.

Diversity of access provides opportunities for people to experience national parks by opening them to more visitation while making sure that we care for the environment through managing pests, weeds and bushfires. Certainly, this is critically important on the edges of Sydney. People flock to Dharawal National Park on weekends because it is important to have on the city fringes a national park with diversity of access, whether that is a small area for mountain biking, shared pathways for walking and biking, disability access, or lookouts and picnic areas for people to enjoy and where Aboriginal cultural heritage is maintained. Of course, with Dharawal National Park we will make sure that the largest koala habitat right on the edge of Sydney is preserved and protected.

This important park in the Hornsby area certainly must be managed now and into the future. I thank Hornsby council for its support, efforts and joint management of this special area. The Berowra Valley Regional Park contains over 500 flora species, including two endangered ecological communities and at least 10 threatened flora species, some of which are only found in this location. It is quite amazing to know that 10 species are found only in this area. Therefore, protecting that diversity is important. The rich diversity of high-quality habitats in the park support many native animal species. Over 230 vertebrate fauna species have been recorded, including 12 threatened species such as the spotted quoll, giant burrowing frog and powerful owl. In addition, the regional park has important Aboriginal and historic heritage values. The park contains 24 known sites of Aboriginal heritage, with the majority located in valleys, caves and open rock platforms, with examples of grinding grooves, hand stencils and middens.

Public access in the regional park has been promoted and well managed for many years. Investment in camping facilities, bike paths and picnic areas has made it a popular visitor destination. Why are we making part of this park a national park and not retaining it as a regional park? A regional park protects modified land suitable for broader public recreation and enjoyment. Clearly, the level of protection offered by a regional park is not enough to protect the special conservation and community values of this area. Therefore, this bill will give the land and its unique values a more appropriate level of environmental and cultural protection.

The bill changes the category of reserve from regional park to national park by revoking 3,876 hectares from the Berowra Valley Regional Park to create the new national park. The national park category provides a level of protection that the biodiversity and cultural heritage values of the land deserves. The Government also recognises the need to maintain and provide for existing recreational activities that were already occurring when the regional park was created in 1998 and that have continued. This Government is not about locking up parks so people cannot enjoy them, it is about compromise. People like to walk their dogs in parks, but they cannot do so in a national park. However, the Government recognises that is a valid and important recreational activity. The Government is not about locking gates so that people lose those opportunities, it is about working out compromises.

The Government recognises the need to provide areas for recreational activities that were occurring when the regional park was created in 1998. One of those activities is dog walking. I spend a lot of my time dealing with decisions of past governments to create national parks without taking into account the diversity of activities that took place on that land. Previous Labor governments had a tendency to lock a gate and stop recreational activities, such as fishing. When this Government creates a new national park it is done in collaboration with the community and with an understanding of their recreational needs. A portion of the land will remain a regional park, providing dog-walking and picnic areas.

The regional park will have an eight-hectare leashed dog walking area with specific trails. The establishment of the Berowra Valley National Park will be a win for both the environment and the local community with better recognition and protection for the natural and cultural heritage, and continued provision for recreational activities, including dog walking. I commend the member for Hornsby for his advocacy on this matter. I acknowledge the previous member for Hornsby, Judy Hopwood, and her advocacy on behalf of her community. It is a community request that this Government is listening to and I am delighted to be the Minister able to introduce this bill. I am sure it will achieve the support it deserves.

The second tranche of amendments in this bill involves the excision of approximately 38 hectares of land from reservation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to enable essential public highway upgrade projects to proceed. Around half of this land, about 20 hectares, is necessary to deliver on the Government's commitment to improve road safety, reduce congestion and enhance freight efficiency on the Pacific Highway. The Opposition has no basis for a scare campaign. It is standard practice, a sensible change and what is needed to ensure that we deliver the upgrade of the Pacific Highway, despite the Federal Government. Some 17 hectares

will be excised from the Broadwater National Park, 1.5-hectares from Yaegl Nature Reserve and 1.2 hectares from the Cooperabung Creek Nature Reserve. All of the affected land adjoins the existing alignment of the Pacific Highway. It is not as though this land excision is chopping through the middle of a national park.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Bandjalang people as the traditional custodians of the land that encompasses Broadwater National Park. The Government is negotiating an indigenous land use agreement with the Bandjalang people in relation to Broadwater National Park. The National Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to work with the Bandjalang people on park management and on any affect the excision will have on the national park. Upgrading the Pacific Highway is one of the Government's top priorities. The number of deaths and injuries that have occurred on that road over many years make the need for this upgrade abundantly clear. This Government is determined to accelerate work to fix the Pacific Highway once and for all because every member knows lives depend on it. Last year the Government committed an additional \$468 million to the project, more than making up for the \$300 million cut by the previous Labor Government.

The Government also recognises that the Pacific Highway is not the only road requiring substantial investment and upgrade. Previous coronial inquiries have highlighted the need for action along the Pacific Highway. The members for Kiama, Shellharbour and the South Coast have been actively campaigning for many years for a safety upgrade of the Princes Highway. Other members also support that campaign. This bill will also support that outcome. It will excise approximately 18 hectares of land from Kooraban National Park adjoining the Princes Highway at Dignams Creek, 20 kilometres south of Narooma. The works are necessary to address public safety risks along that stretch of the road, which is steep and winding and has a history of fatal collisions.

The Government is moving to fix the problems as a result of years of neglect, but it has not forgotten the need to take account of the environmental and community value of these lands. That is an important part of this project. Whenever the Government excises land from a national park for highway upgrades, compensation will be in the form of protection of other lands of at least equivalent conservation value to ensure that there is no net loss in values across the national park system. The bill will provide that the lands will not be transferred for the purposes of the highway projects until I, as Minister, am satisfied that appropriate compensation has been received. This is similar to the approach used in previous legislation involving the excision of land from national parks for essential public infrastructure projects.

It is an important provision because it locks in the Government's commitment to deliver road safety and environmental improvements. It means that planning for the Pacific Highway and Princes Highway upgrades can commence with a high level of certainty and avoid unnecessary project delays. The final two proposals in this bill involve the excision of land from Bogandyera Nature Reserve located approximately 10 kilometres south of Tumbarumba. The reserve has an area of around 8,700 hectares and it was established in 2001. At the time of gazettal a gravel quarry situated on Crown land was mistakenly included inside the southern boundary of the nature reserve. Tumbarumba Shire Council had previously accessed the quarry for materials to be used in local road repairs.

To be clear, it was a quarry and was accidentally, in the term of the previous Government, placed in the national park. This bill applies common sense and removes the quarry from the national park to allow the Tumbarumba Shire Council access to that quarry. Pristine national park is not being turned into a quarry. It was a quarry. The quarry is probably covered in vegetation, but it will be returned to its former use as a quarry. This would not have been necessary if it had not been mistakenly included within the boundaries of the nature reserve in the first place. This is a sensible proposal. The bill simply corrects the mistake of the previous Government: Something I am always happy to do and I am sure the Opposition will support.

The land in question is around seven hectares in size, has been highly modified as a quarry, is degraded and has no conservation value. I am pleased to advise that the bill provides for these lands to be removed from the nature reserve to enable Tumbarumba Shire Council to continue to use the quarry. As this was a simple error in the establishment of the nature reserve there is no need for compensation. This land has no conservation value. However, I understand that the council has agreed to provide a boundary fence to assist in managing the interface between the quarry and the nature reserve. That is a great outcome; I congratulate the council for its sensible approach to supporting good land management practices.

Finally, in another part of Bogandyera Nature Reserve, the bill provides for the excision of around 17 hectares of land associated with an existing fire trail. The trail requires realigning to enable Forests NSW to access and harvest an adjoining pine plantation, which was planted 16 years ago, before the nature reserve was

established. The access road originally used to plant the pine forest has since been surrounded by residential and other development. For the forest to be accessed would require substantial road and bridge works to upgrade the road to a standard suitable for logging trucks, and that would cause substantial noise and amenity impacts to local residents. The residents certainly do not want that to happen. It is no longer appropriate or safe for Forests NSW to use this road. It is therefore clearly preferable that use be made of the existing fire trail, which is already disturbed and can be upgraded at lower cost and with less disturbance of the community.

We are not chopping up national park; we are using a fire trail, which is already disturbed, and can be upgraded at lower cost, meaning that the community does not have huge logging trucks rumbling past their doors. This is a more sensible outcome. I am pleased to announce that agreement has already been reached regarding compensation for the excision of these lands from Bogandyera Nature Reserve. Some 350 hectares at Imerson's Swamp, near the Everlasting Swamp State Conservation Area, will be reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. A further 300 hectares from within Tumut State Forest will be transferred for future reservation. These are significant gains that more than adequately compensate for the removal of 17 hectares from Bogandyera Nature Reserve. So 300 hectares from the Tumut State Forest and 350 hectares of land near the Everlasting Swamp State Conservation Area are being exchanged for excision of 17 hectares of roadway from the nature reserve. These significant gains will more than adequately compensate for the 17 hectares.

All of the proposals in this bill will deliver good results for the people of New South Wales with very little impact on our national park system. They will support critical improvements to road safety, and will save lives. They will also support the sourcing of local materials for road repairs and the delivery of timber from sustainable sources. Importantly, with the exception of the quarry proposal, all excisions of land from the national park system will be compensated by the protection of other lands of at least equivalent conservation value and of greater size. I would like to make it clear that the land will not be transferred from the national park system until I am satisfied that appropriate compensation has been provided.

The bill makes clear provision for this, following similar approaches that have worked in previous legislation. This is standard practice; these sensible amendments of the National Parks and Wildlife Act balance the importance of preserving high-value conservation lands with the need to provide for essential infrastructure that protects public safety, and promotes economic growth and development of our wonderful State. I look forward to members supporting the bill. I am certain that members who live near the Pacific Highway and the Princes Highway, the member for Hornsby, the member for Wagga Wagga and other members, as well as the Opposition, will support this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BIOSECURITY) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [4.24 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to speak to the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. As someone who comes from a regional community, I appreciate that farming and agriculture are a vital part of our community. It represents so much of where my community comes from and where it is going. Right across the Kiama electorate are traditional farming families as well as newcomers to agriculture. I strongly support our farmers and the work that they do in our community. One only needs to travel the Kiama community, particularly at the start of the year, to recognise the strength of feeling for the agricultural and horticultural community that remains alive today in the Kiama electorate. I refer of course briefly to the show society movement. Be it the Nowra show, jointly shared by my electorate and that of The Speaker, or the Kiama show, the Berri show, the Kangaroo Valley show or the Robertson show, all of these organisations represent a strong movement of farming and agriculture in the Kiama electorate. There is no doubt that the popularity of that movement continues today.

I support thoroughly and wholeheartedly the hard work of our farmers and our farming families. So many farms, as anyone who knows anything about the land, are run as a family business. It involves all hands on and working together in order to generate much of what we see on our tables right around the State. Be it traditional beef farming or dairying, or the production of some new products that have entered our marketplace,

like the burgeoning wine industry in the Shoalhaven and the Southern Highlands, the Kiama electorate is so much a part of the food bowl of the Illawarra. I really appreciate the work being done by so many in that regard. The bill seeks to amend a number of Acts in order to provide for greater biosecurity.

I know that food security in particular is a matter in which many members of this House, from both sides of the table, have an interest. I thank all members who have contributed meaningfully to this very important debate about the future of agriculture and the security of agriculture in New South Wales. I put on record a number of key facts that led me to support this excellent legislation introduced by the Minister. Seventy-five per cent of new diseases in humans have arisen from animals. That is an extraordinary figure; and we need to be mindful of it when considering the amendments before us today. In the past 12 months there were 28 exotic plant pest and disease incursions in Australia that triggered a formal response.

An outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Australia would cost the economy between \$8 billion and \$13 billion. The impact of such an outbreak would be felt most in regional communities, especially by those working on farms, and in agriculture and primary production businesses. Forty per cent of flying foxes have been exposed to Hendra virus, a disease that has led to the death of four people in Queensland. In 2011, eight cases were confirmed in horses in New South Wales and 10 in Queensland. The member for Coffs Harbour made some interesting comments in relation to the Hendra virus. The equine industry in the Shoalhaven is very strong; a number of personalities and identities are involved in that industry. Successful equine industries have been operating as well as racehorse training organisations—Mark Radium being an example of a famous horse from the Shoalhaven district.

There were 10 million cattle movements recorded in New South Wales during the past 12 months, highlighting how important biosecurity is to regional New South Wales and the State's economy. One case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly called mad cow disease, in Japan resulted in a 60 per cent drop in beef consumption within a month. Imagine the impact of such a drop in New South Wales should that disease affect our farmers, our regions and our State. Australia has the highest international status regarding bovine spongiform encephalopathy; however this needs to be proved with ongoing surveillance.

Sixteen cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Canada cost that country's economy \$7 billion and 5,000 jobs. Mr Deputy-Speaker, I know that you and many members on this side of the House come from regional communities. Such an impact on jobs in our communities would be horrendous, and the long-term viability of the agriculture industry would be put at risk. Incurring one of these diseases or bacteria is not something that can be fixed overnight; it can affect a community for months and months. Families on the land will have to contend with that for a long time to come. It affects reputations and it can destroy industries for a considerable time, and that is why this bill is so important.

The cumulative benefit of the biological control of rabbits over the past 60 years has been \$96 billion. However, the combined effect of myxomatosis and the calicivirus is now waning. Rabies in dog populations is spreading eastward along the Indonesian archipelago and is now only 500 kilometres off the coast of Darwin and 100 kilometres off Papua New Guinea. Screw worm fly exists widely in Papua New Guinea and it can be spread easily to Australia through the constant movement of people and animals across the Torres Strait Islands. The combined losses from Australia's key vertebrate pests—rabbits, foxes, cats, wild dogs, buffalo, pigs and other animals—is now approaching \$1 billion per annum. Fruit fly costs Australian horticultural industries more than \$6.9 billion dollars. An additional 36 species of fruit fly are still exotic to Australia.

It took 44 months and \$34 million to eradicate a papaya fruit fly incursion in north Queensland in 1995. Karnal bunt is a serious disease of cereals that could cause export losses of up to \$491 million if established in Australia. The exotic Pierce's disease of grapes has devastated the Californian wine grape industry. I mentioned earlier the wine industry on the south coast. Establishments like the Coolangatta Estate, Morellis Wines, Coolangatta Wines and the Crooked River Winery are all growing their own grapes and bottling locally. If this disease of grapes were to take hold in my community I have no doubt that the food and wine industry as well as the tourism industry associated with it would be affected. Australia is one of the last remaining places where the insect that transmits the disease is not yet found. That is something we can wear as a badge of honour, and I know that the member for Strathfield and the member for Coogee are interested in this.

Red imported fire ant is one of the world's most invasive pests and could cause direct economic losses of up to \$8.9 billion over the next 30 years if the current outbreak in Queensland is not eradicated or controlled. The virulent wheat rust pathogen UG-99 would cost the Australian wheat industry around \$300 million per annum if it became established. The social and economic costs of a foot and mouth disease outbreak in Australia

would be devastating. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics recently provided a 2011 update on the estimated losses from a foot and mouth disease outbreak in Australia, which ranged from \$7.1 billion for a small, three-month outbreak to \$16 billion for a large, 12-month outbreak.

Major foot and mouth outbreaks in Japan and South Korea in 2010-11 incurred costs of approximately \$US2.74 billion and \$US2.7 billion respectively. In South Korea the outbreak resulted in the destruction of 25 per cent of the national swine and cattle herds. Those losses occurred in countries without significant foot and mouth disease sensitive export markets, unlike Australia, but with sophisticated biosecurity systems, like Australia, highlighting the scale of the ongoing foot and mouth disease risk to Australia. Much of the losses from a foot and mouth disease outbreak would occur in regional Australia, which is least equipped to deal with such losses.

Organisations such as the Berry Primary Industries Research Office in my electorate of Kiama are doing wonderful work in this area, specifically for my part of New South Wales. I sincerely hope that that work will continue. The previous Government threatened to close that office, and when I was deputy mayor of the Shoalhaven City Council I took up the fight with local farmers to make sure that that facility continued to operate to serve the region's agricultural and primary producers. Following the release of the Matthews report entitled "A review of Australia's preparedness for the threat of foot and mouth disease" in October 2011, the National Biosecurity Committee indicated that Australia's national capacity to sustain a large-scale foot and mouth disease response and the possibility that foot and mouth disease may not be detected readily and speedily are the highest risks.

Anthrax has resulted in the closure of international meat markets. Following one anthrax incident Indonesia closed Australia's live cattle exports to Indonesia for a short period. These exports are valued at more than \$100 million per annum. Thailand has also stopped meat imports as a result of anthrax incidents. Australia, as a member of the international organisation for animal health and an exporter of livestock and livestock products, is under an obligation to provide a government animal health service that meets the World Organisation for Animal Health [OIE] standards. This is a serious matter because it affects the health and wellbeing of not just country New South Wales but our food bowl right across this State. I sincerely hope that this bill passes this House to provide the biosecurity that New South Wales needs.

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [4.34 p.m.]: It is my pleasure to support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. As stated by my fellow colleagues, the object of this bill is to amend the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991, the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 and the Plant Diseases Act 1924 as follows: to provide for mechanisms to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests, such as the declaration of infested places, restricted areas and control areas and accompanying restrictions on movement, and orders relating to the control and eradication of animal pests; and to prohibit interim court orders that might prevent or delay emergency measures in circumstances where there is an emergency outbreak of notifiable weeds or plant diseases or pests.

Further objects of the Act are: for the use of quarantine areas to control the spread of noxious fish and noxious marine vegetation and to make other provision with respect to noxious fish and noxious marine vegetation; to enable various orders relating to fish and marine vegetation quarantine areas, noxious weeds and plant diseases and pests to be published urgently in newspapers or on a government website; to require the appropriate authorities to be notified by persons who, while acting in a professional capacity, become aware of the presence of an emergency animal disease or pest or a notifiable weed or a notifiable plant disease or pest; and to make other provision with respect to biosecurity measures under those Acts to enable regulations containing savings or transitional provisions to be made as a consequence of the enactment of the proposed Act.

As noted by the Minister for Primary Industries, the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 aims to improve the capability of New South Wales to respond to a biosecurity emergency. The bill will consider those gaps in the legislation that may prevent an effective response to a biosecurity emergency. It is a very smart and reasonable approach to how we manage biosecurity in this State. The bill will also improve New South Wales compliance with the abovementioned four national biosecurity agreements to which we are a signatory. As we are all aware, biosecurity risks are on the increase as a result of more people taking the opportunity to travel overseas, better opportunities for global trading, an increase in the world's population and the change in climatic conditions. Hence, this bill is important because it will provide a framework for better protection of our primary resources and our natural environment.

The 2007 equine influenza outbreak and the recent outbreaks of Hendra virus have revealed some gaps in the legislation. Some of these gaps and limitations could result in longer response times, which could cause

greater risks for our State. The bill will amend the Animal Disease Emergency (Outbreaks) Act 1991 by broadening the scope and objectives of the Act to apply to the control of emergency animal pests and animal diseases. Being able to declare emergency pests will significantly assist the capability of New South Wales to respond to animal pests that may have an impact on the environment, the community and business activity as well as on primary production.

The new part to the Act will provide a mechanism to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests, which would contain a duty to notify and provide powers to declare and regulate infected areas, as well as the inclusion of permits to enter and exit those infected areas. Eradication, control and management tools already exist in the Act; however, the new part will become available in respect to outbreaks of emergency animal pests. Additionally, existing provisions relating to importation orders, destruction orders, quarantine orders and disinfection orders will be extended so that they also apply to emergency animal pests.

Furthermore, the bill provides broad powers to the Minister to determine whether destruction of domestic animals should take place. Taking into consideration diseases such as foot and mouth, which is a highly contagious viral disease, destruction of infected livestock would have to be seriously considered in order to prevent foot and mouth from spreading. If not treated properly, foot and mouth disease would have serious implications in the loss of agricultural production and the cost of control and eradication, as many speakers have mentioned. The Act also will include amendments to allow flexibility for the control measures that may be necessary in response to animal disease or pest emergencies. Finally, in response to the recent Hendra virus, the Act also will give inspectors more power in allowing them to remove infected animals off property in order to prevent further infestation.

The Government has initiated a reform program that will result in a New South Wales biosecurity strategy. The reforms will aim to boost productivity and ensure that our natural environment is protected. New South Wales is the nation's most populated State. It contributes 31 per cent to our nation's gross domestic product and contributes another 2.6 per cent to Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. I commend the Minister for introducing a bill that proposes necessary and sensible amendments that will provide a consistent framework to animal and plant pests and diseases and weeds to ensure a more efficient and effective response in New South Wales should an emergency occur. The bill will improve the capability of New South Wales to respond to emergency pests, weeds and diseases that potentially could affect our economy, environment and communities. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.41 p.m.]: I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 which provides mechanisms to deal with emergency outbreaks of animal pests. As has been stated by various speakers, this country has a great record of effective quarantine against diseases. However, from time to time we are faced with threats that can infect our animals and food and horticultural industries. Acting-Speaker Mr Thomas George is well aware of diseases such as the Hendra virus, which he brought to the attention of the House in a matter of public importance. Not so long ago we had a debate about that dangerous disease which has already claimed four lives in Queensland and which is still under investigation.

I am pleased that one of the objects of the bill is to impose a duty to notify an inspector of an emergency animal pest or suspected pest on an owner of premises, a person who owns, possesses or controls or is in charge of a suspected emergency animal pest and a person who is consulted in a professional capacity. The bill also gives the Minister more powers to be able to declare a restricted area which in the opinion of the Minister may place at risk an area infested with an emergency animal pest. The declaration will apply to animal products, fodder, fittings, soil, vehicles or other things identified by the declaration and will be revoked if notice of the declaration is not published within 14 days.

In all my time in the thoroughbred racing industry I never thought I would see the emergence of a disease as devastating, destructive and damaging to the industry as equine influenza. If my memory serves me correctly that disease came into this country in 2009. I spoke almost immediately in this Parliament when that outbreak occurred. Derek Majors from the Agnes Banks Equine Clinic was charged with the responsibility of advising the Government on the disease. Derek has been my veterinary surgeon for many years. I respect him greatly and I always take his comments on board. Such were his concerns about the virus that I felt I must address the issue in this House. Stables were locked down and horses had to be quarantined. However, the problem was that the former New South Wales Government would not impose a state of emergency.

To her great credit the former Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, imposed a state of emergency almost immediately in her State. She knew full well the destruction that could be caused by the virus, or she was

taking the advice of some very good people. I acknowledge the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts who is in the Chamber. He will remember the figures that were quoted in 2009. I think that the cost to the industry in New South Wales from gambling proceeds alone and revenue back to Treasury was around \$150,000 per week. When dealing with that sort of revenue we should not risk there being a day that a race meeting cannot take place. However, once equine influenza was detected in New South Wales racing was closed down across the Sydney metropolitan area for a number of weeks or months which cost the Government dearly. Had it acted more expeditiously, quarantined every area and inoculated the animals—as the veterinary world and horse owners had wanted it to—the outbreak of the disease and its impact on the racing industry could have been minimised.

It also must be pointed out that although our attention at that time was focused on the racing industry, many horses that were used for pleasure were also affected across New South Wales. Those horse owners did not have access to rebates or to funding because they were not businesspeople. At the time it was estimated that there were about 600,000 pleasure horses across this State. The horses owned by dressage riders, endurance riders, jumpers, polo players and pleasure riders all suffered dearly as a result of equine influenza. I am pleased that this bill will tighten up measures because it was suspected at the time that the source of the outbreak was a stallion that was housed at a facility on the corner of Walgrove Road and the Great Western Highway.

The Hendra virus has also been spoken about in this House. I had the pleasure of speaking to Professor Martin Jeggo who was undertaking investigations into the Hendra virus with support from the Barry O'Farrell Government. In partnership with the Queensland Government, the New South Wales Government committed millions of dollars to try to find a cure for the Hendra virus. As we all know, the Hendra virus is spread by flying foxes. The Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts who is in the Chamber has a few flying foxes in his backyard up around Willow Tree.

Mr George Souris: In Singleton.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: In Singleton. The Minister has been vocal about that issue in the past. There also are plenty of flying foxes in my area. Flying foxes should not be a protected species because they are out of control. Other members of this House and I know that over the years the number of grey-headed flying foxes has increased dramatically. We must begin taking measures to control them. Only a week or so ago I noticed a newspaper report on the flying fox removal program at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, where the grey-headed flying fox is destroying beautiful 200-year-old fig trees. The program has been interrupted and something has gone wrong. I could suggest a couple of people who could solve the problem very quickly, if not immediately. While it is not nice to speak about eradicating animals, when they damage other species they certainly need to be moved or eradicated. It has been suggested that in some cases they enjoy more protection than do human beings, and in some cases that might be right.

When a species of animal gets out of whack or we have too many of one species, the numbers must be reduced. Unfortunately, we are now seeing the effects of flying foxes spreading the Hendra virus through the equine industry and to human beings. The link about how the virus is transmitted from flying foxes to horses has not been discovered at this point. As I explained to Professor Jeggo, I have lifelong experience of horses. I also have watched very closely the manner in which flying foxes in the Bilpin area drop apples. They take only a bite of the apples and then drop them all over the countryside, especially on the roads. It is easy to assume that although thoroughbred horses would not eat any faeces or go anywhere near bats, they would certainly eat something sweet that is lying around their yards or around the premises or stables. I believe that is the way horses have contracted the Hendra virus. Once having contracted the virus, it is quite easy for horses to pass that on to human beings.

I turn now to discuss diseases with which I have had some experience as a parliamentarian, particularly myrtle rust. Previously I raised the issue of myrtle rust in the House after being alerted to the issue by Mrs Sonia Howard—who with her husband runs a very good nursery at Arcadia—after myrtle rust had been detected on the Central Coast. Myrtle rust is a disease that has been introduced to this country and affects our eucalypts and native vegetation species. There are seven State national parks in the Hawkesbury area and adjoining the Central Coast. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Mrs Howard was very concerned because she sells native vegetation species, as many nurseries do. At that time she warned me that an outbreak had the potential to damage not only the horticultural industry but also our native species throughout our national parks. I took up the issue with the former Labor Government and, surprise, surprise, nothing was done about it. Now myrtle rust poses a significant problem for our native species.

Certainly the former Government eventually took action, but it was approximately a year too late. The spread of myrtle rust from nursery to nursery has resulted in many native species being affected adversely. On Saturday mornings I often listen to a good 2GB commentator, Graham Ross, on the Garden Clinic, which I very much enjoy. The show makes a nice change from some other radio programs and is very informative. My wife, who has a green thumb, also enjoys the program. One morning someone called in with a question about myrtle rust. Graham explained just how damaging it would become to our horticultural industries. It was obvious he knew quite a lot about it. I could only think that if the former Government had acted immediately when I discussed the issue in Parliament all those years ago, perhaps we would not have that problem now.

I am pleased to state that some of the provisions of the bill will give the Minister the right to oppose interim orders that may be put in place on properties. We live in a litigious society. Sometimes when outbreaks occur, some companies may seek injunctions to prevent people from coming onto their property. We would not want that to occur, but when the circumstances dictate that the Minister must step in and impose emergency quarantine measures on a property or disinfection orders and restriction of people coming and going, or prevent people from entering premises, the bill will give the Minister controls and powers to make that happen. In my view, that is a great move forward. This bill is not about the heavy hand of government; this legislation is about ensuring we look after our food production industries, protect our animals, protect our horticultural industries and protect our native species.

However, I hope we will not continue to protect the grey-headed flying fox. I would like to see a large decrease in the number of flying foxes to reduce some of the problems that occur in orchards, particularly those involved in the apple industry and the banana industry in Coffs Harbour. That also would make the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts a bit happier because he would not have defecating grey-headed flying foxes upsetting all the people around Singleton and Willow Tree. A decrease in the number of flying foxes would put a smile on everybody's face but, more importantly, if we were to minimise the number of grey-headed flying foxes, we would simultaneously reduce the potential for Hendra virus to spread in the equine industry and to human beings.

It has been suggested by some that we are looking after a species of animal better than we take care of human life. Considering that human life is being lost because of the Hendra virus, we have arrived at a pretty poor point in time. I hope that funding that has been provided by the New South Wales Government and funding from the Queensland Government will result in a cure being discovered for the Hendra virus. In the meantime, we should minimise the number of grey-headed flying foxes in our environment, which in turn will minimise the threat of Hendra virus spreading to members of the public and to the equine industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [4.56 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I join other members in debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012. Members are aware that since Federation, a cooperative approach to government in Australia has been assisted by intergovernmental agreements on a number of fronts. This bill forms part of a national network of legislation as a response to biosecurity concerns. Intergovernmental agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of cost-sharing arrangements between all Australian government and industry bodies that are signatories to the agreements in responding to emergency animal and plant as well as pest and disease incidents. As a signatory to these agreements, New South Wales has an obligation to ensure that it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond effectively to a biosecurity emergency in a timely manner. That is what this bill is all about.

The bill will amend a number of Acts and make significant changes. It will amend the scope and objectives of the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act to ensure that New South Wales can respond to emergency animal pests and diseases; provide the Minister with the power to order the destruction of wild or feral animals, whether or not they are infected; amend the Plant Diseases Act to provide for the destruction of plants, non-residential premises and other property which may not be infected, if it is believed that the destruction will prevent the spread of a defined emergency plant pest or disease; allow inspectors to enter non-residential premises for the purpose of conducting surveillance if the inspectors have a reasonable suspicion that pests or diseases are present, or are likely to spread to the premises; and amend the Fisheries Management Act to provide more effective quarantine provisions, including in relation to noxious fish and noxious marine vegetation to better protect our aquatic ecosystems.

The bill will also extend the duty to notify in the Plant Diseases Act and the Noxious Weeds Act, and reduce the notification period in the Noxious Weeds Act; amend the Plant Diseases Act and the Noxious Weeds Act to safeguard emergency biosecurity response actions in respect of an emergency plant pest or disease,

including class 1 and class 2 weeds, by protecting them from challenge or interim injunctions; provide more responsive and efficient processes in the Plant Diseases Act, the Noxious Weeds Act and the Fisheries Management Act for the publication of orders and other instruments related to plant pests and disease, noxious weeds and fish and marine vegetation in urgent cases. These national provisions have been agreed to by all signatories.

With travel becoming more accessible to people around the world our biosecurity risks are increasing. One has only to witness some of the television programs about border protection in which Customs and others increasingly are finding food products and other material that could have an effect on Australia's biosecurity. In 2010-11 the agricultural, fisheries and forestry industries in New South Wales were estimated to generate about 3 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product. New South Wales, which is the nation's largest State contributor, generates 31 per cent overall of national gross domestic product. New South Wales contributes 2.6 per cent to Australia's agricultural, fisheries and forestry industries and it has extensive links to international markets. In 2009-10 the State's exports of goods and services were valued at \$61 billion on a balance of payments basis, representing 21 per cent of national exports.

I make these important points because of the real threat to our export market. One has only to travel to some of our trading partners and speak to them to establish that Australia is regarded highly for the way in which it manages its biosecurity. Developing nations want to buy our products. China's economy, which is growing at a rate of 8 per cent or 10 per cent, generates 100,000 millionaires per annum. Those people then have the buying power that enables them to purchase better quality products from countries such as Australia that guarantee the quality of their products, inform them about pesticides and other things that are used, and that have a clean and green environment. Effective legislation is a part of that.

Australia is regarded highly by countries such as China. A few days ago I visited a supermarket in Beijing where Australian products such as wines, fruits and packaged goods were featured and for which demand is increasing. Many operators in China are now importing Australian goods which means the market will grow rapidly as the economy continues to develop. Countries such as India and Indonesia will also be seeking our products—the markets and the opportunities are there. I am concerned greatly about produce in the Riverina, in particular, produce grown in the Batlow area. Members might recall that some time ago Batlow apple growers, cooperatives and others were concerned about the fact that New Zealand apples were being imported into Australia. Members also would be aware that New Zealand has had fire blight which is a devastating disease.

If fire blight is transmitted to Australia through the importation of apples it will cause enormous problems for orchards in the Batlow and Tumut areas, and in Orange and Bathurst where stone fruits are grown. Members might not be aware that once fire blight spores have developed in the core of an apple they can be transferred by the wind and, if not treated properly, can be transmitted either to ornamental trees or to fruit trees. If an infected apple is thrown into a compost heap the fire blight spores multiply and develop, are then carried by the wind and infect ornamental trees in the city. The disease can be transmitted that easily, which is why growers are concerned about the importation of apples from New Zealand. Other products such as grapes that are being imported into Australia might be infected with phylloxera. Members would be aware of the devastation that occurred in parts of the world where grapevines had to be bulldozed and burnt to try to rid vineyards of diseases.

We do not want those diseases in Australia and must legislate to protect our farmers. Importantly, we need a department and bureaucrats who will take heed of farmers' concerns and reduce the impact that such diseases will have on local economies and farmers' incomes. Sometimes the concerns of farmers become lost in a myriad of legislation and regulation. Fire blight is still a major concern for farmers in Australia. A number of shipments of apples to New South Wales and other States in Australia were knocked back because of concerns about their preparation and treatment. We must ensure rigidity when assessing the quality and treatment of apples and other fruit imported into Australia. I commend the Minister for introducing legislation that will unite us nationally and protect our valuable assets on which we all rely. Our agricultural base provides to nations that know our brand so well with the best quality fruit, vegetables, meat and wines.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [5.06 p.m.]: The Murray-Darling electorate has two real biosecurity threats. In the southern Riverina and Sunraysia districts the threat of fruit fly is ever present. Fruit fly costs Australian fruit growers \$100 million each year. Recently there was a fruit fly outbreak in the Sunraysia district at Ellerslie. As a consequence growers were subject to stringent export conditions. Growers who are subjected to the threat of fruit fly must ensure that any fruit exported from their farms is treated correctly, which

is an expensive exercise. Growers generally are doing it fairly tough as the citrus industry is a difficult business. Fruit fly also affects grapes and both the citrus and grape growing industries have found that market conditions are tough as a result of our current exchange rate. Fruit flies can lay eggs in maturing or ripe fruits such as stone fruit, citrus, loquats and quinces, as well as some vegetables including tomatoes, capsicums and chillies.

Many travellers to the Sunrasia area are not aware that they are carrying infected vegetables into an exclusion zone, which is causing many problems. South Australia is doing a much better job with its roadblocks, and there has been a request by the Sunrasia growers group, the citrus cooperative and the grape growers for a roadblock to be set up and manned on the Sturt Highway around Euston in the growing season to prevent vehicles and travellers with affected fruit and vegetables from entering the area. We must protect growers in that area and ensure that they do not face any threats.

The other threat in the grazing areas of western New South Wales is OJD—Ovine Johne's Disease. This disease affects sheep and is difficult to detect. Sheep start losing weight and wool quality drops. Most of my electorate has an OJD exclusion zone, which is a recognised area. By good management we have eradicated OJD. As a consequence, graziers in the area must ensure that stock coming into the zone is not carrying OJD. Other areas of New South Wales and other States recognise that OJD is prevalent and stock requires inoculation. Exclusion zones confirm that stock coming in has been inoculated so there is no threat of the OJD virus being carried into the area. As those graziers have kept the threat of OJD out of western New South Wales, wool production is higher and sheep meat is guaranteed to be of the correct quality and not affected by the virus. Consequently, those graziers are mindful that OJD always is a threat and must be managed. Rangers in the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities certainly were mindful of that process and monitor stock routes to ensure the area is protected from OJD.

Mr Geoff Provost: What does it stand for?

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: It stands for Ovine Johne's Disease. The Parliamentary Secretary for Police is a little slow. He might have a little OJD—he has that wasting look about him. We have not shorn him, but I imagine the wool would be of poor quality. He wanted to know what OJD was; perhaps inoculation should be part of the process. With those remarks, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [5.12 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this important debate. The Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill 2012 makes useful amendments to the Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991, the Plant Diseases Act 1924, the Fisheries Management Act 1994 and the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. This bill will improve New South Wales's compliance with the four national biosecurity agreements to which we are a signatory, and also address gaps and limitations in our legislation that may prevent an effective response to a biosecurity incident. I acknowledge the valuable contributions by the many members who spoke in this debate representing the electorates of Port Macquarie, Mount Druitt, Camden, Cronulla, Clarence, Bathurst, Gosford, Tweed, Orange, Monaro, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth, The Entrance, Myall Lakes, Wollondilly, Charlestown, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Kiama, Wagga Wagga, Hawkesbury and Murray-Darling.

I particularly thank the member for Tweed, who is at the table, for his compliments on my approach to this issue. As the member for Mount Druitt noted, this bill complements the national biosecurity policy and legislation and focuses on emergency situations aimed at preventing the entry and establishment of biosecurity risks not only at the farm gate but across all areas of the environment. New South Wales must ensure that it has the appropriate legislation and systems in place to respond to biosecurity incidents. These are sensible amendments that will provide consistency in the approach taken to animal and plant pests and diseases and weeds; provide for more efficient and effective operational and administrative arrangements; and greatly improve New South Wales's capability to respond to emergency pests, weeds and diseases that affect the economy, the environment and our community. 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 Ms Katrina Hodgkinson 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.

TATTOO PARLOURS BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 3 May 2012.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [5.15 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. I note at the outset that the New South Wales Opposition will not oppose this bill. The Opposition continues to support the NSW Police Force and is willing to work with police to give them the resources and laws they need to combat crime. The bill aims to counter the activities of outlaw motorcycle gangs by disrupting their control of tattoo parlours. Criminal organisations have been known to use legitimate businesses, such as tattoo parlours, to cover up illegal activities—such as money laundering. Imposing stringent controls on such businesses is an attempt to remove the influence of illegal organisations from the industry. Many tattooists and tattoo parlour owners run legitimate businesses, and their only agenda is to provide a service to customers and receive payment in return. While this bill may burden these small businesses, hopefully the benefit will outweigh the cost. I have been advised by the Minister's office that reasonable time will be allowed for compliance and an extensive advertising campaign will be run to inform businesses.

The bill does not cover tattooists who perform purely cosmetic or medical procedures; these individuals are regulated under separate legislation. Tattoo parlour operators and tattooists will have to register with NSW Fair Trading. If a business operates on multiple premises, an operator licence will be required by a person for each set of premises. Sole owner-operators will have to register only once as an operator. A corporation's non-compliance will result in the imposition of 100 penalty units, and for a continuing offence 100 penalty units for each day the offence continues. Tattoo parlour operators will be obligated to ensure that their employees hold a tattooist licence. Applicants for licences must be 18 years or older and Australian citizens or residents and must not be subject to a control order. Applicants must provide information about their close associates. Associates are defined within the bill as having a financial interest, power or position within a tattoo parlour business.

The Opposition is concerned that this definition may not be broad enough to cover all persons. I ask the Minister to consider extending the definition to incorporate close relatives of tattoo parlour operators. There is the potential for members of outlaw motorcycle gangs to use relatives' details to register a business. I ask the Minister to address this issue in his speech in reply. Applicants for tattoo licences must provide finger and palm print records. Licences remain effective for three years from the day on which they come into force and cannot be renewed. After a licence has expired an application must be made for a new licence. A holder of an operator licence must make their business financial records available for inspection. Officers must provide written notice before such inspections. Officers will be allowed to take copies, extracts or make notes from those records. Operators must inform Fair Trading of any change to their licence particulars or employment arrangements. Operator licences must be conspicuously displayed on the premises.

The Director General of NSW Fair Trading can suspend a licence by serving the licensee with written notice. The licence holder then has 14 business days to provide written reasons why the licence should not be cancelled. The licensee must return a licence that has been suspended to the Director General in the period specified by the Director General. Failure to comply carries 20 penalty points. The Director General is required to cancel a licence if adverse security findings are made by the police commissioner about the licence. The mechanism and penalties associated with failure to comply are the same as with the suspension of a licence. Persons who are unsuccessful in their licence application or have their licences suspended or cancelled can appeal to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal to have their matter reviewed. This ensures judicial oversight of this process and will ensure fair outcomes.

The police commissioner may issue an interim or long-term closure order of a tattoo parlour that is operating without a licence. Penalties apply if body art tattooing continues on closed premises. Police officers

are able to enter a licensed premise with police dogs at any reasonable time to carry out drug, firearms or explosives detection. The New South Wales Opposition remains strongly supportive of the NSW Police Force and providing our police officers with the powers they need to fight crime. The New South Wales Legislation Review Digest provides a detailed analysis of this bill. The digest noted a number of concerns with this proposed legislation which I will draw to the attention of the House. The digest referred to Parliament potential issues about the implementation of the bill in so far as activities that are presently legal, such as tattooing without a licence, will become illegal. The committee was concerned that affected persons may not receive sufficient notice that the activity they are undertaking may become illegal. The Minister's office has confirmed there will be reasonable time for compliance and there will be an extensive advertising campaign to notify all such businesses of the legislative changes.

The committee referred to Parliament issues about the process for the review of licences. These included the closed nature of these determinations in which a person may not be notified of the reason for refusal of a licence. However, the committee noted that there is a need for law enforcement to prevent criminals from accessing intelligence concerning them personally or their organisation. The Opposition would like the Government to address the potential for this bill to be challenged in the courts. The Opposition is concerned the Government will pass this bill only to have it overturned by the judiciary. In the past, outlaw motorcycle gangs and other criminal organisations have proved willing and able to use the courts to further their agenda. I would ask the Minister to confirm in his speech in reply whether the Government has sought advice from the Solicitor General about the potential for a legal challenge of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.23 p.m.]: It gives me pleasure to participate in the debate on the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. It also pleases me to see that the Opposition is supporting this bill. That is the most positive thing those opposite have done to assist in the resolution of the issue of drive-by shootings, such as those that have occurred in the past three months. Rather than being critical of the NSW Police Force and the New South Wales Government, the Opposition has supported a very good bill. I commend the Opposition for supporting the bill. They do not deserve praise often but I am happy to commend the Opposition for supporting this piece of legislation.

This bill provides for the regulation of tattoo parlours across New South Wales. By introducing this bill the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government has shown its commitment to doing everything it can to stop the spate of drive-by shootings that currently are plaguing Sydney. Whilst the Opposition condemns our police and this Government, we continue to make changes that limit bikies wearing colours and that strengthen provisions on behalf of police. Operation Spartan has made 322 arrests, laid 566 charges, including 23 for drive-by shooting offences alone, seized 39 firearms and searched over 1,200 vehicles. These are some of the proactive changes that the O'Farrell Government has introduced in relation to what can only be referred to as a bikie war across the Sydney metropolitan area.

Some weeks ago I spoke to that good radio commentator Alan Jones and we discussed what was happening in relation to the drive-by shootings. I stated publicly at the time that I thought the Government needed to take a close look at the operation of tattoo parlours. On the morning we spoke a tattoo parlour in Baulkham Hills and a home, I believe owned by Mr Ibrahim, in Bella Vista had been shot at. Both those premises are located in the Hills area of Sydney, a wonderful, peaceful area that I do not think has experienced anything like that in the past, and I hope will not experience anything like it in the future. When Alan Jones asked what the Government was doing about the situation, I suggested the Government needed to look closely at tattoo parlours. Lo and behold, only a matter of hours later—maybe it was foresight or from looking at my crystal ball—the O'Farrell Government stated that it was going to make mandatory the licensing of tattoo parlour owners and operators. That is a great move because I have long felt that the operation of these tattoo parlours is dubious at best.

I hope that this Government proceeds with the licensing and we soon see in this Chamber similar licensing legislation for massage parlours and brothels. Personally I think that would be a great move forward. It has been noted by former Australian Federal Police officers that every tattoo parlour in New South Wales is owned by an outlaw motorcycle gang. If that is so, there may be a lack of tattoo artists in the next few months once this piece of legislation is proclaimed because those people will be unlikely to gain licences. That is a good thing. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are nothing less than organised criminals. The Government knows it, the police know it and the community knows it and their illegal activities must be stopped. I state for the record that I love motorbikes. I certainly love Harley Davidson and vintage motorcycles. I suggest that those who want to ride motorcycles and be involved with good people join the Ulysses Club.

The club's motto is "Grow Old Disgracefully". That has provided me a segue into promoting a lovely coffee shop at Dural known as Pirate Pete's where every Saturday morning members of the Ulysses Club meet

to have a cup of coffee. From time to time I call in to chat to these lovely people, who adore their motorbikes and between them have some wonderful vintage motorcycles. These motorbike riders abide by the law and raise money for worthy charities. They are nothing like the outlaw motorcycle gangs, which this bill aims to stop from owning or operating tattoo parlours. As members are aware, some of the drive-by shootings have targeted tattoo parlours. Tattoo parlours may be targeted by outlaw motorcycle gangs to send a warning message to the owners, who often are members of other outlaw motorcycle gangs, and to assert authority over their turf. In other instances tattoo parlours may be targeted for extortion purposes: the owner is not a member of an outlaw motorcycle gang and is being threatened to pay protection money in order to operate his business.

I put that on the record because what is happening in tattoo parlours and other venues across New South Wales needs to be frankly stated. Tattoo parlours are a symbol of a gang's presence in an area and an indication of their strength. The community does not want outlaw motorcycle gangs in the Hills, in other areas of Sydney or in country areas. Tattoo parlours are often the target of malicious damage and violence, such as drive-by shootings, fire bombings and arson. Tattoo parlours can be used to launder proceeds of crime. The Government is determined to ensure that tattoo parlours will not be de facto bikie clubhouses or shopfronts for the distribution of illegal firearms and drugs. That issue also has been raised with me by former Australian Federal Police officers. They say that these premises are being used as places where these people can plan their future activities.

I am pleased that that illegal activity is addressed in the bill. I am aware that many young people nowadays seek body art tattoos as an attraction. I am sure they will not think it is appealing when they get to my age and yours, Mr Assistant-Speaker. When gravity kicks in; tattoos may not look quite as attractive. However, I do understand fads and fashions—like having long hair, which I had at one stage of my life. The Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012, by removing criminals from the operation of these parlours, will reduce the risk currently faced by law-abiding people who wish to use the services of a tattoo parlour. Law-abiding citizens must have the right to be able to go about their business without the risk of being caught up in this violence. It is very hard to concentrate, Mr Assistant-Speaker, given the level of conversation in the Chamber.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Opposition members will have an opportunity to participate in this debate. Until then, they will listen in silence.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Mr Assistant-Speaker, you might remind them that I could stay in the Chamber and interject while they address the House. This bill will get the bikies and other criminals out of the tattoo parlour industry and substantially reduce the risk to the general public. We are even trying to protect members of the Opposition. Some might ask why. That is the nature of the big-hearted and generous Government that we are. The bill also will reduce the risk to law-abiding citizens employed by tattoo parlours. Under the provisions of the bill, only persons of good character will be able to obtain and hold a licence. I am most pleased that the proposed legislation will not include businesses that provide cosmetic or medical tattooing unless they also provide what the bill defines as "body art tattooing". This will assist those for whom medical tattoos are an unfortunate necessity. The new licensing scheme for both operators and employees will encourage and attract law-abiding citizens to this industry, who are free to operate their small business without the fear of criminals standing over them.

It will cut out the cancer of criminals operating in tattoo parlours; it will cut out the drugs and firearms and the laundering of proceeds of crime. We certainly hope that it will stop the drive-by shootings that we have witnessed in past months. Overall, this legislation aims to outlaw motorcycle gangs and organised criminals from this legitimate industry. It will protect law-abiding citizens going about their normal business. I am aware that other jurisdictions will watch this legislation with great interest. The Opposition is struggling to come to terms with just how proactive this Government has been in introducing legislation that is clamping down on organised crime. I commend the Minister for being proactive in bringing forward this legislation, and I commend his department and staff for working diligently to get this legislation before the House. I am proud that New South Wales has led the way in this important legislation. I believe it will have great outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.33 p.m.]: I speak on the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. I note the main purpose of the legislation is to create a licensing and regulatory scheme for the carrying out of a body art tattooing business and the performing of body art tattooing procedures. The practical significance of this legislative instrument is not primarily to regulate the body art tattooing industry in New South Wales, but an attempt to put a stop to the gun wars currently being waged in the streets and neighbourhoods of western and south-western Sydney. From memory, there have been 96 shootings since the O'Farrell Government came to

office; the most recent target was a family home in Canley Vale. The people of western and south-western Sydney are tired of being frightened. What they want from this Government is action. This legislation was first requested by the police. The Minister for Fair Trading, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, has listened to the police, the men and women leading the charge to protect the public.

In his seconding reading speech, the Minister with carriage of the bill, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, stated that this legislation is an attempt to break the stronghold that outlaw motorcycle gangs have over the tattoo industry in New South Wales. The Minister cited two incidents. The first was the fatal brawl by members of rival motorcycle gangs, the Comancheros and the Hells Angels, at Sydney International Airport in 2009. The more recent was the shooting of a man and woman in a shopping centre on the Gold Coast. Both attacks, the Minister claimed, were associated with tattoo parlour businesses. The former was due to the opening by the Hells Angels of a tattoo parlour in an area that the Comancheros considered their territory; in the latter, it was a tattoo parlour inside the Gold Coast shopping centre that was said to be the target of the shootings.

I turn now to the legislation. This bill will introduce two licensing categories to regulate the body art tattooing industry: an operator's licence, to authorise the operating of a body art tattooing business at a single set of specified premises; and a tattooist licence, which authorises the holder to perform body art tattooing procedures on other individuals. A licence holder must be 18 years of age and over. Operators of body art tattoo parlours are obliged to ensure tattoo artists employed at their parlour hold a tattooist licence. Operators will be required to register their business with NSW Fair Trading. If the business operates on multiple premises, an operator licence is required for each set of specified premises. Non-compliance by incorporated bodies operating body art tattoo parlours will result in a financial penalty of up to 100 penalty units and a further penalty of up to 100 penalty units for continuing offences for each day of the infringement.

Other non-compliance offences will result in a financial penalty of up to 50 points and a further penalty of 50 points for each day the infringement continues. Applicants for licences are required to provide information about their close associates. I will return to this issue later. Further applicants must provide fingerprint and palm print records. Division 4 of the bill introduces special conditions relating to operator licences. Holders of an operator licence must make their business financial records available for inspection. The holders must inform Fair Trading of any change in their licence particulars or changes to their employment arrangement. Finally, operators will be required to conspicuously display their licences on the premises. Division 5 of the bill sets out mechanisms available to the director-general to suspend or cancel a licence.

The bill stipulates that Fair Trading can suspend a licence by serving the licensee with a written notice which will give the licensee 14 days to provide in writing reasons as to why the licence should not be suspended. The director-general also will be required to cancel a licence if adverse security findings are made by the Police Commissioner about the licence. Finally, part 4 of the bill provides enforcement remedies available to police. This includes the authority for police to issue an interim or long-term closure order for a tattoo parlour operating without a licence. It also contains provisions allowing police to enter licensed premises with police dogs at any reasonable time to carry out drug, firearms or explosives detection.

As a local member of an electorate greatly affected by the escalating gun crime, I commend any legislation that attempts to put an end to violence in the streets and neighbourhoods of western and south-western Sydney. One view of this legislation would be that it imposes overtly harsh conditions and portrays all body tattoo parlours as being a front for organised gangs. This would be a disservice to legitimate tattoo parlour operators across New South Wales. Further, it could be argued that the legislation would better serve the community if it included "direct relatives" in the definition of "close associate" under section 4, as it has been identified that some associations that would be in the radar of police as possibly involved in shootings and organised criminal activities run along familial lines.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [5.38 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. There have always been tattooists in New South Wales and for many years legitimate businesses of this kind have been operating in this State. But in recent years their infiltration by criminal organisations, particularly those associated with motorcycle gangs, has tainted the industry and in many respects taken over much of its operations, to the detriment of legitimate businesses and definitely to the detriment of the community. We have seen tattoo parlours operating as fronts for criminal activities, providing the opportunity for money laundering and an income stream for illegal motorcycle gangs. It is time for the Government to deal with this activity that has been creeping up on New South Wales and, as we have heard from previous speakers, that is occurring around Australia.

This bill is a clear commitment by this Government to deal swiftly and concisely with gang crime in New South Wales and it follows the passing of the Crimes Amendment (Consorting and Organised Crime) Bill 2012 and the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Bill 2012. To protect the people of New South Wales we are tackling the issue head-on and are not shying away from hard decisions. The Tattoo Parlours Bill aims to break the stranglehold that outlaw motorcycle gangs have over the tattoo industry in our State. The primary function of this bill is to introduce and regulate a licensing regime for tattoo parlours and tattooists. Under this bill, tattoo parlours, as well as tattooists working in parlours, will be required to obtain a licence.

The licence will be issued by the director general, based on an assessment from the Commissioner of Police as to whether the applicant is a fit and proper person and whether there would be a public interest conflict in granting that person a licence. The bill clearly defines what areas within the tattoo industry fall under its jurisdiction. It does not include cosmetic or medical tattooing; it is confined to what is called body art tattooing, which is defined as a tattooing procedure performed for decorative purposes. Practitioners in cosmetic or medical tattooing will not be required to obtain licences under this legislation. It will be an offence for a tattoo parlour to conduct business without an operating licence and it will also be an offence for a tattooist to perform work without a tattooist licence. The penalties for failing to obtain licences will be \$11,000 for corporations and \$5,500 for others.

In order to obtain a licence, the operator of the parlour must make a statement about his or her close associates and consent to being fingerprinted and palm printed. Those measures obviously will be deterrents to criminals to become involved in the industry. Each application made to the director general will be investigated. Further, the applications will be referred to the Commissioner of Police for a determination as to whether the applicant is a fit and proper person. The licence can be granted or refused by the director general. If a licence is granted, it will remain in force for three years. The bill makes the critical definition of what constitutes a "close associate", which licensees are required to declare in their applications.

Clause 4 of the bill defines "close associate" to include any person who holds or will hold any relevant financial interest, or is or will be entitled to exercise any relevant power, or will be able to exercise a significant influence over or with respect to the management or operation of that business. That is intended to capture any members of outlaw motorcycle gangs who are not officially registered as part of the business but who have significant influence over the business. This includes parlours that are required to pay protection money to outlaw motorcycle gangs—a disturbing trend that has emerged. While the director general will be required to provide reasons why a licence application has been refused, clause 20 states that the Commissioner of Police is not required to give reasons for refusing to grant a licence if doing so would result in the disclosure of criminal intelligence or information.

Further, in ensuring that tattoo parlours are dealt with adequately, conditions are attached to the operator licence. These conditions include the licensee permitting the financial records of the body art tattooing business to be inspected by an authorised officer; the licensee notifying the director general of any changes to the particulars of the licence, such as the address or operator details; the licensee being required to conspicuously display a copy of the licence at the premises; and the licensee notifying the director general of changes in the employment of staff members, which is a crucial condition as it ensures that even if someone is employed in a non-tattooist role they will still have to be registered with the department. This provision was included to avoid a situation where the real licensee continued to work in the parlour without formally registering his or her details as an operator or tattooist.

The bill provides appeal rights to applicants whose licence application has been refused as per clause 27. In addition, the bill requires the director general to provide reasons for the rejection of the licence. I note again that this does not apply in cases when the Commissioner of Police has reported that the person is not a fit and proper person or that granting the licence would be contrary to the public interest. If the Commissioner of Police is satisfied that body art tattooing is being carried out in unlicensed premises or there is a reasonable suspicion of any serious criminal offence being committed on the premises, clause 28 allows for an interim closure order.

In more serious cases a long-term closure order can be obtained from the Local Court if the court is satisfied of the earlier conditions. It is an offence to continue operating the business when a closure order is in force. A particularly good aspect of the bill is that it enables a police officer to enter at any reasonable time any licensed premises or any other premises that the police officer reasonably suspects are being used to perform body art tattooing procedures for the purpose of carrying out general drug detection using a dog or carrying out

general firearms or explosives detection using a dog. That will assist the police in carrying out their duties in pursuing drugs, firearms and explosives, and in laying down the law to groups that believe they are outside the control of the law. It will enable police to take a far more assertive and proactive role.

The bill provides a comprehensive measure to deal with the influence of outlaw motorcycle gangs over tattoo parlours, and particularly to remove the ability of gangs using tattoo parlours as points in their turf wars. I commend the Minister for Fair Trading and the other Ministers involved in the preparation of this bill for taking a firm stance and introducing a proactive measure to curb the activities of motorcycle gangs that wish to operate outside the law. It will make it much, much more difficult for them to do so and it will provide the police with real powers to take action when the law has been broken. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [5.46 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012 in principle—that is, in creating a licensing and regulatory scheme for the carrying out of body art tattooing. The bill does not apply to cosmetic or medical procedures, and I am not sure that it will go unchallenged. It is my view that the people of New South Wales will welcome this bill. The registration process with Fair Trading will ensure that an operator licence is required for each set of premises and must be displayed in the parlour in full view. It is fair and reasonable that an operator licence will only be issued to a person 18 years and over who is an Australian citizen or a resident, and who is not subject of a control order of any description. The brawl and subsequent murder that occurred at Sydney airport in 2009 sent shockwaves throughout the community at large.

The brawl was connected to a dispute over a tattoo parlour on the Gold Coast; it occurred in a heavily occupied area without any thought for the persons who witnessed this disgusting, abhorrent and cowardly act perpetrated on another human being. Since Premier Barry O'Farrell took office our city has experienced 90 shootings. Families are living in fear and, so far, the Premier has done nothing to stop the escalating violence on Sydney's streets. I am not suggesting that the introduction of this bill will stop these shootings, but I believe that implementing changes and making tattoo parlours more accountable is certainly a step in the right direction. It sends a clear warning to those gangs that use tattoo parlours as a front for shady and illegal operations that there is no place and no tolerance for these operators in our communities.

Changes in the bill will also negate the spoiled reputation by those cowboys inflicted on reputable parlours trying to go about their business, which is another issue altogether. It is appropriate that the non-compliance section of this bill, which will result in penalty units being applied, aims to serve as a deterrent and force compliance of tattoo parlour owners and operators. Applicants will now have to provide information about their close associates who may have a financial interest or some power or position in a tattoo parlour business. This section of the legislation may be difficult to administer and even harder to prove. We will have to wait to see how this will eventually present itself in the coming months. A holder of a licence must make his or her business financial records available for inspection—a requirement that does not apply to the broader business community. This should ensure that operators comply with the taxation and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission requirements.

For the past five to six years we have seen an increase in tattoo parlours within our communities as the trend for tattoos and body art grows. I am constantly amazed at the growing need for our youth to express themselves with a tattoo that has some kind of meaning to them, although I am sure members have also seen the advertisement on television with the elderly woman sporting a barbed wire tattoo around her arm talking about the decisions she made when she was younger. But the point is that the tattoo parlour industry is a rapidly growing industry and it is here to stay. I have seen firsthand the disputes that have resulted in some operators having to walk away from their tattoo businesses due to gang-related issues or territory wars.

The tattooist that I knew was a nice person. He had a clean and well-run enterprise, and he had a wife and two children who were clearly well looked after. He employed three people who were always respectful whenever I saw them. His shop was in the front of my office so I saw him and his staff on most days. I recall coming out of the office one day and seeing the shop shutters pulled down on both sides and the front door locked. I was later told that a bikie gang had invited him to leave not only his shop but also the region and to never come down the hill—referring to Mount Ousley—ever again. That was the end of that and we never saw that person again.

The Government still has a lot of work to do in the area of crime prevention and management, and in providing our Police Force with the personnel and resources required to effectively contain and control crime at the community level. Giving the Director General of Fair Trading the powers to suspend a licence by serving

written notice is fair and reasonable. In relation to the enforcement provisions of this bill, grounds for some legal challenge may present themselves in future, particularly in relation to police dogs and what is deemed to be a reasonable time. In its present form the bill is open to differing interpretations. I encourage the Government to ensure that the structure of this bill is airtight when the legislation is implemented.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [5.51 p.m.]: I support the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. It is a sad fact that tattoos parlours have become associated with organised crime. I say that because they have become quite popular among the youth of today. We only have to watch any rugby league game on television to see that half, if not three-quarters, of the players have quite visible tattoos. Some even have them on their necks. Tattoos seem popular among young women too. That makes it all the more imperative that proper controls be introduced for these establishments. Any reputable owner of a tattoo parlour would welcome the bill introduced by the Minister for Fair Trading because it is clear that in some areas outlaw bikie gangs and other criminals stand over legitimate tattoo parlour owners to either run the parlours or get protection money.

The three key parts of the bill make it clear why this is a crime issue as much as it is a consumer issue. The new licensing regime for tattoo parlours will give the Commissioner of Police the power to refuse licences. The Crimes (Criminal Organisation Control) Act 2012 will be amended to add tattoo parlour operations to the list of prescribed activities in which controlled members of declared criminal organisations are not permitted to participate. This occurs after a control order is made by the Supreme Court. Section 27 of the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act contains provisions prohibiting the carrying on of certain activities when an interim control order or control order takes effect.

Among the activities to which tattoo parlours will be added are: operating a casino; carrying on security activity; carrying on the business of a pawnbroker; carrying on the business of a commercial agent or private inquiry agent; possessing or using a firearm or imitation firearm; operating a tow truck; carrying on the business of a dealer within the meaning of the Motor Dealers Act; carrying on the business of a repairer within the meaning of the Motor Vehicle Repairs Act; selling or supplying liquor; carrying on the business of a bookmaker; carrying on activities of an owner, trainer, jockey, stablehand, bookmaker or bookmaker's clerk or any other person associated with racing; and carrying on activities as an owner, trainer or person associated with greyhound or harness racing.

Those provisions in the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act set out what were known to be the areas in which outlaw bikies operated. The tattoo parlour is clearly another area in which they operate. Only yesterday in the Supreme Court Justice Garling revoked bail for a man charged with various offences including torching a police vehicle after threatening police that their vehicle would be blown up if they left it outside his tattoo shop in Newtown. He was granted bail in the first instance, but Justice Garling found that he was a flight risk and was likely to reoffend. We must not judge this man; he is entitled to the presumption of innocence. Nevertheless, Justice Garling said:

The protection and welfare of the community, in particular ... the violent nature of the offence and the likelihood that he will commit further serious offences, require that the bail review should be upheld.

At the moment it is as though Sydney is in the throes of an urban guerilla war. This legislation is another key step in trying to get control of these people. The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 will be amended to allow the use of drug detection dogs, and firearms and explosives detection dogs in tattoo parlours without a warrant. These changes follow on from the organised crime package that the Government introduced in the first sitting week of this year and which are now law. Tattoo parlours also arose in that debate. The Opposition says that the Government is not doing enough. We are doing more than those opposite did. We have passed new laws. For the last 10 years of Labor's reign there was a lot of drive-by shootings and activity by outlaw bikie gangs. In fact, the record number for such incidents was reached in 2002. It is all very well for Labor members to criticise the Government.

[Interruption]

There were some crackdowns. We are using the same police that were used in the past, but this time they are reinforced with more powers and have a Government that is strongly behind them. We have fixed up the mess that Labor made with its version of the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012, which the High Court declared was invalid.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! Opposition members will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr GREG SMITH: We cannot get away from that fact that Labor's legislation was found to be invalid. We warned Labor that it had problems and that it was rushing the legislation through, but Labor ignored our warnings and its legislation was found to be invalid. The Government has fixed that legislation and is coordinating with other States to have a uniform approach to outlaw bkie activity. The gangs in this country have, to a great extent, been out of control and unfortunately the Carr, Iemma, Keneally and Rees governments did very little to stop it. According to the outlaw motorcycle gangs crime profile by the Australian Crime Commission, almost 40 motorcycle clubs that describe themselves as outlaw motorcycle gangs are linked to criminal activities in Australia.

The reference to "outlaw" is not a legal definition; rather, it refers to their view of themselves as operating outside the law. As this document says, in recent years a broader group of people from other nations have joined outlaw motorcycle gangs and there is now a strong Middle Eastern presence in a number of the gangs. Some gangs do not work to a constitution and include members who do not even ride motorcycles. There is a group called Notorious that apparently drives around in cars. These organisations do not exist for the public good. Some of them might have members who just wish to have fun, wear their outfits and badges, and ride their bikes. But they have a duty to ensure that the people in their gangs who are active in criminal activities such as selling drugs, particularly amphetamines or ice and other dangerous drugs, and who are involved in car rebirthing and other criminal activities do not put the community at risk.

Recently outlaw motorcycle gangs have been involved in a number of shootings that have put members of the public at risk, such as a recent shooting of people on the Gold Coast, which is not the first time people openly have been shot by bkie gangs. An incident at Sydney Airport was the subject of a recent conviction of Michael Harwi and others as a result of the killing of one of their rivals. Recently in Adelaide there were two instances of shootings of bkie gang members. This is important legislation. We have been dealing with organised crime as best we can. I have been involved in many organised crime investigations in the past, but this legislation relates to the most insidious group of gangsters. There are 40 gangs whereas originally there were only approximately 10. The threat is increasing. Not enough has been done and we must do more. We must stamp this out.

This type of crime is like a cancer. It must be stamped out. We need all the support we can get from every politician in this Parliament and from every honest law-abiding citizen in the State to fight this cancer; otherwise, bkie gangs will take over more and more of our activities, industries and small businesses. Bkie gangs used to be in pubs and they probably still are. I remember a shooting at the Railway Hotel at Liverpool many years ago when a man was murdered, but no-one saw it. We had to rely on circumstantial evidence. Another murder I remember occurred at the former Governor Bourke Hotel at Parramatta, which was owned by bikies at the time. No-one saw the shootings. This situation is similar to the situation that confronted Victoria when, for many years, the painters and dockers wreaked havoc on the waterfront and elsewhere.

The painters and dockers had their hit men or contract killers, such as James Frederick Bazley, who shot Donald Mackay and Douglas and Isabel Wilson. The type of activity by bkie gangs that is threatening this country is a far greater evil than that, and it is something that must be stamped out. Various triads have been responsible for importation into this country of heroin, but there is a far greater risk from amphetamines because of the violence that drug causes when people take it. So much of the trouble that occurs late at night in our hotels is caused by the use of ice and other amphetamines. When that type of violence occurs, our police officers have to put their lives on the line. I applaud the Minister and the Government for going ahead with this legislation. I am very happy that the Opposition supports it. I just hope it will be passed and that together we can stamp out the activities of those evil men.

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

[The Acting-Speaker (Mr John Barilaro) left the chair at 6.00 p.m. The House resumed at 7.00 p.m.]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GOULBURN ELECTORATE TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [7.00 p.m.]: All members of this House would agree that the most important people in our

parliamentary lives are our constituents. Many of our constituents become our friends, for whom we never have enough time; others we meet at formal occasions to congratulate them on their achievements, or address from a podium at a local event. We exchange brief chitchat at noisy social functions, have individual meetings in our electorate offices and stand alongside others barracking for our teams at sporting events. All this is the bread and butter of a member of Parliament's life, but it often involves only those motivated, able, or even confident enough to invite us to functions or make an appointment to see us.

I have spoken in this place on previous occasions about the size and diversity of the community in my 7,000-square kilometre electorate. Unlike many of my colleagues, many of my constituents come into the big smoke, the townships of Bowral or Goulburn, only once a week for their round of chores, to shop, to pay bills and to have a social catch-up. They might bump into me as I do my shopping or while I am at the hairdressers or they might see me as I take my daily jog. Occasionally they will stop me in the street to raise an issue—but only occasionally. I realised pretty early on that to find out what is worrying people I would have to ask them. All new constituents receive a letter with a questionnaire, and people certainly are not shy in responding, with boxes ticked and their concerns detailed.

There is also a roster of village visits. I have dozens of small towns, villages and hamlets across the electorate. Once a month I send everyone in the chosen locality a letter to let them know that I will be in town on a particular Saturday morning. They do not need to make an appointment; it is a chance for people to wander up for a chat. Weather allowing, I set up my shingle outside the local coffee shop, which often doubles as the local store and fuel station, and is the hub of the village. I am very blessed that one of my two hardworking electorate staff will come with me. In the past year I have visited villages across the electorate from the northern village of Balmoral to the southern village of Tarago. Both those villages were established along the rail line and while Balmoral long ago lost a through train, Tarago still has to address the issue of the trains dividing the township into two parts. They are relaxed mornings. Residents wander up for a natter and I am able to spend time hearing about the history of the towns and meeting some of the local characters.

Early this year, I also spent a morning in the lively town of Bundanoon. Locals queued up outside the Olde Bundanoon Bicycle Shoppe. I barely had a chance to gulp down my coffee before the issues came so quickly to my attention. Bundanoon is an extremely active community. It hosts the Australian-Scottish mecca, Brigadoon, and the epic mountain bike race, the Highland Fling, which are two of the biggest annual events in my electorate. They attract thousands of visitors to that tiny town. Bundanoon was the first town in the world to ban bottled water after beating back attempts by big business to tap into local spring water. Bundanoon is a community of people who are not afraid to stand up for themselves.

At the other end of my electorate is Taralga, which is a township that is half an hour's drive out of Goulburn on the recently upgraded Oberon Road. This charming bluestone village has seen boom and bust several times since it was first established in 1828. Taralga is now regarded as a dormitory town for Goulburn. It has a fiercely proud community of people, who hold one of the most moving Anzac marches along the tree-lined main street in my electorate. This year held the prize as the coldest Anzac march. I am sure that I saw snow swirling out of the black clouds as we were blown along by an icy wind.

Other villages that I visited in the last year include Yerrinbool, Canyonleigh, Wingello, New Berrima, Bungonia and Colo Vale. All of them have their own character and different demographics. Whether they are fifth generation locals or newly arrived weekenders, all the people feel passionately protective of their village. As we know, the balance of supplying twenty-first century services to these remote villages while retaining their rural ambience is often a fine line. Therefore I was proud to support a number of village projects in the recent 2011 Community Building Partnership grants. Taralga received funds to help restore the memorial hall and to build viewing platforms at the cattle yards. Bundanoon's Men's Shed, Bungonia Community Hall and the Penrose Rural Fire station were also amongst the recipients of grants under this scheme. I am, without doubt, the luckiest member of this House.

ST GEORGE CABS CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

Ms CHERIE BURTON (Kogarah) [7.05 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House that St George Cabs Co-operative Limited has been in operation since 7 September 1954. The founding members started with only 15 taxis. In the ensuing years the number of taxis has grown to a fleet of nearly 200 vehicles. The cooperative is not a public company, and all profits earned are distributed amongst members. During 1997-98 St George Cabs was issued with 15 peak availability licences, or PAL plates. The peak availability licence plates were used to cover any delays experienced in taxi changeover times and were used to increase availability

during periods of peak demand. The hours of operation were between 5.00 a.m. and 12 noon daily. The licences were initially issued for a period of six years and then reissued annually after expiration of the term at an annual cost of \$6,000 per annum, payable in advance.

As a part of taxi licensing reforms, the peak availability licence plates were taken away from St George Cabs. Previously every taxi company had 15 plates each. The new open tender process was designed to give all lessee operators an opportunity to take up a licence in their own right. However, the tender process is flawed by the number of tenders that are submitted by drivers in the larger networks. For example, if Taxis Combined has 3,400 taxis, there could be 6,800 drivers who could tender for a plate. Premier Cabs has 1,000 taxis, so there would be another 2,000 drivers who could tender. St George Cabs has 190 taxis, so has only a possible 380 drivers who could compete for tender. The likelihood of a St George Cab driver tendering successfully at a fair price is negated by the sheer numbers he or she is up against.

Even though drivers of larger networks are free to take the tender plate to any network, that is unlikely due to enticements such as the availability of ready-and-waiting fitted-out cars. That illustrates how larger operations benefit much more from the tendering process. St George Cabs believes this process is neither equitable nor acceptable to the residents of the localities it services and ensures that all stakeholders are outrageously disadvantaged. The tender process also gave no consideration at all to the long-term lessees of the peak availability licence plates, who had demonstrated their ability to uphold and maintain their commitment to the timely servicing of their customers. Those lessees invested a substantial amount financially in securing the licences and appropriate vehicles, and incurred additional equipment and installation costs. The long-term lessees also effectively lost their small businesses and the ability to provide the necessary security for their families and dependants.

In any reasonable commercial leasing scenario, a landlord would give the existing tenant the first option to stay and renew at current market value, if the tenant had abided by the agreement correctly. The peak availability licence operators should have had their status acknowledged, if they were willing and able to meet the market-based lease price. The Director General of Transport for NSW said that the aim of the taxi licensing reform was to progressively increase the number of licences issued in a managed and sustainable way and improve services to customers, while maintaining a viable industry. St George Cabs has lost 7.5 per cent of its fleet now the 15 peak availability licence plates have been reissued to public tender. They were an integral part of the network for more than 13 years and assisted in providing continuous services to customers in periods of high demand, such as changeover times, and Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.

St George Cabs has experienced a downward trend in bookings of more than 8,000 and a decrease in profits of more than \$90,000 since the loss of its peak availability licence plates. Interestingly, the one operator who successfully tendered for a licence and chose to join St George Cabs survived for only two months because he could not afford the lease amount that he had tendered to the Government, so of course he cut his losses and left. This highlights the fact that the price paid for the plates is far in excess of the returns that can be made on taxi fares. A peak availability licence plate that was leased previously at \$260 week was now being tendered for over \$500 a week. The taxi licensing changes are not meeting the objectives that they were created to achieve. Larger taxi networks are prospering at the expense of smaller networks. It concerns me greatly that this could lead to the eventual demise of St George Cabs—a valued and necessary part of our community.

St George Cabs strongly believes a new system could be implemented that caters for area allocations. Area plates would be put up for tender with conditions strictly outlining the area of allowed operation. These plate holders would be able to use taxi ranks only in the designated area, along with Central rail and airport ranks. The successful tenderer would then make an informed decision as to which taxi network to join. This area-based category of licensing would allow a much fairer distribution of licensing plates, or one that is essential to the ongoing viability of smaller operations. I call on the Minister to listen to the people who have borne the brunt of these new initiatives and to act swiftly to minimise any future losses to stakeholders and the St George community. [*Time expired.*]

IRONMAN AUSTRALIA EVENT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [7.10 p.m.]: Last Sunday while many of us were relaxing, sitting back and enjoying the autumn sunshine, more than 1,400 competitors were in Port Macquarie challenging themselves in an Ironman Australia event that most of us would simply shake our heads at in disbelief. Imagine jumping into the cold Hastings River at 6.45 a.m., swimming 3.8 kilometres, getting out and riding a pushbike 180 kilometres to Camden Haven and back twice, then getting off and running

42.2 kilometres. That is exactly what these athletes did, and some for 17 hours. For others, like the winner, Paul Ambrose, it took just eight hours 17 minutes and 35 seconds. Port Macquarie's Tim Burkel came second, 3½ minutes later followed by Jason Shortis. The first woman home was Michelle Mitchell, ahead of Nicole Ward.

These iron men and women push their bodies to the edge with sheer determination to do the best they can, to go the distance, often in extreme pain. That is the spirit of true champions. Many of these competitors know that they will never cross the finish line first, but they do this year after year to challenge their own limits. As I said, there were around 1,460 starters, with 1,292 people finishing the race by the cut-off time of 11.45 p.m. The last competitor finished the race with just two minutes to spare, after 16 hours and 58 minutes of putting one foot in front of the other. While I was unable to attend, I was told by my husband, Don, and staff member, Terry Sara, that the Port Macquarie foreshore was lined with thousands of spectators for the swim event and our local streets were packed with wellwishers cheering on the athletes.

This is the seventh year that Port Macquarie has hosted this exciting event, which has gone from strength to strength in recent years. The event started 27 years ago. For the first 20 years it was held in Forster, in the electorate of my colleague the member for Myall Lakes, before moving to Port Macquarie. In Port Macquarie the level of professionalism witnessed by thousands of spectators and millions of people around the world who saw the event on television is an indication of how far it has advanced to become the second longest running Ironman event in the world. Of course, an event such as this does not just happen—a sea of people behind the scenes deliver this world-class Ironman event.

The local organising committee does an outstanding job. I thank Greg Laws and Mike Reid for leading their team of 22 committee directors and for their outstanding work. More than 2,200 volunteers on the day start in the early hours of the morning and many are still there well after midnight. As next week is National Volunteer Week I take this opportunity to thank all those wonderful volunteers in the Port Macquarie electorate who contribute to making it such a vibrant and inspirational community. An event of the magnitude of the Ironman event would not be possible without those volunteers to whom I say a very big thank you.

I thank Port Macquarie-Hastings Council administrator Neil Porter for filling in for me by starting the race. I also thank the Minister for Sport, the Hon. Graham Annesley, who attended the race to present medals to the winners. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Destination NSW and many other sponsors financially support this event, which is important to our area and which injects an estimated \$8 million annually into our local economy. I know that not everyone in our community loves the event and I acknowledge that there are some disruptions to normal life, but when we consider the financial contributions and the publicity that is generated it is well worth it. It is important for the Liberal-Nationals State Government to continue to support the Ironman Australia event in Port Macquarie for many years to come.

WOLLONGONG LABOR PARTY MEMBERS

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [7.15 p.m.]: Today I inform the House of the death of William Harvey, who was known to people in the Wollongong area as Billy Bunter. Billy was associated with the Maritime Union of Australia. Members of that union deeply regret Billy's death as he was a stalwart of the union movement. Billy was also a member of the Port Kembla branch of the Australian Labor Party and had been for some years. Every year he put up his hand and was elected as the fundraising officer for the Port Kembla branch and he ran little raffles at each meeting. Billy was known to many members and officials as the heart and soul of the union across the board in the Illawarra. People such as Billy, who are unsung heroes, rarely get to have their names mentioned in Parliament or placed on the parliamentary record.

Since becoming a member of Parliament a number of Labor Party members who helped me and supported me have passed away and I have not had an opportunity to thank them or to place their names on the parliamentary record. I do not want to detract from my acknowledgement of Billy Bunter, who died suddenly, but I want to acknowledge people such as Neville O'Connor, an official at one stage with the Miscellaneous Workers Union who went on to work with Members Equity and who died when he was relatively young. Tony Riskevski, a member of the Labor Party in the Albion Park area, passed away since I was elected to this place. I include Draga Dragarski and John Brierly, who was also an official with the Australian Workers Union, a member of the Warilla branch of the Australian Labor Party and a dear friend of mine.

Jeff O'Brien was a member of the Australian Labor Party in Dapto and Georgina Skinner, who worked with children at the University of Wollongong, was also a member of the Labor Party. Noleen Rasmussen was a member of the Wollongong branch of the Labor Party. Bobby Graham is well known in the Illawarra for his

activities as an official of the Miners Union. Bobby's wife, Mary Graham, a great stalwart for the community, fought for workers' rights and for people's entitlements and deserves to be acknowledged. Noleen Green was a member of the Labor Party but also was active in the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Women's Association. She was one of the first women in the Illawarra who pursued and promoted women in general as part of the Catholic Women's Association.

It might seem strange to members in this place that all my friends who have died were members of the Labor Party, but that is the nature of the beast. I have placed on record the names of these unsung heroes who worked tirelessly for the community without any payment. They sought nothing for themselves; they were committed individuals who went above and beyond the call of duty in delivering support to their member of Parliament. In return, I thank their families and acknowledge those individuals. I acknowledge also that those families gave up time with their loved ones and put up with a lot of politicking. Perhaps the partners were not always of the same ilk; nonetheless, they provided support. I acknowledge also that Billy Bunter will be sadly missed by the Port Kembla branch and the rest of us. We acknowledge his good work.

CENTRAL WEST LIBRARIES

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [7.20 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to some exciting developments in libraries in central western New South Wales.

Mr Matt Kean: It's about time.

Mr Jai Rowell: Hear! Hear!

Mr ANDREW GEE: The member for Hornsby and the member for Wollondilly are excited about these developments. I was privileged to attend Orange City Library on Friday 4 May, where I met Jan Richards, manager of Central West Libraries, who also sits on the Library Council of NSW. We were joined by the coordinator of the Central West Writers' Centre, Jasmine Vidler. These two women are fine librarians but they also are dragon boat racers of high repute. We were at the Orange City Library to announce funding of \$94,600 for Central West Libraries and Orange City Council as part of a grant to digitise Central West newspapers through which the library will be able to provide the world with access to our heritage. Central West Libraries is an important organisation in that part of New South Wales, with library branches at Blayney, Canowindra, Cowra, Forbes, Manildra, Molong and Orange, and its support and administration centre at Orange City Library. Central West Libraries serves a population of 75,719 people covering an area of more than 15,000 square kilometres.

The grant, which was recently announced by Minister for the Arts, George Souris, provides a wonderful opportunity for the people of the Central West. The Minister is also excited about the development as Central West newspapers between 1914 and 1920 will be digitised with the long-term goal to expand digitisation to encompass all years prior to 1954. Digitising newspapers will put our heritage on the National Library of Australia database for people around the world to view. On the day we announced also a grant of \$1,500 to support Poetry in the Jenolan Caves—a project driven by Jasmine Vidler. The writers' centre certainly was pleased to receive that important funding. The member for Bathurst, whose electorate encompasses Blayney, also is a strong supporter of Central West Libraries. The day's excitement did not stop at Orange City Library. From there we moved to Manildra for the wonderful occasion of the opening of the Manildra Library.

The Mayor of Cabonne, Bob Dowling, with his wife, Alex, attended the opening, which was officiated by the State Librarian of New South Wales, Dr Alex Byrne. I pay tribute to some of the local Manildra people who drove the opening of this branch. I refer particularly to Mrs Barbara Gosper and Mrs Judy Douglas, who led a community campaign for many years to establish a branch library at Manildra. Through their hard work, fundraising and book drives to collect books they eventually got a library up and running, which was officially opened as the Manildra branch in 1989. However, it was not until last Friday that we were able officially to announce the new and improved Manildra library. Mrs Douglas and Mrs Gosper have passed away, but they were the driving forces behind the opening of the new Manildra library. It is important that the House recognise their contribution and that of Councillor Janelle Culverson and Councillor Geoff Dean, Ella and Milton Murray, and Mrs Lyn Woodhart. Many of Manildra's local citizens attended to help celebrate this important day.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.25 p.m.]: I represent a neighbouring electorate to that of the member for Orange and I appreciate the hard work he does for his constituents. He is a strong supporter of the libraries in his electorate, including attending the Manildra library. He acknowledges the

hard work that staff members undertake and he has seen the operation of various library programs. The member for Orange, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Hornsby, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Rockdale and the member for Riverstone understand the importance of libraries. Over the years libraries have changed with the introduction of the internet and other technological advances. It is important also to promote events such as Poetry in the Jenolan Caves. The Government acknowledged the importance of the Jenolan Caves and cultural events by providing a \$1,500 grant for that project.

WOLLONDILLY "NIGHT OF NIGHTS" CONCERT

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [7.26 p.m.]: Last weekend a very important event was held that demonstrated that community spirit is alive and well in Wollondilly. A memorial concert entitled "Night of Nights" was held on 5 May for the Dudas family. I did not have the pleasure of meeting Anna Dudas; however, I have been lucky to have met many people whose lives were touched by Anna. They include her beautiful children, loving parents and inspirational friends. Anna was a strong and passionate woman who would not rest without the assurance that her family would be cared for after her death. Unfortunately, Anna recently lost her fight with cancer—just before the concert. The concert continued Anna's legacy of ensuring the protection and support of her dear children. The community was united at the concert to pay respect and to celebrate the short but vibrant life of Anna, but also to show her children, Adrian, Tahlia, Ashton and Skye, that it was behind them and that they could turn to anyone for support.

The success of the night depended on many different factors that combined to create community spirit, leadership, dedication and selflessness. Dale Burridge, a valuable member of my electorate and a renowned stage show musical performer having appeared on the West End and in the Australian version of *Phantom of the Opera*, was an integral part of the night's success. Dale had the pleasure of meeting Anna only days before her death and was inspired to make a difference and to help her family. This local man felt the need to make a difference in the lives of people who were in need. Although initially driven just to donate to Anna's cause, Dale soon realised that he wanted to do more than that and felt he really needed to make a difference. From those early days, Dale rallied support within the local community and his colleagues. Everyone got on board. Since that point Dale became the driving force behind the movement to support the Dudas family.

But Dale was not alone. A driving force behind the event was Brooke Hilton. Brooke has been a good friend of mine for some time and I have always held her in the highest regard. I was privileged to see her take on a task of such enormity and shine like never before. Brooke organised the venue, volunteers, sold VIP tables and organised the raffle, all with the poise and professionalism of a seasoned events manager. I believe Brooke succeeded not only because of her talents but because she genuinely cares about the community and the Dudas children. Brooke, you are a credit to yourself and your family, and our community is better because you choose to call Wollondilly home. Haley Harrington and her efforts also are worthy of mention as she never gave up in the face of overwhelming emotion to continue to piece together day by day an amazing concert that would do Anna justice. Haley was Anna's best friend and on the night she gave an emotional, but inspirational speech about her most loved friend. It is not enough to recognise just these individuals as it was the culmination of everyone's efforts that made the night such a success.

The community spirit that was evident as a result of these fundraising efforts was inspiring. I wish I were able to acknowledge and to thank every person for his or her contribution, but because of time constraints I am not able to do so. The communities of Wollondilly, Macarthur and Campbelltown came together to support and to lend a helping hand to a family that experienced one of the greatest hardships imaginable. I am extremely proud to know that I am part of a community that pulled together in hard times and demonstrated the value of lending a helping hand to both friends and strangers. It also was great to share a table with my great mate Russell Matheson, Federal member for Macarthur. The generosity of community members was evident in their donations of time, skills and money. This was demonstrated by the fact that people were happy to spread the word about the evening by telling their friends, putting up posters or selling tickets.

There were big donations from those who bought a number of tables. Campbelltown Catholic Club donated the venue. The combination of efforts, big and small, went a long way towards making a difference in the lives of the Dudas children. We can make a difference not just through spending money but also through providing moral support and lending a helping hand in the knowledge that people in the community will back us all the way. All these different ways of contributing demonstrate that community spirit is alive and well in Wollondilly. Many people sit back and think they cannot make a difference but the memorial concert for Anna Dudas proved we can all play a part. The event was so successful that in excess of 700 people attended on the

night and played their part to help this family. Final figures are still being calculated. However, at the last count it was discovered that over \$50,000 had been raised in one evening—a tremendous effort for a small community. However, if a small community has a big heart anything is possible.

Private members' statements concluded.

TATTOO PARLOURS BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

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

Mr Kevin Conolly: Show us your tats.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [7.38 p.m.]: Despite the interjection—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira has not even started his contribution. I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. The member for Keira will be heard in silence.

Mr RYAN PARK: In response to that interjection I state for the record that I do not have any tattoos. My father has a tattoo and he vowed to ensure that his son never got one. Not based on this bill but based on a fear of my father, I do not have a tattoo. The Opposition supports the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012, which is important legislation. On occasions I can be critical of the Government but because of the hard work of Ms Tanya Mihailuk, the member for Bankstown, shadow Minister for Fair Trading, shadow Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and shadow Minister for Volunteering and Youth; Mr Nathan Rees, the member for Toongabbie, shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and shadow Minister for the Arts; and Mr John Robertson, the Leader of the Opposition, we have driven the Government to the point where it introduced this bill.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order—

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

Mr Gareth Ward: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 76. What members of the Opposition do is not relevant.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: It is important to ensure that people on both sides of the House understand what this bill is about. This bill is not about attacking legitimate business owners. The member for Myall Lakes and others stated that tattoo art has become popular in recent years. It is far more popular than when generation X was in its youth. This important issue goes to the heart of law enforcement in this State. Opposition members will support the bill because the police want this bill enacted. Opposition members understand that when the police require specific powers, they also need bipartisan support. I am proud to be a member of a party that is above politics and that is able to give police bipartisan support to ensure they can crack down on outlaw motorcycle gangs.

Despite all the toy runs and the things that outlaw motorcycle gangs do to mask the fact that they are anything other than criminals, they are known by members in this place and by members of the community in western Sydney as nothing more than criminal organisations. Outlaw motorcycle gangs can do 100 toy runs every day of every week but in reality they are organised crime groups in our communities. We have seen the carnage that they are wreaking daily in western Sydney, frightening and scaring innocent people in our communities. As a former chief of staff to a police Minister I know that at times it is important for proposed legislation to move quickly through the Parliament. This legislation should not be held up if it results in preventing the hardworking men and women in the NSW Police Force from doing their jobs. The former Ministry of Police supports this legislation. We must give police officers the powers they are seeking, which is why Opposition members give this bill their bipartisan support.

I want to ensure—and I will be listening carefully to the Minister's response—that appropriate legal advice has been sought to make this bill as strong as possible in the event that it is subject to a legal challenge. From past experience, governments have learnt that outlaw motorcycle gangs are well resourced and able to employ the services of legal teams to protect their criminal activities. I ask the Minister in reply to inform members of any advice he has received from the Solicitor General and from appropriate legal departments and organisations that confirms this legislation is as robust as possible. Opposition members are happy to support the bill but we want to ensure that such advice has been sought. I put the Government on notice that Opposition members will be holding it to account to ensure that NSW Fair Trading and the police have the resources that are required to target tattoo parlours that are fronts for organised criminal activity.

Legislation that has received bipartisan support must provide adequate resources to crack down on illegal activity in tattoo parlours. Opposition members want to ensure that NSW Fair Trading, in conjunction with the NSW Police Force, have the resources that are needed to enable them to enforce this bill. The bill outlines a number of powers that police officers will be given to search tattoo parlours. However, in three to six months time we do not want to debate amending legislation because police officers and officials from the Office of Fair Trading have not been given adequate resources to deliver on this Government's commitments. This is one of the largest law enforcement issues with which we have been faced in recent years.

Members on this side of the House know that we cannot sit idly by and allow these criminals to continue to terrorise local communities and innocent families, because it could soon be that an innocent child, father, mother or grandparent will be killed or maimed by their criminal behaviour. I was speaking to a constituent in my electorate who raised concerns about this matter and asked, "Is it just a case of baddies shooting baddies?" I said, "No, it's not, although it may seem like that." I explained that the reason is very simple. Many members in this place who have been involved in law enforcement—whether as police officers or members of the legal fraternity or, in my case, as chief of staff to a police Minister—know that, as we are told in many briefings by police and the ministry, while these criminals are intent on getting the person they are after, it only takes a simple mistake such as confusing the target address as 81 Smith Street instead of 18 Smith Street, or Smith Street with some other street, or targeting the wrong tenant, and an innocent person is killed or maimed by these criminal actions.

When I explained that, the constituent clearly understood the need to ensure this Government does everything possible, particularly in western Sydney at the moment, to crack down on this type of activity. We on this side of the House will continue to back the police; and I expect Government members to do likewise. Bipartisan support in this place is one thing; but we need to ensure that the men and women on the ground from the NSW Police Force and NSW Fair Trading have the resources necessary to make this legislation meaningful. Police must have the resources they need to carry out the important work they do to crack down on this criminal behaviour and improve the safety of everyone in our communities.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [7.42 p.m.]: First, I thank members from both sides who have supported the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012, which aims to stop shady and criminal activities. The bill is about getting tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. This Government is leading by example with the passage of such important legislation. I welcome the Opposition's support for this sensible legislation to clean up the industry. Members on this side of the House support this legislation to tackle the mess that has been around for many years. It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this debate and support this legislation, which is necessary to help address an ongoing issue in our community.

A number of tattoo parlours have strong links with outlaw motorcycle gangs and serve as a symbol of a gang's presence and influence. The spate of shootings over recent months has demonstrated this link, as tattoo parlours have often been targets of the shootings. This is unacceptable given the risks to the community of injury or death. There is also the fact that honest businesspeople who operate tattoo parlours are often subject to negative community sentiment as a result of conducting those businesses. Further, there are reports of parlour operators being stood over or threatened because their parlours are not affiliated with any particular bikie club. This regulation will be an important step in breaking the nexus between bikies and tattoo parlours. Legitimate business operators need confidence that their businesses are not being undermined by employees who have links to bikie gangs or that their legitimate operation will be a potential target.

The bill will create two categories of licence—for the operator and the tattooist—and will be regulated by NSW Fair Trading. This scheme will not include cosmetic and medical tattooing; it will apply only to body art tattooing. Licences will be issued on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police after the making of fit and proper person and public interest inquiries in respect of the applicant. I want to acknowledge the

Ministers involved with this important legislation, the Minister for Police and the Minister for Fair Trading. Importantly, "controlled members" of a declared criminal organisation will not be able to hold licences. This will assist in weeding out criminal elements from the industry. Members on this side of the House are cleaning up the tattoo industry once and for all. Should a licence be denied, an applicant will have the recourse of appeal to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, unless the applicant is subject to a control order under the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act. Additionally, the bill will give police the power to use drug detection and firearms and explosives detection dogs in tattoo parlours at a reasonable time without a warrant.

Furthermore, the Commissioner of Police will have the power to close an unlicensed tattoo parlour for 72 hours where illegal activity is occurring. Escalating penalties are introduced to ensure that this measure hits the criminal elements where it hurts most—in the hip pocket. Licence fees and reporting on any changes to employees will bring regulatory rigour to the industry and deter criminal elements from masking operations by employing a member of a proscribed organisation as a cleaner or in some such role. This is important reform to combat criminal elements in our community who use tattoo parlours as a front for their activities. The community is clearly concerned about tattoo parlours, and the industry needs to be cleaned up to ease community concerns and assist legitimate businesses.

A recent decision to prevent a tattoo parlour setting up in Beverly Hills and Hurstville raised grave concerns in my community; a number of petitions landed on my desk. This legislation is overdue. It will once and for all break the strong criminal link with the tattoo industry, outlawing motorcycle gangs from involvement with tattoo parlours. Tattoo parlours are a symbol of gang presence in any area. For this reason tattoo parlours are often the target of violence and malicious damage, such as drive-by shootings, firebombing and arson. This has occurred in areas close to my electorate. Police are aware of numerous incidents in which members of outlaw motorcycle gangs have stood over, threatened and attempted to extort money from owners of tattoo studios not affiliated with bikie groups. It is inappropriate in the extreme that organised criminals should be permitted to maintain such a stranglehold over this industry. That is why the Government is proposing this legislation.

There is also a real risk that tattoo parlours are used by bikies to launder the proceeds of crime. The Government believes that serious criminal penetration of organised crime in the tattoo industry has resulted in tattoo parlours becoming an unsafe environment for staff in this industry. Tattooists and other workers should not have to go to work in fear of being shot or firebombed because of a bikie war. By the same token, tattoo parlour business owners who are unaffiliated with gangs should not live in fear of extortion or being stood over or attacked. The only way to end this situation is to ensure that licensed applicants and licensees are subject to checks regarding criminal history and criminal intelligence. That is why I support this legislation.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [7.48 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. The object of the bill is to create a licensing and regulatory scheme for the carrying on of body art tattooing businesses and the performing of body art tattooing procedures. The bill aims to reduce the involvement of organised criminals in the tattoo industry in New South Wales by establishing a new regulatory scheme for owners, operators and tattooists. The people of New South Wales are justly concerned about the influence of outlaw motorcycle gangs on the tattoo industry in this State. The Government announced that legislation would be introduced to give police and other authorities power to stop or limit money laundering as well as drug and firearm trafficking.

Tattoo parlours are known to be heavily associated with organised crime, particularly outlaw motorcycle gangs. Tattoo parlours are frequently the target of violent attacks, including drive-by shootings, firebombings and arson. Business owners attempting to operate a tattoo parlour that has no affiliation with organised crime have been subjected to extortion attempts and violence. There have been many news reports of the firebombing of tattoo parlours, particularly in metropolitan areas. I have spoken in the House many times about Myall Lakes on the picturesque mid North Coast where the sun always shines, the sea is blue, dolphins swim in the water and everybody wants to retire or holiday there. But even in a town as small as Forster-Tuncurry there is a tattoo parlour.

The tattoo parlour was opened several years ago by the Rebels motorcycle gang. Forster-Tuncurry has a population now of about 18,000 but back then it was about 16,000. A population of that size had a tattoo parlour employing nine full-time employees with no-one in the waiting room. What were they doing? It was obvious: The Rebels bikie gang was running an amphetamine operation and was using the tattoo parlour to launder the drug money. Nine people were on the wage books getting paid a full-time wage not from the proceeds of the tattoo business but from drug money. The Rebels also opened up a clubhouse in an industrial area in Tuncurry and, besides selling drugs, were involved in prostitution and the illegal sale of alcohol at the clubhouse. The police in Forster-Tuncurry were well aware of the Rebels' activities.

Bikies being bikies, they could not just run the business and make a profit, they wanted to be heavies and get involved in other activities. As a result of their other crimes, such as assaulting innocent people, brawls and the like, the police were able to target them and eventually drive them out. When they left, another bikie president took over the tattoo business and moved it to Tuncurry. I received information last weekend that the police believe he has onsold the business and has gone. That is one example of what these outlaw motorcycles are all about: drug manufacture, the sale of drugs and laundering money through tattoo businesses.

The Attorney General and the member for Hawkesbury spoke about young people and their tattoos. It is unfortunate that tattoos are a fad because by getting tattoos young people are supporting drug businesses, supporting gangs and supporting outlaws and criminals. The purpose of this bill is to attack those gangs, and one way to do it is by attacking their business—attacking their hip pocket by taking away the money-laundering side of their business. NSW Fair Trading will join with the NSW Police Force to attack the gangs where it hurts. On television last week we saw a number of gangs talking about how this legislation is targeted at them, how it will hurt them and how it will ruin their lifestyle.

The introduction of laws to tackle the problem of gangs is not new. Back in the 1930s when we had the razor gang wars the then Government introduced consorting laws as a means for police to target those gang members. That is what we have done. We have toughened those consorting laws and we have made it easier for police to arrest people under those laws. We have introduced this legislation, which backs up the consorting laws, and earlier this year we introduced the criminal organisation laws to make it easier for police to prove that a person was consorting with a member or members of a gang.

We have introduced heavier penalties for crimes where a gun is involved. Police have made 555 arrests for criminal offences involving a gun. We have established a police task force and the New South Wales Crime Commission and now we have joined NSW Fair Trading and the NSW Police Force to work together to tackle this issue. History shows that Al Capone and Abe Saffron were brought to justice not for their many crimes but for tax evasion. It is the same with these gangs: We are using various methods to target them and bring them to justice. These drive-by shootings have not just happened since 26 March last year; they started in 1998, peaked in 2002 and continue to occur. This legislation is part of a suite of strategies that the Government is using to attack these gangs and bring them to justice. We are supporting the police.

The member for Keira spoke as though drive-by shootings are new occurrences. As I said, drive-by shootings have increased since 1998, peaking in 2002. The member for Keira also said that he hoped that the legislation has been carefully scrutinised because he does not want it to fail. Once again, that is looking at this Government through the eyes of a Labor Party member. The legislation of the previous Government failed in the High Court. This legislation will not fail like the Labor Party's legislation did. This legislation is part of a suite of mechanisms to attack these gangs and to stop their money laundering. But we need the Federal Labor Party to do its part. We are introducing legislation in New South Wales to attack these gangs but a tsunami of illegal guns is coming to Australia through our porous borders.

The Federal Government cannot stop the boats and it cannot stop the guns. The New South Wales Labor Opposition has to talk to its mates in Canberra and ask them to man the ports and bring in legislation to stop firearms parts being imported into Australia. The New South Wales Labor Opposition says that this legislation does not go far enough. We have introduced a raft of measures, yet for 16 years the Labor Party did absolutely nothing. These problems have been occurring since 1998, and the Labor Party did nothing. It makes one wonder whether they wanted to do anything about it. The Opposition should get onto its Labor Party mates in Canberra and tell them to stop the guns coming into this country.

Mr Ryan Park: I'm onto them now.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The member for Keira says he is onto them now. He may laugh and joke about it, but this is a serious matter.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I remind the member for Keira that he is not permitted to use phones in the Chamber.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The people of western Sydney are very upset about these drive-by shootings. The Government is taking this issue seriously and we have introduced legislation. The New South Wales Labor Government did nothing for 16 years; we are doing the work now. As I said earlier today, the Liberal-Nationals, not Labor, are the party for western Sydney and the workers. I support the bill.

Mr TONY ISSA (Granville) [7.58 p.m.]: I am pleased that both sides of the House support this legislation to put an end to outlaw motorcycle gangs. However, I do not give credit to members on the other side because, as the member for Myall Lakes said, they should have done something at least 10 years ago. I support the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. Recent events in my electorate of Granville have highlighted the urgent need for measures to deal with drive-by shootings. Only last month a drive-by shooting of a tattoo parlour took place around the corner from my office in Merrylands. I stress that it is the police, not I, who believe that tattoo parlour is owned by a bikie gang. On 16 April shots were fired into the security shutter of Infamous Ink. The business was unoccupied at the time and bullet casings were found on the opposite side of the street. The police are familiar with the owners of this tattoo parlour and it is believed they are linked to outlaw motorcycle gangs. It is also believed they are not registered tattoo artists.

It is clear from police investigations that drive-by shootings are strongly linked to outlaw motorcycle gangs, and that link must be broken. It is understood that the shootings can be directly linked to simmering tensions between rival bikie gangs, as many of these people either own or work in tattoo parlours. I support this legislation because it goes to the root cause of the spate of drive-by shootings that have been terrifying the peaceful people who live in my community. It is clear that over the years tattoo parlours have become symbols of gang warfare. The strong links between the tattoo industry and outlaw bikie gangs need to be broken.

This legislation proposes that heavier penalties apply to bikie gangs operating tattoo parlours. It will guarantee that their oxygen supply is cut off in order to bring an end to these violent drive-by shootings and, most importantly, ensure the safety of the community. It will achieve this by the imposition of heavier penalties on tattoo parlours operating outside the new regulations. The bill also introduces a licensing and regulatory regime for the operation of tattoo parlours. In future, people applying for a licence to run a tattoo parlour will be granted a licence only if they are deemed fit and proper. The bill further makes it compulsory for people practising body art tattooing to obtain a licence.

To ensure that the legislation is effective there are provisions in the bill to regulate different types of tattooing, such as body art tattooing. Currently, cosmetic and medical tattooists are subject to regulation under the Public Health Act 1991, the Public Health (Skin Penetration) Regulation 2000 and the Skin Penetration Code of Best Practice. This legislation does not apply to them because it would make no difference to limiting the criminal activity within the tattoo parlour industry. Limiting this criminal activity is a top priority for the Government. By introducing certain regulations into the industry we have a better chance of severing links between these businesses and organised crime, thereby reducing the level of violence that has become deeply linked to it.

The Government is determined to shut down the link because police have found that certain tattoo parlours have become not only bikie hangouts but also fronts for illegal drugs and firearms distribution. For example, in 2010 police seized drugs, guns and knives from an inner west tattoo parlour. Since then, the gangs have stepped up the violence to dangerous levels, as we have witnessed this year. Under the bill the police will have the power to shut down tattoo parlours that fail to comply with the regulations. This also applies to premises where police may be suspicious that serious crimes are being committed. The closure of a business can be on a short-term basis—for example up to 72 hours—or, if there is sufficient evidence, police can apply to the Local Court for long-term closure. These are similar to provisions that apply in the New South Wales Liquor Act.

Until the introduction of this bill, bikie gangs that were known to be involved in drive-by shootings and firebombings were allowed to continue to operate. Some of the enforcement provisions in this legislation allow police to employ drug and firearms searches to detect unlawful activities in tattoo parlours. Under the provisions, police will not be required to produce a warrant to conduct these searches. This means that tattoo parlour operators will have no prior warning that a search will be conducted. If we are serious about ending the link between the tattoo industry and organised crime we must give the police the power to conduct searches at locations where they know illegal activity is occurring. It is an integral part of the Government's determination to introduce laws that will reduce gun-related crimes and make the community safe.

My constituents have expressed their alarm to me at the number of drive-by shootings that have occurred in the Granville electorate. Recently I had the pleasure of hosting a visit to Merrylands by the police Minister, the Hon. Michael Gallacher. The Minister spoke to many local people to assure them that the Government is doing everything possible to address the problem. This legislation is part of the process. I congratulate the Minister for Fair Trading on taking the tough decision to introduce this bill to the Parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [8.05 p.m.]: I support the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. It is an important piece of legislation that is well crafted and has many different dimensions. I will draw the attention of the House to some of the salient features of the bill. The bill creates offences relating to unlicensed body art. Clause 6 of the bill encompasses licensed operators and tattooists. The penalties for operators breaching the provisions are very strong. A corporation that has committed an offence faces a fine of \$11,000 and, in the case of the offence continuing, 100 penalty units for each day the offence continues. In the case of an individual it is \$5,500 and 50 penalty units each day the offence continues. Similar provisions for individual tattooists who breach the Act are contained in clause 7. Clause 8 makes it an offence for a person to employ an individual to work as a body art tattooist unless the individual is the holder of a tattooist licence. Clause 8 contains penalties similar to those in clause 7. This is an all-encompassing piece of legislation that is designed to catch operators and tattooists and people who employ individuals to work as body art tattooists.

Division 2 of the bill deals with applications for the granting of licences. At the outset clause 11 provides for licence applications to be made to the director general. The bill contains some interesting provisions with respect to licence applications. Clause 13 requires an applicant for a licence to consent to be fingerprinted and palm printed as a condition to his or her application being determined by the director general. Applicants for tattoo industry licences will be required to have their palm and fingerprints checked against a national database as part of the probity assessment for a licence. Fingerprints and palm prints will be taken using live scan machines located in a range of police stations across New South Wales, making it easy for licence applicants to complete this part of the process. This provision mirrors the processes already in place for security industry licence applicants and will ensure that a thorough probity assessment of each licence applicant can be conducted. It is important to highlight that part of the legislation.

Clause 15 of the bill will enable the director general and the Commissioner of Police to require further information to be provided in connection with a licence application. Clause 16 authorises the director general to grant or refuse to grant a licence for which a person has applied. It also sets out the circumstances in which the director general must, or may, refuse to grant a licence. Division 3 applies to the role of the Commissioner of Police, which adds yet another dimension to this legislation. It defines the role of the Commissioner of Police in the whole process. It will enable the Commissioner of Police to inquire into, determine and report to the director general on whether an applicant for a licence is a fit and proper person to be granted a licence. Clause 20 ensures that there is no obligation upon the director general or the Commissioner of Police to give reasons for refusing to grant a licence.

The bill has that important dimension, which is underpinned by the very important role played by the Commissioner of Police in the whole process. Division 4 provides yet a further dimension to the bill. Clause 21 makes it a condition of an operator licence that the licensee permit the financial records of the body art tattooing business that is conducted at the licensed premises to be inspected by an authorised officer. A range of issues need to be checked before a licence is granted. Clause 22 of the bill makes it a condition of an operator licence that the licensee notify the director general of changes in particulars in connection with the licence. That is an important part of the bill, as is clause 24, which calls for licences to be displayed properly at licensed premises.

Division 5 provides for the suspension and cancellation of licences. Clause 25 enables the director general to suspend a licence if the director general is satisfied that there are grounds to cancel the licence. I note that the Acting-Speaker and member for Kiama has a particular interest in that clause. Clause 25 also provides that the director general must permit the licensee to show cause why the licence should not be cancelled when notifying the licensee of the suspension. While there are important regulatory provisions in the bill, the bill also provides for a review of licensing decisions. Clause 27 provides that the Administrative Decisions Tribunal may review a decision. A review process is locked into the bill, and that is an important point that should be highlighted.

Clause 28 deals with closure orders and will enable the Commissioner of Police to make interim closure orders in relation to specified premises. Clause 29 enables the Commissioner of Police to apply to the Local Court for a long-term closure order. If certain conditions are satisfied, the Local Court may make long-term closure orders. Clause 29 (1) (a) and (b) set out the circumstances in which long-term closure orders may be made. Clause 30 makes it an offence for a person, while a closure order is in force, to carry on a tattooing business, and provides for quite onerous penalties to be imposed for an offence. In addition, clause 31 provides other enforcement provisions that add yet another dimension to this legislation. It is worth highlighting some of those enforcement provisions.

Clause 31 enables a police officer to enter at any reasonable time any licensed premises, or any other premises that the police officer reasonably suspects are being used to perform body art tattooing procedures, for the purpose of carrying out general drug detection and general firearms and explosives detection. Clause 32 makes it an offence for a licensee, without reasonable excuse, not to produce his or her licence on demand by an authorised officer. The maximum penalty provided for that offence is \$2,200. Clause 33 makes it an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to hinder or obstruct an authorised officer in the exercise of a function under the legislation, and provides for a penalty of \$2,200 to be imposed. Clause 34 provides that proceedings for an offence against the legislation or the regulations may be dealt with summarily by the Local Court and the Supreme Court.

The maximum penalty that a Local Court will be permitted to impose for an offence under this provision will be 200 penalty units, which will amount to \$22,000. Clause 35 enables an authorised officer to issue penalty notices for offences against the legislation or the regulations if those offences are prescribed as penalty notice offences by the regulations. It is worth pointing out that this legislation is quite encompassing and that it has many different facets that will make its implementation even more effective. It should also be noted that cosmetic or medical tattooing will not be captured by the new regulatory scheme. Businesses that provide only cosmetic and medical tattooing services will not be captured. This is important legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [8.15 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I join in debate on the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012. In doing so, I acknowledge that my electorate of Baulkham Hills, leafy and sleepy as it is, tragically has been the location of a number of outrageous attacks at a tattoo parlour that was unceremoniously shot at twice in the past two weeks. Outlaw motorcycle gangs have subjected New South Wales to a crime wave that simply will not be tolerated. With their callous disregard for law and order, these criminal organisations have been endangering communities right across this State. It is completely unacceptable that the innocent in our community are being exposed to unlawful violence on such a scale. It is upsetting that my electorate of Baulkham Hills has felt the brunt of these attacks, as I mentioned earlier. Over the past couple of months, the Baulkham Hills shopping centre has been the unfortunate scene of no less than two drive-by shootings.

The people of Baulkham Hills naturally are distressed about this dramatic escalation of violence. Through no fault of our own, we have become victims of a shady criminal turf battle. The Hills shire is famous for its family-friendly lifestyle and its leafy environment. We will not have a perfect community ruined by these criminal thugs. The people of Baulkham Hills, and indeed the people of New South Wales, have had enough. This bill is about purging the legitimate tattoo industry of its murky underbelly. The bill will create a new regulatory scheme for owners, operators and tattooists, the aim of which will be to reduce the involvement of organised criminals in the tattoo industry. Tattoo parlours are known to be heavily associated with organised crime, particularly outlaw motorcycle gangs. Such parlours are frequently the target of violence, as we experienced in Baulkham Hills in the past month.

It is often impossible for legitimate operators to avoid violent confrontations without the patronage of a criminal organisation. It should be heavily emphasised that the tattoo industry is a legitimate industry. It has a rightful place within our society and our economy. As a former officer in the Australian Army, I am very conscious of the cultural significance of tattoos in the military. However, this bill is essential because it has been introduced in the interests of both the public and the legitimate tattoo industry. It is essential that we remove the criminal elements that operate behind the façade of so many tattoo parlours in this State. Let there be no doubt that this is a tough bill that is designed to tackle a difficult problem. The decision to regulate the tattoo industry in this fashion has not been taken lightly. However, the Government recognises the need to clean up tattoo businesses so as to protect the public and legitimate operators.

Specifically, the bill will create a system of licensing that will be applied to both existing and new operators. All operators and tattooists will be required to pass a fit and proper person as well as a public interest test conducted by the Commissioner of Police. Controlled members of a declared criminal organisation will not be able to hold a licence. Naturally, there will be severe penalties for operating a parlour without a licence. Further, the Commissioner of Police will be able to close unlicensed parlours, and parlours where illegal activity is occurring for up to 72 hours. This closure can be extended by application to the Local Court. In the interests of natural justice and procedural fairness, the bill provides a right of appeal to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal regarding licence applications.

One of the anomalies of legislation to date is the fact that if a licensed premises serving alcohol has a violent incident on its doorstep the police can close it for 24 hours. But, as occurred in the incident in Baulkham

Hills where there was a shooting on the doorstep of a tattoo parlour, the police are powerless to do anything. Therefore, the approach taken in this bill ensures a balance between allowing the tattoo parlour industry to operate, and the need to protect the public. This bill contains many necessary reforms that will be welcomed across the community, particularly the community of Baulkham Hills. With these reforms we can begin to put this sorry episode behind us. I congratulate the Minister on introducing the bill, and commend it to the House.

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

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Government business having concluded, the House will now consider the matter of public importance.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY 199TH ANNIVERSARY

Matter of Public Importance

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [8.22 p.m.]: I ask the House to note as a matter of public importance, and bring to the attention of this House, that this week marks the 199th year since Australia's first homegrown charity, the Benevolent Society, was founded. On 8 May 1813 Edward Smith Hall, a banker, journalist and passionate social welfare advocate and political reformer, formed a society for relieving the distressed. A significant figure in the New South Wales colony, Hall also founded the *Sydney Monitor*, the colony's first newspaper, and in 1826 he played an important role in the formation of the Bank of New South Wales. Unafraid to speak out when he saw inequality and injustice, his decision to form an organisation dedicated to giving all Australians a fair go really marked the dawn of charities in Australia.

The 199th anniversary of Australia's first charity is a milestone that is particularly significant when we consider the crucial role that charities now play in our communities, working hand in hand with government. In 1818 the then Governor of New South Wales, the respected Lachlan Macquarie, was appointed the first patron of what was then known as the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, with a formalised purpose to relieve the poor, the distressed, the aged and the infirm. Since then, every successive New South Wales Governor has continued this tradition, through to our current Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, the thirty-seventh Governor of New South Wales, who has a personal connection to the Benevolent Society—part of her medical training took place at the Royal Hospital for Women in the 1950s.

As the pioneer of philanthropy in Australia, the Benevolent Society was the first organisation in the colony to house and feed the needy. I take the opportunity to acknowledge some of the remarkable contributions the society has made to New South Wales. In 1821 the Benevolent Asylum opened on the site where Sydney's Central station now stands. This was Australia's first refuge for homeless older men, deserted women and children, and the mentally ill. In 1892 it supported the Children's Protection Act to abolish child labour. In 1896 the Benevolent Society's President, Sir Arthur Renwick, was a leading voice in the campaign for the old age pension. In 1905 it established the Royal Hospital for Women in Paddington, pioneering medical care for women and babies, and groundbreaking techniques such as ultrasound.

The Benevolent Society operated the Royal Hospital for Women for almost a century before transferring it to the New South Wales Government in the 1990s, when it was rebuilt at Randwick where it stands today. In 1917 the society opened Scarba House at Bondi, a welfare home for women and children. In 1949 the Royal Hospital for Women established the first cancer detection clinic for women. In 1968-69 the Benevolent Society brought Elvis Presley's gold Cadillac to Australia for a charity tour across the country. The Cadillac was seen by more than 400,000 people, raising about \$150,000 at the time, which is equivalent to \$860,000 in today's money. Elvis became a life governor of the Benevolent Society. In 2009 it founded Goodstart to acquire the collapsed ABC Learning childcare centre chain, ensuring families across Australia could access stable, reliable and high-quality child care to give children the best start in life. These are just a few highlights from a remarkably rich history.

I thank the Benevolent Society's Brighter Futures Fairfield, which operates in Bonnyrigg in my electorate. Services include case management for families, professional home visiting support for parents, access to quality child care, supported playgroups for children, parenting groups and one-to-one parenting support, and culturally appropriate and language-specific home visiting and parenting groups. One hundred and ninety-nine years is a long time, and the society's proud history shows how much the Benevolent Society has contributed, and to this day still contributes, to our community's most vulnerable.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [8.26 p.m.]: It is an honour to speak on this matter of public importance. Yesterday marked the 199th anniversary of the Benevolent Society, one of the many achievements of Edward Smith Hall, who founded the society. He, along with five other like-minded gentlemen, looked around the colony and was dismayed by the poverty and homelessness, the deprivation and despair. He said we can do better, and established the country's first charity. In the lead-up to the Benevolent Society's milestone of its 200 years we will hear so many remarkable stories and great journeys of extraordinary people who have been a part of and contributed to the journey. The remarkable stories will be about the unsung heroes, the everyday people like the founder, Edward Smith Hall, who felt compelled not just to talk but to do. Some of the hardships that were endured will be spoken about.

In the early 1900s the struggle to feed, clothe and house a family of six or seven children under the age of 10 seemed to be common practice. For many it was not possible to bring up such a family, so the children were sent to the Benevolent Asylum for refuge. Edward Smith Hall was a passionate social welfare advocate and political reformer as well as being a banker and a journalist. Having established the *Sydney Monitor* in 1828, he used the newspaper to give a public voice to a social vision for the colony. Many of the issues he addressed in his editorials were complex and exist to this day. Like many visionaries, he was not afraid to speak out when he saw inequity and injustice. His unwillingness to accept the status quo and his passion for social justice are hallmarks of the Benevolent Society's approach to this very day.

Next year, 2013, will be the Benevolent Society's bicentennial year. It is part of the very fabric of our society, the building of our nation. Can anyone believe that for two centuries this organisation has provided a refuge for the poor and displaced, enriching and providing services for thousands of all ages and creeds? Today, nothing has changed. The society continues to help the vulnerable, the marginalised and those in need by providing vital care, support and advocacy for a generous, caring and inclusive nation. To operate successfully for 200 years is a feat for any organisation. All members in this House are proud of the Benevolent Society and 2013 will be an exceptional year to recognise the society's role in building strong families and healthier communities, and shaping a better nation that continually evolves.

The Benevolent Society has achieved many milestones in its 200 years, but behind each monumental milestone is a personal story about a life: a story about fundamental social change, the abolition of child labour, the introduction of the old age pension, the pioneering of support for single mothers, and the setting up of free maternity care and legal aid. While things today operate differently administratively, the fundamentals of caring communities wanting a healthy and safe environment so that people can reach their absolute potential is alive and kicking more than ever in this organisation, just as it was 199 years ago.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [8.30 p.m.]: The Benevolent Society is one of the longest-running organisations in Australia and is Australia's first charity. To operate successfully for 199 years is a landmark achievement for any organisation, but for a charity it is perhaps even more significant because non-profit organisations depend on the goodwill and support of individuals, the business community and government for their ongoing existence. In many ways, it is a reflection of the generosity of the whole community that the Benevolent Society has survived and thrived for 199 years and reaches more people than ever today. From its early beginnings in Sydney, the Benevolent Society's impact now reaches far and wide. Today, more than 900 employees and 600 volunteers support more than 41,000 Australians each year.

Building strong communities is at the heart of all the Benevolent Society's work because research shows that people are happier, healthier and more confident when they feel connected to their communities. People who feel a sense of connection and belonging within their communities have a powerful support network that can help buffer them against adversity and overcome disadvantage. The Benevolent Society maintains this focus on creating caring, inclusive communities and a just society in which people are not discriminated against on the grounds of religion, culture or sexuality. From financial hardship to mental health issues, child protection to independent living for the aged and more, the Benevolent Society's fundamental aim is fixing the underlying problems—not just treating the symptoms—and doing whatever it takes to make a difference. This Parliament and society believe Australia will be a better place if everyone has a fair go and feel that they belong.

In New South Wales the Benevolent Society is a leading provider of programs such as Brighter Futures, introduced by New South Wales Labor to help parents keep their children; intensive family support programs to give at-risk families the support they need to stay together; foster care programs for children who cannot live with their families; playgroup programs to help give children the best start in life; and specialist post-adoption support, counselling and guidance. Society also is one of the key providers of support for older people and people with disabilities living in their homes and their carers, people living with mental illness and a

range of other community development programs The Benevolent Society works with communities across New South Wales, from Rosemeadow to Rutherford, Bonnyrigg to Bathurst and Punchbowl to Parkes. I commend the Benevolent Society for 199 years of supporting our communities and wish it well in the future. I thank the member for Cabramatta for raising this truly important matter of public importance.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [8.33 p.m.], by leave: The Benevolent Society has touched and transformed millions of lives over the course of its 199 years. It is an important organisation that helps those people in most need. The society's work is broadly grouped under five core areas of expertise: children and families, including domestic violence; ageing; community development; mental health care; and social leadership. Achieving 199 years is marvellous, particularly in reaching out and helping families by supporting them and caring for children when tough times hit. I especially acknowledge Brighter Futures Fairfield, which is located in Bonnyrigg. The Benevolent Society works in partnership with disadvantaged communities to address the systemic challenges they face. In the past year alone the society has helped 41,000 people.

It is interesting to note that in 1813 the society was the first private organisation dedicated to relieving the distressed and meeting the needs of the population that were far beyond the capacity of government. In 1818 the Benevolent Society of New South Wales was formalised with a broader purpose to relieve the poor, the distressed, the aged and the infirm. Other achievements include the incorporation of the Benevolent Society in 1902 by an Act of the New South Wales Parliament and the appointment of the first women directors to the board, and establishing Social Ventures Australia in 2002 to invest in social change and support social entrepreneurs. These are only a few achievements of the Benevolent Society, but the real achievement rests in the help it has provided to those in need. I will read the words of Warwick McNamara, who visited the archives of the State Library and discovered the impact of the Benevolent Society on his great grandmother's life. He said:

My great grandmother, born in 1875, was very secretive about her past. Now that we have managed to uncover some of the details of early years, thanks to the Benevolent Society's archives, we can better understand her and her background.

Mary was the daughter of Irish Roman Catholic immigrants. Her mother, born during the Irish Potato Famine, suffered severe mental health problems and her father also experienced frequent bouts of poor health and lengthy periods of unemployment. Consequently, Mary's childhood was blighted by severe poverty, uncertainty and instability.

Her parents were, from time to time, unable to care for their children. Fortunately for them, the Benevolent Society was on hand and provided them with financial assistance, pastoral care, food, shelter and medical care. The children were also taken off the parents for extended periods and looked after, either by the Society or the Randwick Asylum for Destitute Children.

Given the sectarian character of the times in which she grew up, the Benevolent Society's support and generosity to my ancestors' family was extraordinary. This support lasted for a decade and was provided without regard to religion or nationality. The Benevolent Society has much to be proud of.

Once again, the Benevolent Society has much to be proud of. I congratulate it on achieving 199 years of service to the community.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [8.36 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Drummoyne, the member for Auburn and the member for Fairfield for their great support in speaking on the Benevolent Society's 199th anniversary. I join my colleagues in congratulating the Benevolent Society on reaching this great milestone. When there were no social welfare services for those in difficult circumstances, the Benevolent Society was there to help. The help the society provided to orphans or abandoned children, older people, families and others who were unable to support themselves has been and continues to be absolutely vital. Many past significant gains on behalf of the people of New South Wales flowed from the work of the Benevolent Society. Things we now take for granted, such as the abolition of child labour, the old age pension, support for single mothers, and free maternity care and legal aid, were pioneered by the Benevolent Society. I again congratulate the Benevolent Society and look forward to celebrating its bicentennial in 2013.

Discussion concluded.

CO-OPERATIVES (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

THE ENTRANCE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANTS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [8.38 p.m.]: I welcome my family to the Legislative Assembly this evening. The Community Building Partnership Program is a fantastic initiative at a grassroots level for community groups and organisations that could really use financial assistance. Groups that benefit from the program provide an enormous local service, whether it is getting kids involved in a sporting team, providing childcare services, improving or expanding existing facilities or providing equipment. Funds provided through the Community Building Partnership Program empower and enrich our local communities and encourage active and social participation. I was excited to receive almost 30 applications from groups within my electorate and was impressed at the array of projects and the potential impact of each of them.

At the completion of the assessment rounds I was pleased that 13 groups were successful in this round of funding. Of these, there were a couple that I feel especially fit the scope of what community building partnership is all about. Ourimbah United Football Club was thrilled with the news that its bid for funds to build a new clubhouse was successful. Combined with a matched contribution from its own funds and Wyong Shire Council, it now has \$225,000 to start building. The popular soccer club has been around for more than 30 years and has some 490 members. Its clubhouse is teeming with white ants and is suffering the effects of wood rot. The state of the very old building and the desperate need for a new one was brought to my attention while I was doorknocking in the lead-up to the State election, and I am truly delighted that this new clubhouse will come to fruition.

Recently I was invited to a special morning tea by The Entrance District Sporting and Community Centre Croquet Club, which was successful in receiving funds to erect a six-foot high boundary fence around the grounds. The members of the club take great pride in their lawns, the surrounding gardens and the clubhouse. Sadly, their beautification works are hindered by constant vandalism, foot traffic, animals and even vehicles. The perimeter fence will enable them to improve their lawns and beautify their gardens without the threat of their being destroyed. Members in the club range in age from their mid-fifties to mid-eighties and have a great spirit of camaraderie and friendship. Apart from the obvious benefit of the physical and mental activity, for many members it is their main source of social contact. The club works together to foster their welcoming environment by holding regular barbeques and social outings.

The Entrance District Sporting and Community Centre Croquet Club encourages local participation and also takes part in competition croquet at State, national and international levels. The club is run by a very efficient committee that meets on a regular basis. I would like to say a special thank you to Tracy Southern from Wyong Shire Council who assisted the committee—and particularly Betty Siegman, Club Secretary—in getting the application together. Along with Ourimbah United Soccer Club and The Entrance District Sporting and Community Centre Croquet Club, I am delighted that the following groups were awarded funds for their projects: Bateau Bay Men's Shed, to provide additional workspace and purchase a trailer; Girl Guides Association of New South Wales, for improvements to the Niagara Park Girl Guides Hall, including graffiti removal; and Gosford City Council, for renovations and upgrades to Niagara Park Children's Centre kitchen.

Other groups included Killarney Vale Australian Football League Club, for an electronic scoreboard and installation of an awning to the amenities building; Ourimbah Tennis Club, to upgrade the wire fencing around the courts; North Entrance Surf Life Saving Club, to repair the leaking roof on its clubhouse; Police and Community Youth Club Bateau Bay, for a floor covering to protect the new polished floorboards; Scouts Australia, for upgrades to the Ourimbah Scout Hall; The Entrance Bateau Bay Australian Football League Club received funding for its new clubhouse; the Razorbacks Rugby Club at Ourimbah received funding to resurface its rugby playing grounds and for a mower for maintenance; and Toowoomba Bay Surf Life Saving Club received funding for the installation of a mezzanine floor for storage space and equipment purchases. I congratulate the successful groups and thank each one for its input to the community. I look forward to seeing the completed projects.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [8.43 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I acknowledge the outstanding contribution that the member for The Entrance has made in such a short time to this House, this State and The Entrance constituents.

CLARENCE VALLEY CLUB INCORPORATED

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [8.44 p.m.]: I acknowledge the wonderful contribution that the Clarence Valley Club has made to worthy causes in the Clarence Valley since 1979. The Clarence Valley Club was born out of the notion that charity that begins at home should stay in the neighbourhood. Its long-time motto is a simple "We help." The club was created after Brian Heber, Pat Macdonald, Jack Kelly and their wives met in December 1978 at the Shirlaine restaurant in Grafton. Within weeks a public meeting was held at the Grafton Bowling Club and the club was formed. Foundation members included Bernie Barron, Pat Macdonald, Darcey Everingham, Brian Heber, Jack Kelly, Barry Rogan, Alan Malthouse, Ray Masters, Darryl Dickson, Malcolm Webber and Robert Tyler.

The first project cannot be recalled but current club president, Herb Abele, said that members did a lot of home improvements, remodelling bathrooms, and putting in ramps and the like in the homes of the disabled. It fits in well with their motto, "We help." In the early days of the club, three-quarters of its members were tradesmen who were happy to provide their services free of charge to needy charities. The first project that Herb can remember being involved in was the construction of tennis courts for children at St Joseph's Children's Homes in Grafton. Other projects include an amenities block on a property used as a market garden by the Grafton Salvation Army, a gift of \$14,000 to Grafton Base Hospital to purchase hydro mattresses, \$6,000 for lift equipment in both South Grafton and Maclean, and \$5,000 towards the appeal for a pool at the Caringa centre for the disabled. A large percentage of today's membership of 20 or so people are skilled tradesmen, although with insurance concerns and the fact that there is more assistance by government for sponsored programs, home improvements are no longer on the club's agenda.

Donations have gone to hospitals, nursing homes, children's and sporting groups, surf clubs, Meals on Wheels, Cancer Council appeals and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter. The club owns and maintains a number of motorised wheelchairs and scooters that are available for those in need in our community. Over the years thousands of dollars have been raised to boost appeals for individual families. People write in and ask for help—that is the sort of grassroots charity provided by the club. The original Clarence Valley Club members were all male but this changed in 1990 when it was opened to women members. Prior to this wives and partners of members had operated as the Clarence Valley Ladies Club. Among the club's major revenue raisers are the monthly old schoolhouse markets at Alummy Creek, operating the gates at the Grafton show and catering for the annual weekend of trucking held in Grafton each June.

Since 1979 the club has donated \$346,800 to charities throughout the Clarence Valley and contributed more than 176,800 man hours. That is a tremendous amount of work over a long time for charities in the Clarence Valley. Some of the beneficiaries include Westpac Helicopters, \$23,835; Grafton Base Hospital, \$38,000; Rural Fire Service, \$35,000 in donations and miscellaneous items; Cowper Homes, \$10,660; and the Grafton Showground Trust, \$8,500. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the work of the Clarence Valley Club in this place. I acknowledge all members of the club and particularly the executive: Herb Abele, President; Max Lawson, Vice President; John Hobbs, Secretary; and Mark Quinn, Treasurer. They do a remarkable job in the Clarence Valley and I commend the work that they have performed.

Private member's statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 8.48 p.m. until
Thursday 10 May 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**
