

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 21 June 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

Routine of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [10.00 a.m.]: I wish to inform honourable members about the business before the House today. Honourable members would be aware that two pieces of Government legislation are presently being dealt with in the other place. One of those is the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012, which I understand is being dealt with at the third reading stage as I speak. The other is the proposed workers compensation legislation. This morning I propose to commence in the usual way by the giving of notices of motions followed by community recognition notices.

The House will then deal with the motion that yesterday was given priority, standing in the name of the member for Charlestown. Members will be entitled to speak to that motion, and I understand that a number of members will be seeking leave to do so. I formally note that members who have indicated they will seek leave will be granted leave. The Government intends to allow members on both sides of the Chamber to speak to the motion. At the conclusion of debate on that motion, I anticipate that the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill will have been received from the upper House. In that case, at a convenient point we will deal with that bill. The workers compensation bills are a little more complex in the sense that they are yet to be fully dealt with in the upper House.

I would like members to understand that, if at all possible, we will deal with them today, but subject to the time they become available for this House to consider. At the moment my thoughts on this matter are that I will assess the situation and indeed discuss it with the member for Maroubra at approximately 5.00 p.m.—I do not anticipate that the bills will be received in this House any earlier—and I will make a decision on whether or not this House will sit later this evening. If the workers compensation bills are not received by between 7.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m., I am inclined to adjourn the House to the ringing of one long bell and bring members back tomorrow. Obviously, members would prefer to deal with the bills today, if at all possible, but it is a balancing act. I will have discussions with the Opposition during the course of the afternoon and I will inform members how that legislation will be dealt with.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

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

VOLUNTEERING

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the contribution made by volunteers within both the East Hills electorate and the wider community of New South Wales.
- (2) Recognises the invaluable role that volunteers play in the work of not-for-profit organisations within the East Hill Electorate.
- (3) Encourages everyone, who is able, to volunteer some of their time for the benefit of the community.

AUSSIE PAINTBALL, MILPERRA

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Steve Ballas and Terry Marousis on the official opening of Aussie Paintball, Milperra, on 25 May 2012.
- (2) Commends them for bringing commerce, employment and enjoyment to the East Hills electorate.
- (3) Encourages the community to get behind and support local small business.
- (4) Wishes Messrs Ballas and Marousis all the very best for a successful and prosperous future.

BANKSTOWN LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the eight new probationary police officers who commenced work at the Bankstown local area command [LAC] on 7 May 2012.
- (2) Commends all police officers of the Bankstown LAC for keeping the East Hills electorate safe.
- (3) Encourages the community to get behind and support all police officers.
- (4) Congratulates Superintendent David Eardley on the high standards of policing within the Bankstown local government area.
- (5) Wishes the eight new probationary police officers the very best in their careers with the NSW Police Force.

EAST HILLS ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA EVENT

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates David Roberts on organising the Biggest Morning Tea at Revesby Heights Ex-servicemen's Club which raised almost \$4,000 for the Cancer Council.
- (2) Recognises everyone within the East Hills electorate who either organised or attended a Biggest Morning Tea.
- (3) Encourages the community to support events like the Biggest Morning Tea to raise funds for cancer research.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN MCCORMICK, OAM

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Pays tribute to Mr Kevin McCormick, OAM, who passed away, aged 82, on 17 May 2012 after a short stay in hospital.
- (2) Recognises the contribution made by Mr McCormick to both Bankstown Sports Club and to the community of the Bankstown local government area.
- (3) Extends condolences to his partner, Ms Margaret O'Connor, and his family.

CHRISTIAN YOUTH CHANNEL

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the Christian Youth Channel, a multilingual international Coptic channel, dedicated to Christian youth of all denominations.
- (2) Applauds the channel for its efforts to enhance the awareness of the Coptic Church, faith and history.

GRAFTON LEGACY CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the commitment and dedication of members of the Legacy Club of Grafton Inc., in providing services to defence force families.
- (2) Pays tribute to outgoing President Legatee, Ron Shoebridge, and other members of the executive, Vice President Tom Cross, Junior Vice President M. Sexton, Honorary Secretary E. J. Tanner, Honorary Treasurer R. P. McFarlane and Sergeant-at-Arms J. A. Campbell.
- (3) Congratulates Tom Cross on his election as President Legatee and wishes him well in his role over the next two years.
- (4) Thanks all members of the Legacy Club of Grafton for their fundraising efforts over many years and also thanks the community for its generosity.

RED ROCK-CORINDI SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Red Rock-Corindi Surf Life Saving Club on another successful season.
- (2) Acknowledges the efforts of its volunteer surf lifesavers in keeping beaches safe for residents and visitors.
- (3) Acknowledges the following surf lifesaving volunteers who received awards at the annual presentation night held at Corindi Beach on 26 May 2012: Mitchell Wright, club person of the year; Narelle Wright, female member of the year; and Leane McLachlan, associate member of the year.
- (4) Acknowledges the commitment and dedication of the Club's current president, Brad Kearns and outgoing secretary, Leane McLachlan.
- (5) Pays tribute to the commitment and dedication of Leane McLachlan who has held a number of positions over a period of 13 years in the junior and senior clubs including secretary, publicity officer, fundraising officer, social club secretary, branch delegate, team manager and member protection officer.

BARYULGIL COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dr Ray Jones, from the Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service in Grafton, on his role in implementing a preventative health program for Aboriginal children at Baryulgil.
- (2) Acknowledges the support of Dr Andrew Black and Farmer Lou's in Grafton which provided the fruit and vegetables to the Baryulgil community.
- (3) Commends Dr Jones, Dr Black and Farmer Lou's for working together to deliver this program, which has halved the rate of deafness in Aboriginal children in Baryulgil and had profound health benefits for them overall.

CARRAMAR PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the dedication and work by staff and students at Carramar Public School in maintaining gardens on school grounds.
- (2) Commends Carramar Public School for encouraging healthy habits and significant values to its students in caring for the environment.
- (3) Congratulates Carramar Public School for participating and winning the Fabulous Fairfield Award from Fairfield City Council.

BAGPIPER LACHLAN MICATI

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Lachlan Micati's achievement, commitment and success in playing the bagpipes.
- (2) Commends Lachlan for his dedication and work in teaching other school students this musical instrument.
- (3) Congratulates Lachlan on being welcomed to the Scots College Pipe and Drum Band in Bellevue Hill.

VARIETY LIBERTY SWINGS

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the invaluable contribution that Variety provides directly to families and organisations to empower students with special needs.
- (2) Notes that Variety has funded more than 70 Liberty Swings in New South Wales in parks and special needs schools.
- (3) Congratulates Variety representatives David George and Scott Dundas and William Stimson Public School on the official opening of the Liberty Swing.

CLUB MARCONI

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Club Marconi's achievement and success in hosting Italian Republic Day celebrations on 27 May 2012.
- (2) Notes Club Marconi's invaluable contribution to the Italian community in New South Wales over a number of years.
- (3) Congratulates the achievements of the Italian community in Australia, especially in New South Wales.

GEORGETOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the commitment to community, safety and security displayed by members of Neighbourhood Watch groups.
- (2) Congratulates Morris Graham who has been the secretary of the Georgetown branch of Neighbourhood Watch since the branch was founded in 1987.

NSW SWIFTS NETBALL TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the NSW Swifts for winning their match against West Coast Fever at the Newcastle Entertainment Centre on 20 May 2012.
- (2) Congratulates NSW Swifts' coach Lisa Beehag on her efforts in leading the team to win five straight matches in the Trans-Tasman Netball Championship.
- (3) Congratulates Susan Pratley who shot 32 goals out of 39 attempts in the match.
- (4) Notes the important role that professional sport plays in the community, with the players, the public and the economic benefit of sporting events taken to regional centres.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER HAYLEY MACKAY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends Hayley Mackay, from the Hunter, for producing a documentary highlighting the numerous areas across Cambodia and Vietnam that are filled with landmines.
- (2) Notes that Ms Mackay is a graduate of the University of Newcastle and that the documentary will be released later in 2012.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE FLU MONITORING PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the University of Newcastle for developing the second largest influenza monitoring program in the world.
- (2) Notes the online influenza surveillance program alerts health officials to large outbreaks of influenza.
- (3) Congratulates coordinator Dr Craig Dalton and the researchers at the University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health for devising this initiative.

KATIE EBZERY EMERGING OPALS SQUAD SELECTION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates basketballer Katie Ebzery, of the Newcastle Hunters, for being named in the Emerging Opals squad to play six games on a tour of China in June 2012.
- (2) Notes that Ms Ebzery was the Waratah Basketball League's leading scorer in 2011.

FOOTBALLER ISAAC HEANEY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Isaac Heaney, of the Australian Football team Cardiff Hawks, on making the under-16 NSW/ACT Rams representative squad.
- (2) Offers its best wishes to Isaac in his young Australian Football career.

CORPORAL RYAN AVERY MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY AWARD

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Corporal Ryan Avery, of Shortland, on receiving the nation's third highest military honour, the Medal for Gallantry.
- (2) Commends Corporal Avery on his extreme courage and selflessness which enabled his patrol to safely withdraw in the face of significant enemy forces.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT HELEN CROLL-WILSON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Helen Croll-Wilson, of Cronulla, on the receipt of the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to medical history through curatorial roles with the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Heritage Centre.
- (2) Thanks Ms Croll-Wilson for that service.

NORTHERN BEACHES CHORUS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA—That this House:

- (1) Notes the Northern Beaches Chorus was awarded a third place medal from a field of 19 choruses at the National 2012 Sweet Adelines contest in Canberra.
- (2) Congratulates the chorus on achieving its ambition of becoming a B+ Chorus, which is the same level as Australian champion choruses.
- (3) Acknowledges the work of the internationally renowned coaches and music director Linda Wareham in the success of the Northern Beaches Chorus.

BONDI SURF BATHERS' LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Bondi Surf Bathers' Life Saving club established in 1907 is officially recognised as the oldest surf lifesaving club in the world.
- (2) Commends the club for its dedication to ensuring no lives are lost when it patrols Bondi Beach.
- (3) Congratulates club members who received awards at the presentation night on 2 June 2012.

ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the scholarship winners from Asquith Boys' High School: Brandon Lukich-Yang and Sam Powell, of Mount Colah, Creative and Visual Arts; Andrew Morrison, of Mount Colah, Creative Arts Stage Band; and Thomas Tuynman, of Hornsby, the Academic Mervyn Brown Scholarship for Physics.
- (2) Wishes these students all the best in their endeavours.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT DR DAVID LILLYSTONE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dr David Lillystone on being awarded the Order of Australia Medal for over 35 years of service to paediatric and child health in Hornsby and the North Shore.
- (2) Notes that Dr Lillystone is also a councillor of the board of the Tresillian Royal Society for the welfare of mothers and babies.

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT SARAH PARKINSON

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Sarah Parkinson, of Hornsby, on receiving the Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Award and a Rotary Club of Hornsby Pride of Workmanship Award.
- (2) Notes that the award criteria is for nurses and midwives who are visionary, innovative leaders and change agents; and moving the profession forward through work in patient-women care, education or research, or other professional activities, endeavours or contributions.
- (3) Wishes Sarah every success in the future.

BUXTON AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Buxton Festival Committee on its successful festival that was held on Sunday 29 April 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges Pam Down for organising the festival markets and the marketing of the event.
- (3) Recognises the members of the Rural Fire Service for their attendance and support of the festival.

MACARTHUR GARDENS RETIREMENT VILLAGE OPENING

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates everyone at the official opening of the Macarthur Gardens Retirement Village on 27 April 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges David Pittman, from Retirement Living at Stockland, and the Minister for Fair Trading who attended the opening.
- (3) Notes the sense of community ownership and belonging that residents of the village have to their newly opened facility in Wollondilly.

AUSSIE HELPERS CHARITY

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges those who supported and participated in a karaoke night to raise money for the Aussie Helpers Charity.
- (2) Commends the vision and dedication of Mr Brian Egan who established the charity to assist those in rural and farming communities.
- (3) Recognises the importance of supporting rural and farming communities.

KOSHIGAYA PARK PLAYGROUND

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Thanks Campbelltown City Council for the delivery of a new playground for Koshigaya Park.
- (2) Notes the value of this park in strengthening community wellbeing.

CAMPBELLTOWN TAFE AWARDS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges those who organised, supported and attended the TAFE Awards 2012 at Campbelltown Catholic Club.
- (2) Recognises the role Campbelltown TAFE plays in the education of local citizens.
- (3) Commends all winners of NSW TAFE medals.

AUSTRALIAN AIRMEN WORLD WAR II SERVICE

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the World War II service of Mr Dudley Hannaford, of Wollondilly, in the British Royal Air Force.
- (2) Congratulates all Australian ex-service men and women chosen to represent Australia at the dedication of the memorial acknowledging airmen of World War II in London on 28 June 2012.
- (3) Wish the members of the Australian delegation all the best for their forthcoming trip.

ANNA BARNES AND ANNE COOKE WORLD MASTERS SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS SELECTION

Mr JAI ROWELL: Mr Jai Rowell—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the efforts of Ms Anna Barnes and Ms Anne Cooke in their preparation for the World Masters Swimming Championships in Riccione, Italy, between 10 and to 17 June 2012.
- (2) Wishes Anna Barnes and Anne Cooke all the best in their events at the World Masters Championships.

MUMS MOVIE NIGHT FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Commends Mrs Presic for her support of the Sydney Children's Hospital through a Mums Movie Night fundraiser on 12 June 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work Mrs Presic and her fellow volunteers in organising the Mums Movie Night.
- (3) Wishes Mrs Presic's son Jay all the best in overcoming his ongoing health problems.

ALLIED MILLS DEVELOPMENT

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House acknowledges the development of the Allied Mills \$27 million joint venture with Graincorp in contributing to jobs and expanding business in Wollondilly.

MANNING VALLEY COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the executives of the Manning Valley branch of the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association: John Newell, President; John Flood, First Vice President; Len Bannister, Second Vice President; Sue Furlong, Secretary; Neville Mays, Assistant Secretary and Publicity Officer; and Nell Muhlsimmer, Treasurer.
- (2) Notes that, through its committee, the branch has been active in providing advice to its members on financial and related matters.

FORSTER TUNCURRY HAWKS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dean Basham, captain of the Forster Tuncurry Hawks rugby league team, on playing his 200th game for the Hawks.
- (2) Notes that the Hawks won this match defeating the Wingham Tigers 58 to 8.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT MARK VAILE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Hon. Mark Vaile on being appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2012 for services to the Parliament of Australia.
- (2) Notes that Mark Vaile, AO, is a former member for Lyne, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Trade and Minister for Transport and Regional Development and was Leader of the Nationals from 2005 to 2007 and Deputy Leader from 1999 to 2005.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT MAVIS RICHARDSON

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mavis Richardson on being appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2012 for services to the community of Manning Valley.
- (2) Notes that Councillor Richardson has been a councillor on Greater Taree City Council since 2004, has been chairperson of numerous council committees and was awarded the Public Service Medal in 1999.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT DR MOHEB GHALY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dr Moheb Ghaly, of Taree, on receiving the Medal in the General Division in the Order of Australia.
- (2) Notes that Dr Ghaly has been a general surgeon in Taree and a Visiting Medical Officer at Manning Rural Referral Hospital in Taree since 1986 and is a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT ROSS PRESGRAVE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Ross Presgrave, late of Forster, received the Medal in the General Division in the Order of Australia.
- (2) Notes that Ross Presgrave was the founder and chairman of Ronald McDonald Family Retreat, Forster, and numerous other charitable and community organisations in the Great Lakes area.

BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITOR JOSH BROOKES

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Josh Brookes, of Bringelly, on moving into second place in the British Superbike Championships after good results at Thruxton and Oulton Park, England.
- (2) Wishes Mr Brookes the best of luck for the remainder of the championship.

INTERNATIONAL SONGWRITING COMPETITION WINNER NATASHA DUARTE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Natasha Duarte, of Glenmore Park, on winning first place in the Teen category of the 2011 International Songwriting Competition.
- (2) Notes that Missy Higgins, Jedediah and Kimbra also won this category in the early stages of their careers.

WALLACIA PANTHERS LADIES GOLF CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House acknowledges the generosity and hard work of Wallacia Panthers Ladies Golf Club in raising \$6,000 for the Nepean Cancer Care Centre.

PENRITH POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Senior Constable Richard Hogan on winning the Penrith Police Officer of the Year Award 2011.
- (2) Congratulates Claire Hogan on winning the General Administration and Support Officer of the Year Award 2011.

LOGAN RYMER NEW SOUTH WALES BASKETBALL TEAM SELECTION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House congratulates 12-year-old Logan Rymer, of Claremont Meadows, on being selected for the New South Wales basketball team to compete at the Australian Primary School Championships.

EMMA TERRY BOSTON BALLET SCHOOL SELECTION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 16 year old Emma Terry, of Glenmore Park, on being selected for a place at the Boston Ballet School in the United States of America.
- (2) Wishes her well on her journey to becoming a professional dancer.

ST MARYS RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House acknowledges the generosity and hard work of the St Marys RSL Sub-branch in donating \$6,000 amongst 12 local schools.

ST MARYS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House congratulates St Marys Rugby League Club on receiving a Clubs NSW Award for Excellence in the large clubs category.

RETIREMENT OF CHRISTINE GREEN

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the contribution Christine Green has made to the operations of the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens for more than 16 years.
- (2) Congratulates Christine on her retirement and thanks her for maintaining such a high level of enthusiasm for the gardens during her employment and volunteering.

AUSTRALIAN FLY CASTING CHAMPIONSHIPS AND LILLEY FAMILY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tony and Jayden Lilley, members of the Bulahdelah Fishing Club, on winning their age groups at the NSW Casting Championships held in Tuncurry.
- (2) Notes that Jayden is 14 years old and was placed second in the 2011 National Casting Titles with a 123 metre cast.
- (3) Notes that the Lilley family, including Therese and Leteisha, will take part in the Australian Casting Titles in Queensland during August.

BULAHDELAH LIONS CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Bulahdelah Lions Club on its donation of \$500 to provide breakfast for hungry children at Bulahdelah Central School.
- (2) Notes that breakfast is provided by volunteers and teachers every Thursday and Friday morning to up to 120 pupils from kindergarten to year 12.
- (3) Notes that the club intends to make a further donation of \$500 in term three to meet the demand for the breakfast.

BONNIE WINGHAM SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Manning Valley Historical Society, and its President, Eric Richardson, on organising the eighth Bonnie Scottish Festival that was held in Wingham on 2 and 3 June 2012.
- (2) Notes the festival was attended by thousands of people who came to celebrate and recognise the impact of early Scottish migrants on the area.

GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL WATER-SAVING MEASURES

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Gosford City Council for its innovative approach to sustainability by saving 25 per cent of its annual water usage in the Gosford Council building in Mann Street, Gosford.
- (2) Notes that this saving, through the installation of a condensation re-use tank and dual flush toilets will save over one million litres of water per annum.
- (3) Recognises the work of Rod Williams, Director, and Mikell Borg, Project Officer.

RETIREMENT OF PETER WILSON

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Peter Wilson, General Manager of Gosford City Council, on his retirement.
- (2) Recognises the contribution of Peter to delivering a number of major projects for the city of Gosford such as the Central Coast Stadium, the Gosford Regional Art Gallery and the Peninsula Leisure Centre.
- (3) Wishes Peter a long and happy retirement with his family.

HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE RESEARCHER OF THE YEAR PROFESSOR AMANDA BAKER

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Professor Amanda Baker on receiving the Hunter Medical Research Institute researcher of the year award, the first female recipient since the awards inception in 1999.
- (2) Commends Professor Baker on her extensive research into the treatment of mental health and drug and alcohol-related problems.

CALLAGHAN COLLEGE HEALTHY SCHOOLS, HEALTHY FUTURES PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Callaghan College, Wallsend Campus, on its selection to be involved in the Healthy Schools, Healthy Futures research program.
- (2) Commends the Healthy Schools, Healthy Futures program for its efforts to work with the school community to increase the resilience of students and to improve their health and wellbeing.
- (3) Recognises the great commitment to the program by Principal Paul Tracey and School Project Officer Tanya Wedesweiler.

CALLAGHAN COLLEGE WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY ACTIVITIES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Callaghan College Jesmond Campus students on their involvement in World Environment Day.
- (2) Recognises the great commitment by students who pedalled bicycles attached to mini-generators in an attempt to highlight the increasing cost of their personal electronic equipment.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2012

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

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Robert Brown, MLC, advising that the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly.

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

FAIRFAX MEDIA RESTRUCTURE

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [10.12 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns Fairfax Media for its decision to move 66 production jobs from its regional mastheads to New Zealand; and
- (2) notes that the loss of the 41 subeditors in Hunter Fairfax Publications will have severe personal effects on those involved and adversely affect the quality and accuracy of printed news in the Hunter.

On 13 June this year Fairfax Media Ltd announced that it will proceed with its plan to move 41 editorial positions from the *Newcastle Herald*, *Port Stephens Examiner*, *Lakes Mail*, *Myall Coast Nota* and the *Newcastle Star* to New Zealand. This is a sad development for the Hunter. This is a sad development for the quality of journalism in my region and, most importantly, this is a sad development for the individuals concerned and their families. This motion deserves support because in the pursuit of cost efficiencies Fairfax Media will reduce the value of one of its flagship brands, the *Newcastle Herald*. The measure will remove career opportunities for journalists in the Hunter. By removing subediting from the region Fairfax has removed a step in the career path of journalists, thus making it harder to attract and retain quality journalists in the region. Therefore, this will reduce the editorial quality of our local newspaper.

The *Newcastle Herald* has a proud and long history. It was first published, albeit under another name, in 1868. It has delivered the news in a fearless fashion for 154 years. It has reported on the great events of our region—the Newcastle earthquake, the sinking of the *Cawarra* and the Japanese attack on our port. The *Newcastle Herald* is an important part in the lives of everyone in the Hunter. This motion deserves support because by offshoring the important function of subediting, the *Newcastle Herald's* capacity to continue its role in the lives of everyone in the Hunter will be reduced. It is counterintuitive that a subeditor based in New Zealand will understand the nuances of a story in the same way a locally-based subeditor would. I developed my interest in public policy by reading the *Newcastle Herald*. I have copies of the newspaper I have saved for years, and I have thrown copies in the bin immediately after reading them.

But it has been an important part of my life and it has been critical in recording the lives and stories of those who have had the good fortune to live in the Hunter. Some of my earliest memories are sitting at the breakfast table with my father reading the *Newcastle Herald* and being shown how to read different words that had not quite entered my lexicon at that age. It is a publication that is part of the fabric and tapestry of the lives of the Hunter people. Its initial guise as the *Miners' Advocate* was exactly that, it was a paper born out of the community and designed to support the community. It will be a very sad day when these subediting positions go. It will diminish the quality of the newspaper. Fairfax Media is undervaluing the paper by this decision. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [10.16 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Charlestown, which is replicated and also moved by all members representing Hunter electorates from all sides of the political divide—Labor, Liberal, Nationals and Independent:

That this House:

- (1) condemns Fairfax Media for its decision to move 66 production jobs from its regional mastheads to New Zealand; and
- (2) notes that the loss of the 41 subeditors in Hunter Fairfax Publications will have severe personal effects on those involved and adversely affect the quality and accuracy of printed news in the Hunter.

It is always interesting to start a conversation about business restructures and job cuts by looking at the figures. Is the business currently profitable? The simple answer is yes. In August 2011 the Fairfax group announced an after tax and after share dividend profit for the period 2010-11 of \$273.7 million. Indeed, it is reported that the profit for the Hunter's very own regional publication, the *Newcastle Herald*, is \$15 million per year. So the business model is not broken. The strangest thing about this business remodel, forced upon the workers and the community of the Hunter, is that the model and structure do not seem to be changing too much other than to move some of the jobs offshore and save money in wages. The business model appears to be the same, but now includes sourcing cheaper workers.

Australians across this country should be outraged, furious and appalled. This goes to the heart of the ongoing debate in this country about jobs—local jobs, Australian jobs, jobs that can and should be done in this country, not elsewhere. I personally am mystified and gobsmacked that a desk analysis done somewhere by

some number-cruncher would find a better business model that includes having editorial work done by people who know nothing about the region, the people, the words or the work they are editing. In acknowledging that New Zealanders speak the same language and share many of the same customs and culture of Australia, I must also emphasise that editorial work being done in New Zealand could just as well be done in Portugal, Japan or Russia. After all, the very point of editorial work is to double-check, review and authenticate the work.

Paragraph 1 of the motion refers to mastheads of regional Fairfax Media. A newspaper earns the title masthead because it is superior and of a higher calibre. The removal of the editorial jobs from the Fairfax regional mastheads will have a derogatory effect on the quality and integrity of these publications. In the Hunter the *Newcastle Herald* is without peer. It stands above all others in quality, local integrity and local connectivity. Anything other than local integrity will expose this publication to the risk of a fall from the masthead to the hull. One does not get local integrity from a site 3,000 kilometres away. Paragraph (2) of the motion refers to the severe personal effects of Fairfax's decision. In my short time in this place I have quickly become sick to death of the reference to numbers, data and statistics to justify jobs.

Jobs require real people with families and debts, who are coaches of the local soccer team, who make our supermarkets and libraries hum, who turn up to the funerals of friends, who support our restaurants and takeaways, and who have an income that allows them to spend so that other people can be employed to service their needs. They are the people of our communities. In the Hunter 41 jobs equates to approximately \$4 million in revenue and disposable income. With \$4 million taken out of the economy, one would be a fool to expect anything other than direct impacts. By its action, Fairfax Media is taking a \$4 million sledgehammer to the Hunter economy. I cannot stand by silently while this happens. I propose a third paragraph to the motion calling on the Government to avoid advertising in Fairfax media. This decision of Fairfax Media leads to the self-fulfilling doom of the industry; the same doom and gloom it spreads to justify the annihilation of the *Newcastle Herald*. Amazingly, if Fairfax fails in its restructure move, some within the company will point to this action as proof of that failure.

By the same token, if advertisers and subscribers remove their support, as many have said they will, the company will point to that also as proof of the need to move. As journalists from the *Newcastle Herald* seek to move a no confidence motion on Fairfax boss Greg Hywood, I refer to reports of investments by someone we all may know, Mr Warren Buffet. Warren Buffet is described as the world's ultimate investor. Apparently, he has decided that newspapers have untapped value. Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. has just purchased 63 newspapers, and Buffet says he plans to buy more. He is a self-described newspaper addict who believes in an intensely local editorial focus and a sustainable business model. Warren Buffet should know; he has amassed a personal wealth of \$44 billion. He must know something about business and profit. I suggest that before sacking anyone, the desk accountants of Fairfax should talk with Mr Warren Buffet. I support the motion.

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [10.22 a.m.]: I too support the motion moved by the member for Charlestown. On 2 June 2012, a cold Saturday afternoon 19 days ago, I went to Civic Park in Newcastle. More than 1,000 people gathered alongside workers from the *Newcastle Herald*, the *Port Stephens Examiner*, the *Lakes Mail*, *Myall Coast News* and the *Star*. Civic Park has seen its fair share of protests, but on 2 June 2012 things were different: people from all backgrounds, political and religious persuasions, young and old, male and female, banded together not to protest but to fight for something in which the whole community believes. It was a rally of the hearts and minds of people from across the Hunter. We stood united to condemn Fairfax Media for its decision to move 66 editorial production jobs from its regional mastheads to New Zealand—a move that will have an adverse effect on the quality and accuracy of printed news in the Hunter.

We stood united because for over 150 years the *Newcastle Herald* has stood by the people of the Hunter. Just as Fort Scratchley, Nobbys headland, the Bogey Hole and Merewether Baths are known as Newcastle icons, so too is our *Newcastle Herald*. The loss of 41 subeditors from the Hunter Fairfax offices is devastating. There has been an outcry from Fairfax employees to reverse the decision. There has been an outcry from the community to reverse the decision. There has been an outcry from members of Parliament, from both sides of the political spectrum, to reverse the decision. This decision will change the face of reporting in the city I have been elected to represent. I condemn Fairfax's decision to move 66 editorial production jobs to New Zealand. It is a senseless decision for this most profitable daily newspaper, which provides the heart of media training in our region.

If this decision was based on a less-than-break-even situation, I possibly could understand it. But the decision is not about jobs and profitability, which this newspaper brings to our region and to Fairfax shareholders. Fairfax Media is breaking up a team of united employees who together serve our community. This

team of employees is passionate about their town and jobs and draws on their local knowledge to inform their reporting. Support for *Newcastle Herald* employees has been overwhelming, especially on the "We Love Our Newcastle Herald" Facebook page. Comments from that page describe how Fairfax's decision will break down the teamwork that has enabled the *Newcastle Herald* to withstand the test of time, thus far. The main comment states:

At the Newcastle Herald we've managed to break down the traditional distinctions between subs and reporters, photographers and journos. Partly through necessity, partly through desire, we have subs who write, writers who sub, artists who lay out pages and make multimedia, journos who shoot video and photographers making multimedia journalism. Our print reporters are our digital reporters and vice versa. We are leading the way in multiplatform collaboration. We are truly working as a team. To suggest you can axe 41 people from 90-odd in the newsroom and provide a seamless, quality experience for readers is naive at best. Its uninformed and ignorant of the way we are doing things, and more importantly the way were planning to do things under our newsroom restructure that was so rudely interrupted by this New Zealand folly. we were ready to become a hub. we could be still. but instead nearly half our staff—the ones wearing subs hats on the roster—will be gone. Angry, sad, stupefied. Embarrassed that we have the management we do.

The Australian communications landscape is evolving and changes need to be made. However, Fairfax regional media's response to increasing market pressures and treatment of its employees was avoidable. In light of yesterday's announcement that Fairfax Media will cut a further 1,900 jobs over the next three years, I only hope that it will hold those employees' concerns and community opinions in higher esteem.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.26 a.m.]: I shall briefly refer to three matters relating to this motion. First, the importance of local jobs to our community; second, a letter I received from Greg Hywood after I wrote to him on behalf of my community about concerns with Fairfax's position; and, finally, my distaste with offshoring and outsourcing work in the Hunter and the community's distaste, particularly in the Hunter, for offshoring and outsourcing local jobs. Not only has Fairfax has announced the loss of 41 jobs in the Hunter, but also a further 1,900 staff will go over the next three years. In addition, of course, by 2014 Fairfax will close two printing facilities. This represents a great loss of jobs for the New South Wales and Australian economies.

Of course, I am concerned about the 41 job losses of local Hunter professionals. The member for Charlestown made an excellent point, as have all members who so far have contributed to this debate, when he talked about career opportunities being removed from the Hunter. The member for Charlestown said that removing subediting positions will make it more difficult to attract future quality staff because of the dead-end career path in the Hunter. That is not what we want to see in the Hunter. We want our quality journalists and professionals to have local career paths to ensure their quality and integrity and continuation of work in the Hunter. That is very important. I also support the member for Cessnock when he asked, Is the business model that Fairfax is using profitable? Of course, we know that the answer is yes.

The next question to ask is: Why is it making this decision? It just does not make sense. The member for Newcastle talked about the wonderful 150-year history of the *Newcastle Herald* of which we Novocastrians are very proud. That too is important. In the brief time remaining I refer to my third topic: my and the community's distaste for offshoring. In 2008 jobs were lost at the Bonds factory in the electorate of the member for Cessnock. It was a sad day for local workers. Our region has been hit hard with many textiles factories closing, including Rundles and particularly Bonds. Closing local factories hits the local economy hard. Our local community has a real distaste for offshoring jobs. We want our jobs performed by those who live in our area and who know about and understand the importance of what is happening in the community.

I am sure that many members in my community would wonder how anyone in New Zealand who was double-checking the work would have an understanding of what was happening in Hunter. It is bad enough when Sydney journalists try to write about what is happening in the Hunter without an understanding of the local area, but work quality would suffer if New Zealand editors were writing about Newcastle. I am disappointed about this decision. On behalf of the community I say to Fairfax: Do not send jobs offshore. Do not outsource jobs. It is not what we do in the Hunter.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.30 a.m.]: Support for Fairfax journalists and staff in the Hunter and Illawarra can be demonstrated no better than by the 10 nearly identical motions that were placed on the *Business Paper* last week. Those motions were moved by me and by the members representing the electorates of Charlestown, Newcastle, Swansea, Lake Macquarie, Wallsend and Cessnock, and our Illawarra counterparts the members representing the electorates of Keira, Wollongong and Shellharbour, when Fairfax announced it would proceed with plans to move 66 editorial production jobs from its regional mastheads to New Zealand. We all agreed that this move was nothing short of a catastrophe for the future of journalism in the Hunter and the Illawarra and the integrity of printed news in the future. I do not know

whether Fairfax is aware that the *Newcastle Herald* is the main daily newspaper in the Hunter. Fairfax has confirmed that 41 jobs will go, so 41 families will be without a breadwinner. I should say 40 because I believe two of those subeditors are married with a newborn babe in arms.

In the Illawarra a further 25 subeditors will be in the dole queue. How do 66 very talented and experienced journalists and editors find employment in cities that they love and have served passionately for years? What will it mean to the *Lakes Mail* and the *Newcastle Star*, also local and profitable Fairfax publications? What will it mean for the two weekly papers in my own electorate, the *Port Stephens Examiner* and the *Myall Coast News*? Unfortunately the journalists there, with whom I have a great working relationship, are still unsure. What they are passionate about is the possibility of the quality of their paper suffering if it is subedited outside the Hunter. Of course events have probably overtaken this issue with this week's announcement that a further 1,900 Fairfax jobs are to go as the Fairfax executives belatedly find themselves in the online era. Fairfax is going online with its loss leaders the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*, but what about our regional and local papers?

Some may write off these local papers as "rags"—quaint weekly country newspapers delivered every week onto people's front lawns in a plastic bag. But these papers often are the only newspapers some of my constituents read and they read every word, every week. They are, and have been for generations, a wonderful source of community news. They are a true record of our times for the local community, filled with local news written by local journalists and then keenly scrutinised by local subeditors. The loss of jobs is always devastating to me as a local member, but the long-term outcome of having an overseas journalist edit a local journalist's work is frightening to say the least. Who in the Land of the Long White Cloud would know the nuances that local scribes know? I would have thought that the Leveson inquiry would have had newspaper proprietors reflecting on the role of media and how media should interface with the community on whom they rely for their ongoing relevancy and success.

I know the people of the Hunter. I think I can suggest that the name "Hunter" is Aboriginal for "parochial". They love the Knights, the Jets and when they are so obviously taken for granted by some faceless nameless Sydney bureaucrats they will react. The people of the Hunter will stop buying the *Newcastle Herald* and Hunter-based companies will stop wasting money on advertising in a second-rate paper that nobody reads. Fairfax is now showing contempt for 1,966 loyal employees and for many thousands of current, and soon to be former, readers. The Hunter has a strong regional community because of its strong media force. Each town has its own weekly paper for the community and the regional daily, the *Newcastle Herald*, has been around for 154 years. While the *Newcastle Herald* still markets itself as "the voice of the Hunter", just below its masthead, we really have to wonder whether it will now become "the diluted voice of the Hunter by way of New Zealand". It just does not have quite the same ring to it.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [10.34 a.m.]: I concur with the sentiments expressed by my colleagues from the Hunter and the Illawarra who have spoken on the two-part motion moved by the member for Charlestown which refers to 66 production jobs from regional mastheads that will be lost to New Zealand. In the case of the Hunter the motion refers to 41 subeditorial positions that will be lost. Earlier the member for Newcastle referred to the Saturday community rally which he attended in conjunction with other State members and members of local government. Members of the community across the board, including business leaders and representatives from various political arenas with a wide range of life experiences attended that rally.

The position of Fairfax was roundly condemned. On that day I spoke as Mayor of the City of Lake Macquarie. Having had a lot to do with local newspapers over many years we have seen some changes, in particular, to regional weeklies which over the years have been more susceptible to change. The *Newcastle Herald* has been an anchor of our community. I imagine that the *Illawarra Mercury* would service the Illawarra community in the same way. These important newspapers bind our community together. The Hunter is a large community and is disparate in geography and the types of communities that have evolved. However, the one thing that brings us together in that regional family is the news and community relationship we share that is conveyed by those newspapers. I was astounded that not just the model but a paper that was profitable, through the investment of time, effort, imagination and commitment by journalists working for Fairfax, is being disregarded by Fairfax.

Huge changes have been forecast in the media, such as the increase in the number of jobs that might be lost at Fairfax or News Corporation. Currently we have a model that is working. Journalists and employees of this organisation across the board, across the range of investments in the local area, say that they are prepared to work with Fairfax to find solutions to the problems it is experiencing across the board. I would have thought that

Fairfax would have embraced that as part of the model. Other members referred today to the changes that are occurring with the offshoring of subeditorial roles and the loss of knowledge and perception in the local area. These changes might seem imperceptible or small issue to issue, but the decline or change in the tone and understanding of the newspaper will be inexorable. It will be interesting to look back in years to come to see how the *Newcastle Herald* and its regional weeklies changed over that time.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [10.38 a.m.], by leave: I join my colleagues in the Hunter and the Illawarra in speaking to the motion. Like earlier speakers, I was brought up on the *Illawarra Mercury*, a publication that my family reads frequently. My father has subscribed to the paper ever since I was very young. I remember distinctly that we would gather round and have a chat about the daily news, either in the morning, the afternoon or evening. Back then the internet and so on simply were not available, and we used the newspapers as a means of trying to make sure we were on top of the latest issues that were happening in our local community.

My father was a passionate believer that one got to know the community by reading about it; that although one did not always believe everything that was in the paper, one read it and learned about the community and engaged with the issues that it brought to one's attention. I cannot for the life of me, having lived in the Illawarra all my life, imagine how subeditors working thousands of kilometres away will be able to do their job of critiquing the work put in front of them by reporters. In some areas, particularly in the northern part of the Illawarra, the names of places are often linked to Aboriginal names, so that Towradgi may become Tarowgi and Woonona will become Wonorna. Things like that will be lost on those who are not locals.

Another issue concerns me. Though it may seem unusual that this comes from a member of Parliament, I think most in this place would agree on it. It concerns local media. I know many of us would have had frustrations with the local media. We had a few from the last campaign; when one suffers an 18 per cent swing, one probably has a few more frustrations than most. Members have their fair share of frustrations with the media, but it brings a sense of accountability to members in this place and members of community who are putting forward ideas. I do not think that hurts anyone. It certainly does not hurt democracy, and it probably does not hurt people in this place. I do not think anyone in this place would be threatened by that sort of parochialism that leads to local accountability. But local media does bring a sense of spirit and community within the local region.

The Illawarra is going through some difficult times. We, probably more than most regions across New South Wales and Australia, have in the past 12 months had a downsizing of our major manufacturer in BlueScope and the consequent and significant challenges. We, like our Novocastrian partners, have gone through and are going through a significant transformation of our local economy. That needs to be factored in when decisions like this are being made by Fairfax. This is the paper that often talks about government not doing its fair share to invest in communities, of government not making a fair contribution to support local communities, and it is out there making sure that local politicians like us are doing all we can to get a fair share for our communities.

It is at times like these that Fairfax should reflect on the fact that it operates in regional communities; it operates in communities that rely on Fairfax media; it operates in communities in which locals, residents a small business operators need operators like Fairfax to be a robust and important part of those communities. I say this to Fairfax: the *Illawarra Mercury* will remain a very important paper, but I want it to be a paper that reflects the issues and the concerns of the people that those here lucky enough to represent the Illawarra truly believe in. I and my friends and colleagues in the Hunter stand shoulder to shoulder to make sure that Fairfax understands very clearly that it plays an important role. We expect it to continue to play an important role in our local communities.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [10.42 a.m.], by leave: I make a brief contribution to this debate, and congratulate the member for Charlestown on moving this motion today. I have no doubt that members in this Chamber representing all sides of politics are concerned about the restructure of Fairfax. I draw the attention of the House to the impact that the Fairfax restructure will have on the Bankstown region. I have spoken in the House previously about Chullora Industrial Park, which we are blessed to have in our region. It has, of course, several significant businesses, including those of Fairfax and News Limited. This is a major economic hub in our region, and is a great source of employment for the greater Bankstown area.

Fairfax is one of the major businesses that has offices based in Chullora, so its decision to close the printing facility at the Chullora Industrial Park by June 2014 is of grave concern to me, to our council and to the entire region, given the significance of the site to the local area and the fact that more than 200 people, mostly

locals, work in that facility. Many people will be impacted by this proposal. The member for Keira quite rightly said that many businesses rely on Fairfax being based at Chullora. I remind the House that the Chullora print complex was opened in 1995, at a cost of \$315 million; that it was upgraded between 2000 and 2001, at a further cost to Fairfax of about \$70 million; and that it prints each week an average of approximately 13 million newspapers and newspaper sections, including the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Financial Review* and the *Sun-Herald*, along with various other lift-out sections. Plans to close the Chullora printing complex will be a great loss to our region.

I would have hoped that Fairfax would have spent some time talking to the workers at the site. I have been advised that the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union said that members of staff were not consulted prior to the announcement of the restructure. This has created a great deal of concern for those workers. We regularly hear reports of high unemployment in certain regions of Sydney, and there is no doubt that south-western Sydney has high unemployment rates. Losing this Fairfax printing facility at Chullora will be a significant loss to our community. As I am sure all members of this House would agree, having a strong and free media presence in our democracy is not only important but also essential. I think we are all at a loss at the decision that Fairfax has taken in relation to this restructure. We know that these are difficult times, given the digital age and the internet, but there are ways and means to look at how to keep jobs and how important it is to keep these printing facilities in Sydney and across New South Wales in all regional areas. I reiterate my concern about the decision that Fairfax has made to shut the Chullora printing facility in June 2014.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [10.46 a.m.], in reply: I think it was Winston Churchill who said that a politician who complains about the media is like a sailor complaining about the sea. The motion has demonstrated one important thing about the people in this place from all sides of the political divide: the vast majority of members elected to this place have been elected out of a sense of community, not out of a sense of ideology. The local newspaper is one of those key things that bind our communities together; it is one of the sinews of our communities. Each of the points raised by members reflects how this decision will affect their communities.

The member for Cessnock spoke about the fact that the *Newcastle Herald* is one of the profitable arms of Fairfax, and the loss of these subeditorial positions will affect the quality and integrity of the paper. The member for Newcastle reflected on the rally in Civic Park, where locals and State members of Parliament from across the political divide stood united in their support for the *Newcastle Herald* and the 41 subeditors whose positions are affected. The member for Wallsend spoke about the negative effects of offshore operations, and drew an analogy with the closure of the Bonds factory in the electorate of the member for Cessnock some years ago. The member for Port Stephens also spoke about the fact that the *Newcastle Herald* is a profitable arm of this news group, and that it is supporting loss leaders such as the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He also rightly pointed out that this, being part of the Hunter, is a parochial area; we support our paper and the paper has supported us.

The member for Lake Macquarie reflected on the sense of unity at the rally at Civic Park a couple of weeks ago, with students standing next to millionaires in support of the paper. The member for Keira reflected on the same situation at the *Illawarra Mercury* and the accountability that local media brings. He also made the interesting point that Fairfax holds politicians to account in the way we make decisions that affect our community, and he called on Fairfax to think about things in the same light. The member for Bankstown might be affected more than all of us by the more recent decisions by Fairfax and the potential closure of the Chullora printing press which obviously will have a major effect on her community.

It is a sad day. Decisions that were made within these organisations some decades ago unfortunately have come to fruition today with these difficult decisions being made—decisions that will impact on the families of those involved but also on the wider community. The *Newcastle Herald* has been a wonderful local paper for 154 years. It has reported on the lives and the stories of people in the Hunter. As I said, I have kept some copies and I have thrown others in the bin, but the *Newcastle Herald* has always been there to report the lives of Novocastrians and people throughout the Hunter.

I can only reflect on what other members have said about our sadness at these job losses. The job losses are unfortunate and I think Fairfax is making a mistake. For short-term cash flow benefits Fairfax is devaluing the actual value of one of its great assets—the newspaper—and the greatest asset it has in that newspaper is the wonderful people who work for it. I appreciate the indulgence of the House in allowing members to speak in debate on this motion, and I thank all members who have spoken in debate. I note that people from across the political divide have supported the motion which I commend to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION (BUDGET VARIATIONS) BILL 2012

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

STOLEN GENERATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.52 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) offers its deepest condolences to the victims of the "stolen babies" generation and welcomes the apology that has been issued to those affected;
- (2) notes the latest Senate inquiry; and
- (3) supports the establishment of a national scheme for helping women and their families and requests that more is done to help and support the victims and their children.

It is with deep regret that I discuss today the stolen babies generation—a deplorable period of our nation's history that affected the very core of what constitutes a family. Reportedly, at least 150,000 women had their babies taken by churches and adoption agencies in Australia from the early 1950s to the 1970s. Women were treated atrociously, with incidents of girls being shackled, drugged and even raped. After repeated calls for an inquiry into the practice of forced adoption and an official apology, the Federal Senate succumbed last year and established an inquiry into the frightful practice. After months of investigations the report, entitled "Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices", was tabled in February. The report contained 20 recommendations which, in particular, called for concrete action to be taken. The Federal Senate inquiry was instigated by Greens Senator Rachel Siewert, who said that many women were treated appallingly as a result of these policies. Senator Siewert said:

Young and vulnerable mothers were pressured into adoptions, and often had to surrender their newborn children without being allowed to see them.

Victims generally were young, unmarried women who were identified as being sinful and, consequently, deserved this level of treatment. In 1997 former Newcastle member of Parliament Bryce Gaudry instigated the New South Wales inquiry into these horrendous acts. The inquiry uncovered stories of Hunter mothers being drugged, brainwashed, coerced and bullied into giving up their babies for adoption. Hunter Catholic organisations have publicly apologised to the victims, with Catholic Health Australia, the Sisters of Mercy Congregation in Singleton and the Diocese of Maitland issuing statements expressing their heartfelt sorrow and deep regret for these policies that were enforced from the 1950s. Admittedly, those apologies held personal significance for the victims, with one woman claiming the apology given by the Western Australian Parliament for its involvement was one of the most significant moments in her life because she was "witnessing the truth being spoken out in public".

However, these women need more than just verbal recognition. The victims and their families are entitled to mechanisms such as support services and affordable counselling that should enable them to cope with their continual grief. The outcome of the Federal Senate inquiry provides ample opportunity to establish a national scheme that assists victimised women, their children who were adopted out, and families who are now characterised by what occurred decades earlier. The need for access to mental health support services and effective counselling was identified by mothers, fathers and adopted people who made submissions to the Federal inquiry. Many victims to this day continue to suffer trauma, and the inquiry determined that victims continue to endure emotions of loss, guilt and loneliness, with some women also experiencing difficulty in fostering successful relationships and families.

The inquiry recommended that the Commonwealth and State governments urgently establish affordable and regionally available specialised professional support and counselling services for those victims who were at the mercy of former forced adoption policies and practices. Services that promote public awareness of the issues, document evidence, assistance with information searches and organised memorial events were also suggested in the inquiry. In particular, the report recommends that the funding of those services be sought from

State and Territory governments, institutions and organisations that were involved in these practices. Could anyone really argue that these victims deserve any less? It is important to remember that these cases are not just isolated incidents.

At least 150,000 mothers endured much pain and suffering which shows that, unfortunately, we may all have distressing cases within our electorates. A constituent of mine who resides in Lambton was fostered to another home when she was just six years of age. The woman said that government caseworkers had deliberately stopped her from contacting her natural mother but that after a long, arduous 23 years she finally tracked down her mother and has continued to stay in contact with her. In another case from the Hunter a lady gave birth to a boy at the Mater Hospital in Waratah—where I and all my brothers and sisters were born—where she had her legs tied in stirrups, was drugged and then forced to sign adoption papers. These repeated cases portray the magnitude of this issue and the necessity for victims to be sufficiently supported. I am interested in this issue not only because it has affected women in the Hunter but also because I have been brought up with a great deal of sympathy for these victims.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Members will either resume their seats or take their conversations outside the Chamber. The member for Wallsend will be heard in silence.

Ms SONIA HORNER: My mother, her brother and sister were placed in orphanages at a very young age because my grandmother came from the sort of background where she could not care for her kids. My mum is very familiar with the people of her vintage and the people she knew being in those sorts of positions—people, like my mum, from working-class backgrounds, women who became pregnant at a young age and who were not supported by their families or supported by the men who made them pregnant. As my mum was pregnant at 14 my father had to marry her. If my mum had not married my father I am sure that my sister would have been in a similar situation. State parliaments, churches and adoption agencies have apologised for these crimes, though years later hundreds of victims say there has been little or no change. We therefore need to guarantee that these women receive the assistance to which they are entitled. On behalf of the Wallsend community I offer my deepest condolences to these victims and welcome the apology issued by the Federal Senate.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [10.59 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. This is an important and sensitive matter. The Senate report on forced adoptions has highlighted the devastating impact of past adoption practices on many young women and their babies in earlier decades. The report of the Senate community affairs committee was tabled on 29 February 2012. The inquiry was set up to consider the role of the Commonwealth Government's policies and practices in contributing to the forced adoptions of the past and the potential role of the Commonwealth in developing a national framework to assist States and Territories. The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services is currently considering the Senate committee's recommendations, and this motion is important for that reason. New South Wales has made a written submission to the inquiry and advocated for the Commonwealth to take a greater role in providing services and support for people affected by past adoption practices. It is pleasing to see that the Senate committee has recognised this need in its recommendations.

Although it does not lessen the pain for those who were denied the care and support they deserved, it is important to note that adoption practices have changed radically since the early 1970s. Lessons have been learnt from the past and young women will not be treated this way again. The highest standards of contemporary adoption practices are reflected in the Adoption Act 2000. The Act provides that the paramount consideration in all adoption practice and decision-making is the best interests of the child. It enforces the requirement of counselling for parents and children before any adoption consent, including counselling on the alternatives to adoption. The Adoption Act 2000 also affirms the importance to the child of ongoing access to his or her family of origin and cultural heritage. It provides for adoption plans that may include continuing contact between the child and the birth parents. This principle of openness has been reinforced through amendments that give birth parents, adopted children and adoptive parents access to information such as original birth certificates and adoption orders from the time. These provisions apply to adoptions that occurred on or after 1 January 2010.

In 1998 the New South Wales Parliament began an extensive inquiry into past adoption practices in the period between 1950 and 1998. The unanimous report of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues, entitled "Releasing the Past", was tabled on 8 December 2000. In line with the recommendations of the Legislative Council report, the New South Wales Government now funds a number of services to help people affected by past adoption practices. This includes the Post Adoption Resource Centre. The centre provides counselling, information and support services for adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents and others affected by

adoption. The centre receives renewable funding, which is annually indexed. The Government also funds three other non-government organisations to assist people to find their birth family members from who they were separated due to actions of the New South Wales Government, including adoption. These are the Link-up Aboriginal Corporation, International Social Service in cases where the parties are in different countries, and the Special Search Service, which is auspiced by the Salvation Army.

Some recommendations in the Senate committee report highlight the need for States and Territories to examine practices in the release of records and the need for processes to be more streamlined and accessible. Community Services already has plans in place to review the work of the adoption information unit within Community Services, including the fees it charges. Relevant recommendations of the inquiry will be considered as part of this review. This Government will work across all relevant portfolios and with relevant non-government agencies to improve procedures for parties to past adoptions to access information about each other. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government looks forward to working cooperatively and constructively with the Australian Government, other States and Territories and relevant non-government agencies in responding to the Senate committee recommendations that are applicable to New South Wales. Again I commend the member for Walsend for moving this notice of motion

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.05 a.m.]: I thank the member for Walsend for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the stolen babies generation. Although supposedly at the higher end of the evolutionary spectrum, mankind historically has and unfortunately continues to commit atrocities across the globe. I hope that Australia has moved somewhat beyond that, but I am sure that in 50 or 100 years time people will reflect on what we do today and question why. The Senate community affairs committee was originally expected to report on its inquiry into former forced adoption policies and practices on 21 November 2011, but, due to the many detailed personal accounts it received, the report date was extended and instead it was released on 29 February 2012. The report made 20 recommendations, as mentioned by the member for Walsend. Recommendations 16 to 18 of the report state:

The committee recommends that the Commonwealth provide funding to extend the existing program for family tracing and support services to include adoption records and policies, with organisations such as Link-Up Queensland and Jigsaw used as a blueprint.

The committee recommends that the states and territories extend their Find and Connect information service to include adoption service providers.

The committee recommends that non-government organisations with responsibility for former adoption service providers (such as private hospitals or maternity homes) establish projects to identify all records still in their possession, make information about those institutions and records available to state and territory Find and Connect services, and provide free access to individuals seeking their own records.

These three recommendations are about giving people the opportunity to access the necessary records so that they can find their biological mothers. The recommendations seem to be common sense, yet in 2012 we need a Federal Senate committee to tell us that such common sense applies. The stolen babies were taken away from young mothers who were pressured, deceived or threatened into signing consent forms to give up their babies for adoption. The mothers were single, orphans or migrants. Some of my research stated that the time frame for this practice was from the late 1960s to 1973, but the Senate committee received accounts from the 1950s up until as recently as 1987. A group called Origins Inc was established in 1995 by a small group of mothers who had suffered the trauma of having lost their babies to this form of adoption.

It was this group of mothers that contacted some of their State members in 1997 and called for an inquiry. These mothers discovered that losing their babies would have been entirely avoidable had their legal rights not been contravened. They state, "The law was the only weapon we had to force people to bother to listen to us, and not continue to minimise and dismiss our plight." Origins Inc's logo says "Supporting People Separated by Adoption". The aims and objectives of the group as listed on its website are support, healing, reunion, awareness, research, redress, reform, and liaison. State and Federal governments could learn much from this group, and others like them, and establish a scheme to help and support the victims and their children. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [11.09 a.m.]: This motion is about forced adoption—adoption when a child's natural parents were compelled to relinquish the child for adoption. It is not a situation in which there is informed consent, whether or not the parents were married: It is forced adoption. The past forced adoption practices in Australia have caused unnecessary pain for the women and families who experienced it. This is clear in the February 2012 Senate committee report entitled "Commonwealth Contribution to Former

Forced Adoption Policies and Practices"—a unanimous report of Coalition, Labor and Greens senators. The stories in that report echo those recounted for the New South Wales Parliament during the 1998 inquiry into adoption practices from 1950 in New South Wales. There are lessons in those experiences for all jurisdictions. We thank the courageous people who shared their experiences.

The New South Wales Government funds a number of services for those who suffered from the practices of the past. The Post Adoption Resource Centre assists adoptees, their parents and adoptive parents. The Salvation Army Special Search Service helps people to find their families. Measures have been put in place to help to prevent those practices from recurring, now and in the future. There are now legislative safeguards to ensure that adoptions are made with the informed consent of both parents, and adoptees have the right to know about their family of origin. Adoption decisions and practices are now based on the best interests of the child and on a principle of openness. These are powerful shifts in the way we assist vulnerable children, young people and families. Open adoption in a contemporary context can provide loving and stable families for children, particularly those who are unable to live safely with their birth parents. The recommendations of the Senate report, "Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices", are comprehensive and broad reaching.

The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services is considering those recommendations and how they might contribute in the light of the services already provided and work currently being undertaken in New South Wales. There is still a journey ahead for many of the victims of past adoption practices. The Senate committee's final report can be seen as an affirmation that all levels of government need to work together to provide services and support to affected individuals and their families. The O'Farrell Government is committed to ensuring that future generations of families that adopt, and that are created by adoption, are assisted by the best possible evidence-based policies and practices. The Government will continue to work closely with victims of past adoption practices to deliver services that meet their needs. We also look forward to close collaboration with the Commonwealth, States and Territories as well as the non-government sector on this issue. In conclusion, on the issue of apology I do not think it could be more eloquently put than the way in which Queensland Senator Sue Boyce expressed it during the Senate debate on 29 February 2012. She stated:

It is perhaps not uncommon now for general apologies to be made to people who have been harmed by behaviours of the past—but there are apologies and there are apologies. It is very important to acknowledge that, whether you think people were doing what they thought was the right thing at the time, you know it was not the right thing ...

I commend the motion to the House.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [11.12 a.m.], in reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the motion—the member for Clarence, the member for Cessnock and the member for Cronulla—and I acknowledge the respectful manner in which the House has undertaken this debate. The member for Clarence referred to the Adoption Act 2000 and affirmed better access for children from adoptive families, which is really very important. He also referred to the importance of the release of records. To my mind, that provides critical closure for people. Earlier I mentioned that my mother, her sister and my uncle grew up in an orphanage. I found it really difficult to obtain information about the time my mother and my aunty were at the Monte Pio orphanage. It was very difficult to obtain records from the Sisters of Mercy.

In fact, we still do not really know when my mother and Aunty Jem were put in the orphanage or taken out of the orphanage. They just remember a rough time. That is deplorable. Despite the fact that my mother has a really good attitude about those things, it is something that a person lives with all their life. Many of the children who were placed in orphanages at a very young age, like my mother, do not even know when they were born. They do not know their date of birth. Closure, release of records and access are critical to anybody who was subject to or victim of the stolen babies generation. The member for Cessnock stated that there were so many people who wanted to contribute to the Federal Government's report that its reporting date was extended, and that is really important. He also highlighted the importance of family tracing. He defined for us what being a victim of the stolen babies generation meant.

The member for Cronulla made a good point when he reflected on the journey ahead for victims. He said that all levels of government must work together to support victims, and we must: There is no question about that. In conclusion, I thank the Government for its support that has enabled this motion to be debated today. On behalf of all members of Parliament, who I am sure would agree with me, I offer our deepest condolences to the victims of the stolen generations. We welcome the apology that has been offered to those

affected. I acknowledge that we have a long way to go in supporting families. We should work towards such matters never ever happening again. It is a dark day in Australia's history. It is a situation that we need to improve.

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

Motion agreed to.

SHELLHARBOUR TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY REGIONAL FORUM

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [11.16 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the NRMA on facilitating an expert discussion panel called, 'The Shellharbour Transport and Mobility Regional Forum';
- (2) acknowledges that by 2012, the Government should develop and implement a transport and mobility plan for an ageing population; and
- (3) notes that community consultation is the key to identifying and addressing existing and future transport infrastructure projects and services, whilst also taking into account the transport and mobility needs of older people.

Just after the State election on 26 March 2011, I was invited as a panel member to the NRMA Transport and Mobility Needs of Ageing Australians forum. It was a great and a very heartfelt and emotional forum. It was held at the Shellharbour Workers Club, which is now known as the Shellharbour Club, and was extremely well attended by people of all ages from all walks of life. The forum covered a very wide geographical area within the south-east region. The objective of the forum was to consult with elderly people and many disabled people in relation to transport and mobility within the electorate of Shellharbour and farther afield. In the view of the NRMA and in my view, by now in the year 2012 the Government should develop and implement a transport and mobility plan for our ageing population.

I congratulate the NRMA on this initiative. I support the NRMA in its continuing efforts to ensure that our ageing population is consulted and listened to. For the ageing population in New South Wales, cars represent freedom, self-reliance and mobility, but not just for the majority. This generation of older drivers is especially more reliant on a car to be able to get around and go shopping, visit family and friends, or just attend medical appointments. Having a drivers licence is an important part of remaining independent. However, what happens when a person can no longer drive as the result of a disability, or when a person simply does not own or cannot afford to own a car? For many ageing people, this is a very big problem—one that affects their whole way of life, mental health and wellbeing.

Poor transportation and mobility will no doubt have a detrimental effect on the health and safety of older people. Health and community costs will increase radically if attention to this issue is not addressed soon. Actually, it needs to be addressed now. The New South Wales population is projected to increase from 6.75 million people to 8.7 million people in 2031. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a significant proportion of this increase will be people aged 65 years and older, and the proportion of people aged 85 years and older will increase at an even faster rate. One of the challenges is meeting the transport needs of this ageing population. We will see a significant increase in the number of older people who will not be able to drive and who will need to find alternative transport.

For many, driving is extremely difficult and their fear is that it will become impossible. In New South Wales close to one million drivers over the age of 60 will need to plan for their future mobility. Many couples and singles soon to retire look to moving to regional New South Wales locations, where most Australians choose to live as they age, and transport is becoming more and more important. Most of Australia's population is concentrated into widely separated coastal regions, the south-eastern and east, and the south west. Of these two regions the south east and east are by far the largest in the area and population and is concentrated in urban centres like the Illawarra, Shellharbour, Kiama and Wollongong. We need to start planning and implementing alternative transport options for people who are living in regional and rural areas, especially given that specialist medical facilities are largely unavailable in these areas.

Clearly there is and will be a need for better transport in the regions across New South Wales. In saying this, I believe it is vital that any future planning has a regional focus to ensure that all forms of transport and

mobility are integrated at a regional level. Driving is an integral part of people's lives. It is the key to their independence and their freedom. They can go shopping, visit their friends and relatives and attend medical appointments. They are able to maintain social contacts and participate in community activities. Driving is a key contributor to people's quality of life. The consequences of not having a car are enormous for older people. It can have a detrimental effect on one's health and wellbeing, affecting the whole family. In my view, the transition from driving to not driving should be anticipated and planned for by the government of the day.

There is a great need to prepare for the mobility and transport needs of our ageing population. People need to be provided with information about what transport options are available to help them maintain at least their existing level of mobility when they can no longer drive, before making other life-changing options. It is a myth that older people can use public transport. Public transport is limited. For those living with a disability, particularly in the regions, public transport is more than limited. The risk of a fall increases, and security is a problem. These fears are well founded, with older people suffering serious injuries from falls, often resulting in a permanent disability or even death. Most public transport is unsuitable for older people. One needs only to look at Unanderra station, an issue that has already been raised in this House.

Very few railway stations are close to major hospitals, thus precluding older people from walking between the station and the hospital in comfort. We need to look at the free shuttle bus option currently operating very well in the Wollongong area. It is an excellent service. I have already written to the Minister for Transport on behalf of the constituents of the Shellharbour electorate to try to gain the same service, although we have not yet been successful. The free shuttle bus would enable those people to access medical appointments easily. One only needs to look at Leichardt council to see this is a wonderful thing. This approach needs to be much more widespread and coordinated. Cost shifting by this Government to local government will result in further loss of community transport options. Shellharbour City Council is just one example of this.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [11.23 a.m.]: It is my great pleasure to respond to the motion moved by the member for Shellharbour in relation to transport and the long-term need to plan for transport into the future. The member for Shellharbour and I have the great privilege of representing the greatest part of New South Wales. We share a border and a council.

Mr Ryan Park: That is debatable.

Mr GARETH WARD: I note the interjection by the member for Keira as well as the disagreement from the member for Myall Lakes. We all represent great constituencies, but they holiday in our electorates so we know where they would rather live.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: No, I don't.

Mr GARETH WARD: You should. I will address some of the remarks made by the member for Shellharbour. By and large, I agree with much of what she said. As somebody who relies on public transport and often uses public transport to come to this place, I know we need to do more for public transport. It does not matter who is in government; what matters is the service quality that is delivered. We can argue about those things, but we need to talk about how we can make real and meaningful improvements in public transport. This Government has been doing that in the Illawarra. This Government will deliver the Flinders-Shell Cove railway station, a \$39 million project that was announced by the former Labor Government but was not delivered. We will deliver that project to ensure we improve public transport in the Illawarra.

We will fix Labor's mess left at Oak Flats station where there was a shortage of car parking for that station. We have provided in this budget for 230 additional spaces. We have provided for an additional 40 spaces at Kiama station and 50 spaces at Moss Vale station. These are real improvements, in addition to minor works and upgrades at Albion Park, Gerringong and Dapto—all provided in this budget. What the member for Shellharbour said in relation to planning for those people who may not be able to access public transport was absolutely spot-on. The Government needs to do that and it is doing that. I put on the record some of the things we are doing that regard. I am glad the member for Shellharbour has brought on this debate. It is critical that this Parliament talks about regional transport and how we can deliver the best possible services to people in regional New South Wales.

In spite of our political differences in this place, I know that members in the Illawarra, including Mr Acting-Speaker Evans, all want to continue to work together to do that. This Government recognises that community transport plays an important role in providing much-needed services for the aged, the frail, people

with disabilities and their carers and those who do not have access to public transport. It is estimated that each year two million community transport trips are made for eligible customers, providing them access to recreation, shopping, medical care, social services and social activities. I am always amused by some of my city colleagues talking about having to wait perhaps 20 or 30 minutes between train services. Where I come from it can be up to two hours between services.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Gladys should fix it.

Mr GARETH WARD: I hear from my friend the member for Bankstown, "Gladys should fix it". I will come to her later. I address the member for Shellharbour's comments in relation to Unanderra station, which was mentioned earlier. In 2009 funds were announced by the member for Wollongong in the *Illawarra Mercury*. Sadly, the member for Wollongong is not present to tell us where the money went. I am sure the kebab meal deal at the table of knowledge cannot have been that much. I do not know where the money went, but I would like to continue to lobby with my Illawarra colleagues to improve services. There is no doubt that community transport is important. There is not always a bus or train, particularly in regional areas like the Southern Highlands in my electorate that rely on services like these. This is why the Government has increased funding to community transport programs by \$12 million over the next four years. I commend the Minister for Transport for having the foresight to do this.

This is in stark contrast to those who sit opposite and who did not increase funding to community transport programs since 1997-98. They applied only consumer price index increases to community transport program funding during their time in office. The transport record of those who sit opposite is appalling. The extra \$12 million will go a long way towards providing extra services to those who rely on community transport. Recently we released the first boost in funding with \$500,000 going to more than 70 community transport organisations around the State. This boost in funding has been welcomed by these organisations who have been dealing with increasing demand for their services expected to be provided on the same budget for the past 10 years. I take this opportunity—and I am sure I join with my friend the member for Shellharbour, and indeed all members of the House—to congratulate and thank those people who volunteer hours for community transport services.

People give up their time to ensure that those who cannot drive or get access to services across our community get that access. I have no doubt that we all stand united in commending those people who are in their cars today driving people to their appointments. This Government is committed to planning for the future transport needs of our population. Transport for NSW is committed to putting the customer at the centre of everything we do. New South Wales needs an efficient and coordinated transport system that is world class and needs to plan efficiently to meet the transport needs of the next generations. If we have learned anything over the past 16 years it is that half-baked approaches to transport just not work. The New South Wales long-term transport master plan is being developed this year. It will identify a clear direction for transport in this State. This plan will identify a clear direction for transport over the next 20 years, building on the Government's current commitments which are underpinned by a record \$13.1 billion investment in roads and transport in the 2011-12 State budget.

The plan will recognise and meet the changing needs of our population. The NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan will be delivered and will meet the challenges facing transport, particularly in our regions. The plan will identify the role of each transport mode and the integration of all models to meet future needs of passengers and freight, as well as highlight key transport priorities for the future of New South Wales. We also will properly consider the regions developing the planning framework so that the key transport corridors across road, rail and air services can cope with growth and deliver appropriate cost-effective transport. I commend in the main the comments of the member for Shellharbour and look forward to continuing to work with all members of this House to ensure that people, particularly those in regional New South Wales, get the best possible transport we can provide. I look forward to delivering on the Long Term Transport Plan. I certainly hope that members opposite support us in that process.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [11.30 a.m.]: I thank the Minister for the Illawarra—the member for Kiama.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Keira has the call.

Mr RYAN PARK: The member for Kiama was speaking very well.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: We will make a decision for the Government.

Mr RYAN PARK: Yes. I thank the member for Shellharbour for raising this important issue. Mobility within our electorates is particularly important, and certainly in and around the Illawarra. As the member for Kiama and the member for Shellharbour articulated, significant parts of our electorates are populated by older people and people with disabilities who rely heavily on public transport. I reiterate the support of the member for Kiama to community transport volunteers. My father is a community transport driver in the Wollongong local government area. He experiences an enormous amount of joy transporting people throughout the region and, more importantly, brings an enormous amount of joy to those people each and every day.

Labor governments have a very proud record of providing transport in the Illawarra area. The Gong Shuttle was advocated and introduced by a Labor Government. This extremely important service caters for people in my electorate, particularly around the University of Wollongong, but, of course, focuses more on the member for Wollongong's electorate in and around the hospital and other parts of the central business district. It is an important service providing free transport for those who need to get around our central business district and major precincts. I have lobbied the Minister for Transport significantly for the introduction of a Metro bus for the people of the Illawarra. Sydney members of Parliament know them as the red buses travelling around the city.

Mr Guy Zangari: Great buses.

Mr RYAN PARK: They are extremely successful. They are not free, but they operate on a number of key transport principles. First, they do not run to a timetable. This means that patrons go to the stop and wait for a very short time before a bus arrives. Second, they operate on a prepaid system. That means that time is not wasted at the stops and the dwell time—the technical term—is reduced significantly. Third, people are able to replace their car use with bus travel because the travel times are comparable. Until governments provide Metro bus services in major regional centres, such as the Illawarra, we will continue to be focused on using cars. Members opposite talk about 16 years of Labor Government. The Metro bus was introduced in Sydney by the Labor Government. We did the hard work. That is our success. I ask this Government, in a bipartisan way, to make the next step and take that service outside the major city and into regional areas. By doing so, the aged and those with a disability will be able to rely more heavily on the benefits of public transport, which are comparable with car travel. I commend the motion of the member for Shellharbour and feel honoured to support it.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI (Strathfield) [11.34 a.m.]: I congratulate the member for Shellharbour on bringing to the attention of the House an important issue in our community. I commend also the NRMA, a great organisation with advocacy across a broad range of issues affecting our community. I very much thank my new friend, the member for Shellharbour, for her vote of confidence in our Government. I am deeply touched that she believes our Government can do in months what the previous Labor Government could not do in many years. We will take on board the challenges because I am sure we can actually deliver them. Before I speak to the substance of the motion I want to say that two Opposition members will not speak to it.

Mr Gareth Ward: Who are they? Name them.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: The first one is the Leader of the Opposition because he was one of the State's shortest-serving transport Ministers and did nothing, if I remember correctly, to create a transport plan, let alone address the specific challenges of a transport plan for an ageing population.

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

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: I acknowledge also the contribution of the member for Keira.

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

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: My friend in the New South Wales Parliament. If my memory serves me correctly, I do not remember any major initiatives being released when he was the Deputy Director General of the Department of Transport, which addressed transport needs for an ageing population. I do not recall a single initiative that even came close. The member for Shellharbour referred to our Government facing the challenge of putting together a transport plan for an ageing population. By the end of this year I believe we will be able to meet that challenge, which we will deliver through a process called the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. Another way we will deliver good transport is through our formation of Transport for NSW, which is an organisation that examines broader State transport challenges and looks at the needs of constituencies that require specific issues to be dealt with, one of which, of course, is the needs of an ageing population.

If members have been keeping up with what the Government has been doing, they will know that the master plan involves a broad consultative process with the community, professionals and experts, and looks at all modes and long-term views, specifically including mobility issues for an ageing population. I attended two regional forums and as I listened to the contributions I noted that the issue of an ageing population and how to deal with transport challenges were the constant themes. I offer this challenge to the other side of the House: Given the sheer effort and extensive consultation through the Long Term Transport Master Plan process, will the Opposition recognise the will of the community and once the master plan comes together give it bipartisan support? We all agree that the transport challenge for an ageing population should not be used as a political football between two sides of politics.

I look forward to the member for Shellharbour supporting the master plan that will specifically present issues that deal with an ageing population. Just as she congratulated the NRMA's contribution to the issue, she also will congratulate the Government at the end of the year when the transport master plan comes forward with specific recommendations for dealing with the transport challenge of an ageing population. We should not belittle the size of the challenge. The ageing population has specific difficulties in engaging with our public transport system. Additionally, community-based transport requirements must be dealt with in the greater context of an integrated transport plan for New South Wales.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Kiama will listen to the member for Bankstown in silence.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [11.38 a.m.]: I congratulate the member for Shellharbour on moving this important motion. I acknowledge that the NRMA does have an excellent record on community engagement. However, the motion does not deal with what the member for Strathfield seems to think it does.

Mr Ryan Park: That is unusual.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: I must say his contribution was unusual. The core concern raised in the motion is the Government's intentions in regard to providing a mobility plan for the aged in the future. Statistics show that by 2030 this State will have a population of over eight million, 1.8 million of whom will be over the age of 65. Clearly, transport and transport needs for our ageing community will become more important and significant. I note that the Transport Master Plan is now called the Long Term Transport Master Plan, or the very long term master plan, depending on how hard the Government will try to avoid making any commitments which they will inevitably break down the track. We all agree in this House on one thing, that is, the value of community transport initiatives. I want to talk about Bankstown Community Transport Inc., which is based in Bankstown. Last year there was an initiative to have this group amalgamated into the south-western Sydney community transport initiative.

I, as the member for Bankstown, opposed that move, as did a number of other groups in the Bankstown area. Thankfully, the new board, under the guidance of new chair Denis Hayward, opposed the amalgamation and Bankstown Community Transport continues to be based in Bankstown to look after the needs of our elderly in Bankstown. Bankstown Community Transport is jointly funded by the Home and Community Care Program, a joint Commonwealth and State initiative, and Bankstown City Council. It greatly assists the elderly by providing transport to enable them go to the shops and attend medical appointments and social activities. There is a cost to the individual but that cost is subsidised. I return to the motion and reiterate that all sides of the House want an aging and mobility plan.

I hope the Long Term Transport Master Plan takes into account the problems in regional and rural areas. There is no doubt that accessing public transport is particularly difficult in those areas. For our ageing community, who have spent a lifetime reliant on private transport, to suffer the indignity of losing their independence coupled with the need to access public transport can be difficult. These issues exist in metropolitan Sydney as well. I congratulate the opportunity that NRMA Insurance is giving people across the regions to discuss their concerns about public transport and access to transport to meet their day-to-day needs. I congratulate the member for Shellharbour on her worthy motion and I continue to wait in anticipation for the outcomes of the very long term transport master plan.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [11.42 a.m.], in reply: I thank and acknowledge the members representing the electorates of Keira, Bankstown, Kiama—my very good friend—and Strathfield. I support the comments of the member for Keira in relation to the metro shuttle bus. If the master plan promised by the Government is as fantastic as they say it is, I would hope it would include a Metro bus for the Illawarra, which

the member for Keira and I have been calling for. Shellharbour has an ageing population and a fast-growing population—in fact, the fastest growing on the eastern seaboard of New South Wales. At times, it is difficult to find a car parking space at the university at Shellharbour. A metro shuttle bus in the Illawarra would be of huge benefit to and well received by the community.

The member for Bankstown talked about the increasing age of the State's population and the importance of a long-term master plan. I hope that the "long term" in the title of the Government's transport master plan is not code for, "It is too hard and we will deal with it in 10 years". Although I am sceptical, I will give the Government the benefit of the doubt. The member for Strathfield was a little confused in his contribution. I am not sure that the member read the motion. While the tangent he followed made for an interesting contribution, I would like to know what water he drinks. His contribution was not well researched. Nonetheless he participated and I agree with him that we must take a bipartisan approach to the ageing population and mobility issues.

Mr Mark Coure: He tried.

Ms ANNA WATSON: That is right. One question that remains on the lips of many is: What do we need to do now? The Government needs to develop and implement a transport and mobility plan for our ageing population. It must ensure that all new and existing transport infrastructure development and service delivery include an ageing impact statement. Parliament needs to strategise to allow people to drive for as long as they are safe to do so. Most importantly, actions must be evidence based to improve transport accessibility and mobility and ensure it is integrated at a regional level. Both the member for Bankstown and the member for Kiama discussed those issues in their speeches. A communication strategy must include providing transport and mobility information about transport options that are available to help maintain existing levels of mobility when a person stops driving, and planning for future transport and mobility needs as part of people's retirement plans. The plan must include a whole-of-government strategy and a review undertaken every year with published performance results. During the 26 March election campaign the Government promised accountability. We can only hope that this important issue is not overlooked by the O'Farrell Government.

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

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.48 a.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the consideration forthwith of the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill.

As I indicated to honourable members earlier, the Government must move the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill through this place today. This is hopefully the last sitting day for the session, although we may have to sit tomorrow. This bill must move through the Chamber today. I have had brief discussions with the member for Maroubra, who has indicated that he wants to put on the record the Opposition's views on this matter. I will listen intently and respond appropriately. The Government understands that the New South Wales Labor Party Opposition has very strong views about the bill and, in the normal course, would strongly oppose it. I suspect they will strongly oppose the motion I have moved and will likely demand a division. I indicate that the Government understands the passion and intent of the Opposition in opposing the bill, but we are under time constraints and difficulty may be occasioned to all members if, for some reason, the member for Maroubra considers it necessary to divide. I ask the member to consider not dividing on this motion. However, it is a matter for those opposite. I will listen to the member intently, who I know will speak reasonably and rationally.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [11.49 a.m.]: The opening words of the Leader of the House were, "The Government needs to move [this legislation] through." Indeed, the Government has dire need to put this legislation through as consideration for the dirty deal it did with the Shooters and Fishers not only to sell the electricity assets of this State but, what is readily apparent now, in order to ram through cruel and unconscionable changes to workers compensation laws by legislation that will come to this House from the other place at any minute. There is no accident in the juxtaposition of these two bills. The Government needs to

put through the Shooters and Fishers bill—a bill to allow shooting in national parks—before it brings the workers compensation legislation into this place. The Shooters and Fishers are not dumb; they do not trust the Government not to back down on the deal they have done. And the Opposition does not trust the Government full stop. On this last day of the budget session of this Parliament we are seeing the normal course of events unravelling.

A street full of workers—furies, public sector employees, some of the most trusted in the State—as we speak are marching to meet outside this place in Macquarie Street to object against an unconscionable bill that will rip away their workers compensation rights. The Government does not care about them; it cares more about the dirty payola about to be dropped on this place in the form of a bill to allow shooting in national parks. This is what happens when craven haste and an ideological attack replace sensible regard and careful analysis. If members needed any proof that careful analysis has been replaced by craven ideological haste, they need look no further than the debacle that attended the Premier's interview yesterday morning on Radio National when he said that the workers compensation bill was not retrospective. It is retrospective. The Premier knew it was retrospective. He was misleading in relation to his own bill, or he does not know the bill very well. Even Minister Greg Pearce was surprised to learn last night in the other place that there are in the workers compensation bill provisions that drag police back within its purview.

No-one on the Government side of the House or in the Government knows the ins and outs of that bill, yet we are now debating a motion to bring in a shooting in national parks bill to allow the workers compensation bills to proceed because a deal has been done. This motion is emblematic of what is happening in this Government. We oppose this suspension motion. However, I think on the first occasion I rose as Leader of Opposition business in this House I said that we respect the fact that the Government has legislation to put through and that from time to time, even though we might not like it, it would have a desire to put that legislation through. We do not like the legislation, but we understand that the Government wants to put it through today. We have said all we needed to say about this legislation in the other place. We will have plenty more to say about it in this place. But so as not to be overly obstructionist, we will not divide on this suspension motion.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.52 p.m.], in reply: I accept the commentary of the member for Maroubra, and I understand and appreciate the fact that on this particular occasion, whilst there is a great degree of passion in the Labor Opposition on the issue of the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012, the Opposition will indulge the Government by allowing this procedure without division.

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

Motion agreed to.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Membership

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.53 a.m.], by leave: I move:

- (1) Clause (4) of the resolution of 22 June 2011 appointing the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters be amended to read as follows:
 - (4) The Committee consist of ten members, as follows:
 - (a) five members of the Legislative Assembly, and
 - (b) five members of the Legislative Council.
- (2) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to pass a similar resolution.
- (3) Should the Legislative Council agree to amend the committee's terms of reference:
 - (a) Mr Daryl Maguire and Mr Jai Rowell; and
 - (b) One member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition,
 be appointed to serve on such committee as the additional members of the Legislative Assembly.

Currently, the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Matters consists of the chair, the Hon. Trevor Khan, MLC; deputy chair, the Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC; the Hon. Amanda Fazio, MLC, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, MLC, and the Hon. Peter Primrose, MLC, and Mr Andrew Fraser, MLA, and Mr Gareth Ward, MLA. The Government has determined it is necessary to increase the membership of the committee, and I therefore move the motion to give effect to the desire of the Government to appoint two further Government members and one Opposition member, bringing the total membership of the committee to 10. It is necessary that this matter be dealt with this morning as the matter has to be dealt with by the Legislative Council today as well.

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

Motion agreed to.

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second Reading

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [11.55 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is a sensible and practical augmentation of the State's existing conservation measures. With two good consecutive seasons now under our belt, conditions for animal breeding are excellent. However, the negative side of this is that the impact of feral animals across our landscape is great. Rarely a day goes by that I, in my capacity as Minister for Primary Industries, do not hear of the escalating problem of feral animals on public lands. Volunteer conservation hunters operating under the Game Council have been working in our State forests, on Crown lands and with private landowners to try to manage this escalation in feral animal numbers. As we all know, this initiative was introduced by the former Labor Government.

The Game Council NSW was established as a statutory authority by the New South Wales Parliament under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 and its associated Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2004. This model has also been utilised in other jurisdictions and is working well, notably in Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory and South Australia. The model is also used in the United States, and recreational shooting is also allowed on conservation lands in New Zealand. A statutory five-year review of the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 was comprehensive and yielded a detailed assessment of that Act. The review group agreed that game and feral animals cause impacts to public health and safety, private property, agriculture and the environment, and that establishing a council to facilitate, promote and manage hunting has reduced those impacts. It concluded that the policy objective remained valid.

The Government agrees that this bill seeks to progress some of the recommendations for reform found in that statutory review. The principal features of this amending bill are as follows. The bill will allow the Minister responsible for the national park estate to declare that land, under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002, available for the purposes of shooting feral animals by persons who hold a restricted game hunting licence. The bill makes a number of other amendments of an administrative or consequential nature to the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2004 and to the Rural Lands Protection Act 1998. The bill ensures that the intent of the legislation is consistent with the Game Council objectives. These include the effective management of introduced species of animals and to promote the responsible and orderly hunting of those animals and of certain pest animals on public and private land.

The Game Council NSW is the agency within the Department of Primary Industries with responsibility for the licensing and regulation of conservation hunting in New South Wales. It provides a range of benefits for this great State's agricultural industries, our economy and, importantly, for the environment. Since the establishment of the Game Council, we have seen the introduction of the game hunting licence system, the production of a hunter education handbook and the declaration of around 400 State forests and Crown land areas for pest control by volunteer conservation hunting licence holders. I thank them for their community service. As I mentioned at the outset, the scale of the invasive animals threat is enormous and requires the concerted efforts of all levels of government working across tenures and departments and, importantly, with private landowners. As we are all acutely aware, the resources of government are constrained, and it is eminently sensible to use the resources of the Game Council and its licence holders to help address this problem on a tenure-neutral basis. Our pests do not recognise or respect borders, fences or lines on maps.

There are an estimated 7.2 million foxes throughout Australia. They kill enormous numbers of native fauna and farm animals annually. According to the report entitled "Counting the Cost: Impact of Invasive Animals in Australia, 2004" by the Cooperative Research Centre for Invasive Animals, the cost impact nationally of 11 feral animal species alone totals \$720 million per annum. As of March 2012 the Game Council NSW had issued more than 17,000 game hunting licences, and I am informed that that is expected to reach 20,000 by the end of the year. Since 2004 approximately 2.6 million game and feral animals have been removed from all lands—public and private—by those licensed game hunters alone in New South Wales.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has estimated that in 2010-11 at least 24,000 feral game animals were destroyed on the national park estate. That included almost 10,000 feral pigs, 8,500 feral goats, 2,500 rabbits, 2,000 foxes, 600 wild dogs and more than 250 deer. As we all know, that is the tip of the iceberg and, unfortunately, all indicators suggest we need to increase our efforts and be more strategic in our allocation of available resources. Last year Game Council licence holders removed almost 800,000 game and feral animals on both private and public land. It is also important to acknowledge that, through the pursuit of their legitimate pastime, recreational hunters not only make a strong contribution to the management of invasive animals but also contribute to the economic activity of regional economies.

Schedule 1 [4] and schedule 1 [5] amend the definition of "public land" so that it includes, rather than excludes, as is the case at present, national park estate land that includes national parks and other land reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. The effect of this amendment is that under section 20 of the Act, the Minister responsible for national park estate land may declare any such land as suitable for feral animal control by shooting. Ministers responsible for other public lands may declare the lands under their respective control. The bill lists certain national park estate land that cannot be made available for the shooting of game and pest animals. Under the Act, hunting of game and pest animals on public land is permitted only if the land is declared to be available for hunting.

The amendments to schedule 1 [3] and [12] are consequential, and schedule 1 [2] inserts a definition of "declared public hunting land" for clarification purposes. Another aspect of the bill is the inclusion of other pest animals that may be controlled by shooting. Schedule 1 [6] recasts the provision of the Act that specifies those pest animals that may be shot in accordance with the Act so that the provision refers instead to a list set out in proposed schedule 3. The list of animals contains two separate parts. For example, the animals currently referred to in section 5 (2) of the Act will now be listed in parts 1 and 2 of new schedule 3. The list can be amended by ministerial order but must specifically exclude any animal that was native to Australia before European settlement from being added by such an order.

Amendments to schedule 1 [2], [15] and [16] are consequential. Schedule 1 [7] provides for exemptions from certain offences under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, and the regulations under that Act, insofar as those offences would otherwise relate to lawful hunting by the holders of a game licence. It also provides that certain orders and notices under other legislation cannot prevent or interfere with hunting in accordance with a game hunting licence. Since the passing of the original Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2002, licensed hunters have demonstrated a professional approach towards feral animal control. Schedule 1 [24] extends the existing offence of obstructing, hindering or impeding an inspector to include assaulting, threatening or intimidating an inspector. Schedule 1 [25] creates a new offence of not complying with a direction by an inspector to leave or not to enter declared public hunting land. Such directions may be given to a person if the inspector has reason to believe that the person is committing an offence under the Act.

Schedule 1 [26], proposed section 55B, prohibits commercial taxidermists from preserving or preparing the skin of certain game animals unless satisfied the animals have been hunted by a licensed game hunter or by a person with some other lawful authorisation; for example, under the existing National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Commercial taxidermists will be required to record certain information and to make those records available for inspection. The bill also makes a number of miscellaneous amendments. Schedule 1 [13] provides that a game hunting licence authorises the licence holder to possess the carcass or the skin or any other part of a game animal that the licence holder has harvested under the authority conferred by the licence.

Schedule 1 [14] contains a consequential amendment. Schedule 1 [21] provides that the power of an inspector to require a vehicle to stop may be exercised without the inspector being accompanied by a police officer. This brings the Act into line with similar provisions in the Fisheries Management Act 1994. Licensed hunters will pay the price if they do the wrong thing. Any breaches of the Act or regulations will potentially lead to court action and heavy penalties, including forfeiture of their hunting equipment. This incentivises hunters to operate appropriately. Schedule 1 [22] removes the limit on the value of a thing—"thing" is how it is described

in the Act—that a Local Court may require to be forfeited in connection with an offence under the Act. All the proposed amendments have been drafted so they do not compromise the principles and objects of the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002. The bill will provide real and measurable benefits to the State, the economy and the environment. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [12.06 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I speak in debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. This bill enables, amongst other things, the Minister responsible for national park estate land to make that land available for the recreational hunting of feral animals by licensed amateur shooters. While at this stage the Government has named 79 of the State's parks and reserves that will be open to hunters, the bill itself expressly excludes only 48 parks from being used in that way. On behalf of the Opposition I oppose this bill in the strongest possible terms. The New South Wales national park estate is the envy of the rest of Australia and, indeed, the rest of the world. We have more than 850 national parks and reserves, comprising 6.8 million hectares covering a vast array of landscapes. The National Parks and Wildlife Service official website under the heading "NSW National Parks forever ours" states:

There is joy in caring for and understanding the natural environment, of knowing that wild areas exist – for their own sake, for protection of our unique flora and fauna and as places to retreat, revive and regenerate our bodies and souls.

The website goes on to urge visitors to "tread softly in these unique and precious environments". It paints a beautiful picture for the people of New South Wales and, indeed, for the people of Australia. But this will all now be destroyed, initially in 79 national parks and reserves but in the future who knows how many because the bill does not limit, beyond the 48 parks that are expressly named in the bill and wilderness areas, any other national parks being opened up to hunting. I wonder what words the Government intends to use now on the official National Parks and Wildlife Service website to describe those parks that will be open to hunting? Perhaps the Government will just use the icon of a rifle. The parks that will be open to hunting include some of our most iconic parks such as Kosciuszko National Park and parks such as Dorrigo, Nightcap and Barrington Tops, which include World Heritage listed areas.

It will be almost 40 per cent of our national park and reserves estate. I deplore this decision, as do very many people, on environmental grounds, on safety grounds and on scientific grounds. We know that the Government is supporting this legislation for one base reason and one base reason only—it has done a deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party in order to gain its support for the Government's electricity privatisation bill. So close is this relationship that we have seen the extraordinary occurrence of the Shooters and Fishers Party introducing a piece of legislation in the other place which is then introduced in this House as a Government bill. The Shooters and Fishers Party bill is being sponsored by the Government in this House. This bill breaks the commitment the Premier gave in April 2011 when he said, "We have no intention of doing deals with the minor parties, to sell out those plans. There will not be a decision to turn our national parks into hunting reserves." We now know that those words mean nothing.

The Premier and his environment Minister are trampling over decades of conservation gains. They are breaking the promise they made to the people of New South Wales that they would not introduce hunting in national parks. They are demonstrating once and for all what members on this side of the House have always known; that is, that the Coalition Government is no friend of the environment. It is no wonder that the Minister for the Environment has left it to her colleague the Minister for Primary Industries to take carriage of this bill. She should hang her head in shame. The Government's decision to support hunting in national parks has been condemned by many in the strongest possible terms, including the State's peak environment group, the Nature Conservation Council, that said:

This is a serious breach of faith and a complete departure from the reason our national parks were established—for the conservation and enjoyment of nature.

Opening our national parks to recreational hunters is a very real threat to public safety. Natural areas previously reserved for peaceful recreational uses will become a battleground of competing interests.

It's only a matter of time before a member of the public is seriously injured by the introduction of blood sports into our national parks.

That is the view of the Nature Conservation Council, the peak conservation body in this State. The Government claims that allowing hunting in national parks is a cost-effective way to eradicate feral animals in national parks. Earlier the Minister for Primary Industries interjected and said that the Opposition does not care about feral animals in national parks, which is far from the truth. Hunting in national parks will not help to control the feral animal problem in New South Wales and might well make it worse. The Opposition knows that feral animals

are a great threat to Australia's biodiversity. The Opposition knows that foxes, pigs, cats, dogs, rabbits and goats are the most common feral animals and their populations are rapidly increasing across the State. When in government the Opposition put in place an effective feral animal control program. That program requires careful planning with skilled, professional operators using humane methods, a scientific approach and monitored outcomes.

Ad hoc approaches using recreational hunters will not work. There is a large body of scientific evidence to back this up. I am grateful to Dr Yvonne Davila, a scientist in my electorate, who sent me some of this material. Dr Davila posed a number of questions to the Premier, and I hope the Minister will answer them today. Dr Davila wants to know how the Government will protect her safety and the safety of her students when hunting is permitted in national parks, and what additional resources will be provided to national parks to supervise recreational hunting. Dr Davila also wants to know the source of the Premier's claim that recreational hunting will help feral animal control—a claim that Dr Davila, national park rangers and many others strongly dispute.

Recreational hunters are not effective because they cannot undertake the level of culling required to have an impact. Unless hunters kill more feral animals than can be replaced each year they do not reduce the populations. According to the New South Wales Game Council, last year a total of 14,161 game and feral animals were killed by recreational hunters in New South Wales State forests. Almost half of them were rabbits. In this period 15,080 game hunting licences were issued in New South Wales, so each hunter killed less than one animal on average. The figure is minute when compared to the total number of feral animals in New South Wales. Effective feral animal management requires culling of huge numbers of animals in a short period over a large area. Programs need to be targeted and coordinated and use multiple approaches. They require careful consideration of target species and their habits if they are to be successful.

Recreational shooting is not related to a coordinated program; it is random and ineffective. Even skilled shooters say that on-ground shooting of feral animals is not an effective method of feral animal eradication. Depending on the animal, aerial shooting by skilled marksmen, mustering, baiting and trapping are more effective. On-ground shooting can often increase feral numbers by dispersing groups and making animals such as pigs more wary. To shoot an animal humanely requires a high level of skill. There are very limited areas of an animal's body that deliver a quick and relatively painless death and there are no guarantees that recreational shooters have the level of skill to do that. That is why, to date, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has used a range of methods, including professional licensed shooters, to manage feral animal control. As Pepe Clarke from the Nature Conservation Council said:

Eradication of feral animals is a serious policy issue that must be addressed on the best available science, not backroom political deals.

Allowing hunting in national parks will change the nature of those parks forever. The community will become afraid to go to parks, fearing they are not safe. The example of New Zealand will loom large in people's minds. In New Zealand there have been many injuries and deaths as a result of hunting in national parks. For example, in 2010 a woman was fatally shot when brushing her teeth in a national park camping area. The hunter mistook her for a deer. An email I have received from a constituent sets out how this will impact the community. The constituent advises me that he organises regular camping trips in national parks for a social group of which he is part. The trips are often to the destinations that have been listed by the Government as being opened up to hunting. His email says:

Shooters in these parks will mean that we are sharing the camp grounds with groups of shooters and their guns. It is unnerving to think guns will be carried by other campers...

The end result of the concern and uncertainty created by opening national parks to hunting will be to reduce visitation rates. Over the past few years the National Parks and Wildlife Service has worked hard to better promote our national parks and to encourage people to spend time in them. We all know that in order to increase the level of support for national parks we need to increase the number of people who spend time in them—people who understand them, know them and love them. This will now be placed at risk by the action of the Government. People will be afraid to go into parks and this legislation will create uncertainty and fear in the community. Most tellingly in regard to this piece of legislation, not only conservationists and Opposition members have concerns about this bill. Even the Legislation Review Committee, which is dominated by Government members, raised concerns about the bill. In its report on the legislation the committee stated:

The Committee is concerned that the subordinate legislation making powers of this bill may deny Parliament its proper role in scrutinising alterations to the legislation.

As I said, that committee is dominated by members of the Government, not by members of the Opposition, and even it has concerns regarding this legislation. This process has been so poorly thought through that in their rush to do the bidding of the Shooters and Fishers Party Government members did not even realise that the legislation would allow hunters to use self-loading rifles and pump action shotguns to shoot feral animals on Crown and non-rural lands, which is outrageous. The Leader of the Government in the upper House had to amend the legislation at the last minute in order to prevent that. If the Coalition cannot even ensure that in the first instance the legislation is right and does not allow widespread use of category D licensed weapons, how on earth can we trust it to properly oversight and monitor hunting in national parks when it is up and running? In supporting this legislation the Government has abrogated its responsibility to govern on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: What a load of rubbish.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: It has. It is governing on behalf of the Shooters and Fishers Party. The Shooters and Fishers Party has long advocated for access to national parks for recreational hunters. As a former Minister for the Environment I know that the issue was regularly raised by members of that party, but the Labor Government resisted its approaches. It was resisted by Labor in government because we understood that we hold the parks in trust for future generations. Successive governments, both Coalition and Labor, added to the national park estate because they recognised the importance of the national park estate in fostering public appreciation and enjoyment of our natural heritage and the importance of conservation. This Government will go down as the first government in history to reverse that trend and instead sacrifice part of the national park estate to the agenda of the Shooters and Fishers Party rather than to the needs and interests of the people of New South Wales. I urge members of this House to vote against this legislation.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.20 p.m.]: I support the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. During this debate I will place some facts on the record to counter the bucket load of rubbishy rhetoric Opposition members continue to offer as debate and the hyperbole, spin, mistrust, lies and misinformation circulated by the Opposition and its Labor friends. The New South Wales community fundamentally rejected Labor's approach to issues on 26 March 2011. The people of New South Wales are tired of it. The Opposition needs to adopt some new tactics.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: The Coalition was not even honest with the people of New South Wales.

Mr TROY GRANT: The people of New South Wales were tired of it in 2011 and they are tired of it now.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! I remind the member for Marrickville that the member for Dubbo has the call.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will outline some facts. The Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 provides for the management of pest species through licensed shooting on private and public land. The Act established the Game Council of New South Wales, which is a statutory authority that is subject to the control and direction of the Minister for Primary Industries. The Game Council has a number of functions associated with facilitating and managing hunting, including the administration of a licensing regime. Claims made by the Opposition that licensed shooting on private and public land is uncontrolled, characterised by a failure to accept responsibility, not properly managed and without oversight are incorrect. Through the licensing regime, the Game Council makes recommendations with regard to public land that may be declared open for shooting as well as the provision of educational courses and material to licensed hunters to minimise risks to public safety and to protect animal welfare.

Those facts are the complete opposite to the arguments advanced by the Opposition. The Game Council has issued more than 17,000 licences since it was established. Last year, licensed hunters spent the equivalent of more than 230,000 days in pursuit of hunting activities. No life-threatening safety issues were reported during that time. However, in the same period more than 730,000, which is just short of three-quarters of a million, game and feral animals were removed from public and private land. I ask the House to note that that did not include national park estate land.

Mr Greg Piper: What are their percentages?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will get to that shortly. The national park estate has significant numbers of pests. The Minister articulated that very well and we have heard about regional and environmental factors that

have contributed to the significant increase in numbers. Many of the pests are listed as key threats under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. I point out to the member for Lake Macquarie, who is interested in facts, that the National Parks and Wildlife Service estimates it removed more than 45,000 animals from national park estate land in 2010-11. Much of that was achieved by shooting by staff or commercial contractors. While that number is impressive, people who live near or make use of our national park estate land know that is only the tip of the iceberg. It is a bigger problem now because of climatic conditions that occurred in this State during recent seasons. Earlier I referred to changed climate conditions. There are immensely many more wild dogs, feral pigs, deer, foxes, cats and other feral species that remain in the national park estate. Each day they remain, they threaten the very essence of what Labor Opposition members claim they want to conserve—the pristine nature of national parks.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: Feral animals are destroying the fauna and flora within our national parks and are displacing native species. The member for Marrickville has proclaimed her love of all things native, yet she argues against controlling pests that are impacting on native species.

Mr Andrew Cornwell: Hypocrisy.

Mr TROY GRANT: It is the highest hypocrisy. Pest species are considered to be the second-largest threat to biodiversity in the State after the loss of habitat. Furthermore, they kill large numbers of native animals and damage their habitat, which impacts on approximately 40 per cent of all threatened species. Collectively, pest animals and weeds pose the second-highest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. The impact on primary production from pest species is estimated to cost New South Wales agriculture \$70 million a year. The number of pest species is increasing, particularly after recent rains, and pest species are widely distributed across all land tenures and environments. Pests do not remain within the confines of national parks. They roam onto other public and private lands. They impact on community security. As I have already stated, pest species are estimated to cost New South Wales agriculture \$70 million a year and they impact significantly on environmental values.

As the Minister stated, hunting in national parks already occurs in Victoria, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania. Shooting also is allowed in some national parks in the United States of America, and recreational shooting of a range of feral animals is allowed in the conservation lands of New Zealand. It makes sense to utilise licensed shooters, who have been accredited as responsible hunters, to assist with the effort against feral animal pests in national parks. The National Parks and Wildlife Service estimated in 2010-11 that at least 24,000 feral game animals were destroyed on the national park estate. That represented expenditure of 15 per cent of National Parks and Wildlife Service resources, which is more than the service spends on visitors and visitor services in national parks. That is not economical and it does not make good management sense.

As part of the Game Council's charter, it has contributed to the development of firearms and hunting safety guides, conducted many workshops to help others to develop skills to hunt safely, more effectively and ethically, and approved 190 clubs and organisations for the purposes of the restricted licence, which is a licence to hunt on public and private land. The council also approved 900 voluntary assessors for the restricted licence and implemented the blaze orange hunting clothing safety awareness program. Like most organisations in our society, gun owners are far more safety conscious than has been the case in previous years. Despite the spin and the scare campaign of Opposition members, the provisions of this amending bill will not allow public hunting in a national park estate that is generally in, or adjacent to, metropolitan areas.

The Opposition would like the public to believe otherwise. Under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 inspectors have strong powers to regulate hunting activity. Those powers will be enhanced by the proposed offence provisions and powers to stop and inspect vehicles. The provisions are all about effective management of companies and they underpin the legislation. Effective management prescriptions and public notification will be used so that other park users are not put at risk. A similar proven system has been used in State forests.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: There are a lot of people in national parks and State forests.

Mr TROY GRANT: Examples exist to demonstrate that this system works effectively.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Opposition members will remain silent.

Mr TROY GRANT: That is just another interjection that is an example of the Opposition spin and peddling rubbish. This amending bill provides an effective tool to complement current management activities that already are in place to control pest animals. Government members include experts who will provide evidence in support of the bill. I rely on the expertise of those Government members because they talk facts. They have credibility that Opposition members significantly lack. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [12.28 p.m.]: I oppose the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill, which will allow shooting in national parks. Under this bill hunting could occur in 40 per cent of reserves, including world heritage and wilderness areas. Only 48 metropolitan national parks, wilderness and world heritage areas are specifically excluded from this bill. All leading environment, animal welfare and gun-control organisations opposed the 2002 game bill, which opened the gate to killing animals for pleasure in our forests. I opposed that bill and I continue to oppose this cruel and senseless approach.

This bill serves no conservation purpose. It will not eradicate or even reduce introduced species but it will increase animal cruelty and promote gun use and misuse. Game hunting conflicts with pest management and eradication strategies and the nationally agreed protocols. The Invasive Species Council assessment of recreational shooting as a control measure for invasive animals shows that ad hoc hunting cannot achieve the levels of kills needed to reduce populations. The Shooters and Fishers Party attempts to paint a picture of game hunters as conservationists. However, it is not in the interest of recreational shooters to control feral animal populations. Their interest is to maintain strong populations for future shooting. There are reports of hunters releasing deer and pigs in new areas to ensure available game for hunting, and that is why real conservationists do not support this bill.

Recreational hunting conflicts with other national park uses and risks the safety of visitors. Many people who have contacted me are worried about the safety of people using parks for their beauty and to observe and understand our natural environment. It is no surprise that park workers have refused to implement these changes—they know what will happen in the field, and they are at risk of death and injury. The Game Council has said that there have been only four shooting deaths to date in State forests. Only four, and that is since 2006. One death is too many, and with many more visitors to national parks the risk is even greater. Other jurisdictions that allow shooting in national parks report death and injuries, and I share the concern that New South Wales will see similar incidents. The skill levels of recreational shooters are highly varied, and they are spread across many locations. The council says that 12,000 licensed shooters kill about 15,000 feral animals a year across more than two million hectares, half of which are rabbits. That is one feral animal killed every 150 hectares of State forest a year.

According to the Invasive Species Council's review of evidence, ground shooting of feral animals is ineffective for rabbits, foxes, pigs, dogs and cats. It states that ground shooting can only be effective in professional or sustained programs over small accessible areas such as farms. Shooting as a strategy relies on skilled hunters, but you do not need to be a straight shooter to get a licence. Training and testing are limited. The voluntary code of practice is neither monitored nor enforced on the ground. The fact is no-one knows what happens in the field, what animals are killed and what animals are injured and left to die. The focus for recreational shooters is sport. The aim is for the trophy kill, not to reduce introduced populations. Recreational hunters enjoy shooting animals. They do this as a hobby. Are these the people we should rely on to humanely manage pests? Can we trust them to ensure pests—which are live, sentient beings that feel pain and suffer—are not treated cruelly?

There is growing evidence that fertility control of feral animals and other humane measures can effectively reduce populations and address the impacts of introduced species. The charity Vets Beyond Borders is successfully using these in other countries and the Government should be funding research into programs and implementing existing strategies where there are serious problems with feral animals, and it should be doing that now. These strategies work and are humane. This is what the Government should propose; it should not be pandering to cruel, vested interests to get unrelated legislation through the House. This bill will further promote killing for pleasure, and provides no animal welfare, environmental or community benefit. I condemn the bill.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [12.33 p.m.]: I support the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I am not a shooter. I am a regular national parks user, and animal welfare has been my life for the past 20 years. The Opposition opposes this bill but I ask Opposition members to listen carefully to why this is good legislation. It addresses dark, unpalatable truths, but they are truths nonetheless. Australia's native fauna struggles to compete with feral animals. Our marsupial mammals are based on body designs that date back some 150 million years. Quolls, bandicoots and antechinus would have been at home in

the Jurassic era. The arrival of the dingo some 4,000 years ago placed initial pressure on many species of marsupials. The arrival of European settlers some 220 years ago with several different types of placental mammals was the crushing blow. The red fox, the domestic dog, the domestic cat, goats and pigs all have a devastating effect on our environment. Marsupials struggle to compete. Exemplifying this is the difference between the mix of native wildlife present in Tasmania today with that of similar ecosystems in New South Wales, Tasmania not having the fox. In the mid-1970s the Myall Lakes National Park was gazetted.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: That's a good park.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL: It is a beautiful park and a beautiful part of the world. I have visited that park for two weeks every year since 1977. When we first started visiting that park we would see multiple small wallabies, bandicoots and other small marsupials. We do not see small wallabies or bandicoots now, but we do see wild dogs. Even though it has been protected as a national park we have unfortunately seen the number of feral animals in that park increase. Tasmania possesses both greater numbers and a greater diversity of small marsupials than does the mainland because it does not have this competition. Feral animals do enormous damage to Barrington Tops National Park, which the member for Marrickville mentioned earlier. Feral pigs live throughout the plateau area and are responsible for extensive damage to subalpine habitats. Pigs are omnivorous and obtain their dietary needs by grazing and rooting up plant material. They also prey upon smaller animals, and scavenge on carcasses. In the Barrington Tops area, pigs are recognised as being important dispersers of Scotch Broom seed. Barrington Tops, despite being an absolutely pristine area worthy of the greatest level of protection, is overrun by Scotch Broom.

The European red fox was introduced into Australia as sport for hunters during the 1860s. The fox is well established in the southern half of Australia across a range of habitats. Foxes pose a major threat to native animals. Smaller animals between 35 kilograms and 5.5 kilograms, and ground birds are at the greatest risk. In particular, foxes are the main threat to the survival of the park's broad-toothed rat population. New South Wales has some six million hectares of national park, which comprises about 7.5 per cent of the State and a large proportion of the best habitat for our native fauna. Species that are particularly susceptible to the effects of feral animals include quolls, rufous betongs, brush tailed rock wallabies, koalas, bandicoots, dusky antechinuses, wombats, Albert's lyrebirds and bush stone curlew, to name but a few.

The National Parks and Wildlife recovery plan for the brush tailed rock wallaby identifies fox control to reduce predation and goat control to reduce competition as key factors in this species survival. The Department of the Environment's bush stone curlew management plan identifies foxes, cats, dogs and pigs as being significant threats. There are fewer than 1,000 breeding pairs left in New South Wales. This ground-dwelling bird cannot compete with feral animals and habitat loss. This document identifies 1080 baiting and shooting as vital in controlling the populations of these feral animals. That is right, this document with Bob Debus' name on it identifies shooting as part of the control strategy to reduce the threat of feral animals to the bush stone curlew.

Let us look at the southern brown bandicoot recovery plan. This plan identifies the control of foxes and wild dogs as essential for the bandicoots' recovery. Again, this plan countenances mound baiting, trapping and opportunistic shooting as acceptable methods. Again, this document bears the signature of the former Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus. The red fox threat abatement plan discusses the various methods for controlling this species. Poisoning with sodium fluoroacetate, or 1080, is still the most commonly used method of control. In some circumstances it is highly effective. In others it has shortcomings. This compound has a high kill rate. Methods of using it include aerial baiting and bait stations. Whenever it is used it is designed to try to reduce the likelihood of killing native fauna.

The member for Marrickville and the member for Sydney identified 1080 as being a humane method of control. I have treated or attempted to treat animals dying of 1080 poisoning—generally domestic animals that have consumed it accidentally, but I have also had wild animals brought in dying as a result of 1080 poisoning. Let us address the dark, deep, ugly fact that none of it is humane. Using 1080 poison is not humane and shooting is not humane. None of the procedures is humane, but we cannot hide behind some facade that one is more humane than the other. However, inhumane feral animal control is an unfortunate but essential fact if we are to skew the balance back towards protecting our precious native fauna. The member for Marrickville said that science supported that 1080 does not affect native animals. The red fox abatement plan produced by her Government specifically states that there is little data to determine whether the use of 1080 kills significant amounts of native fauna.

The use of 1080 can be selective to a degree, but it is labour intensive. Using 1080 in an area with spotted quolls involves burying baits at a 27-centimetre depth without poison, placing sand around them and returning daily to examine the surrounding footprints to determine what animals have consumed it. Once it can be determined that the bait has not been consumed by quolls and has been consumed by a fox or a dog, a short baiting program commences. However, this procedure is incredibly labour intensive and expensive. It remains the gold standard for control, but make no mistake, it is expensive. Even with limited resources, our wildlife will benefit when these systems are augmented. For example, the 12-month wild dog program in the Brindabella ranges cost some \$114, 000 in 2001-02 for a small area. This demonstrates the expenses needed to conduct these programs.

If volunteer shooters can augment existing programs, wildlife will benefit. It is an unpalatable dark fact, but a fact nonetheless, that shooting has a role to play. In 2010-11 some 24,000 feral animals were killed by shooting in New South Wales national parks. Volunteer shooters will be controlled by ministerial directive but will augment the work of existing contract shooters. The Minister will control the time, place and number of shooters in a park at any time. Currently, many parks have periodically controlled burns to reduce the threat of serious bushfires. A controlled culling program is likely to apply the same management. Killing native animals is illegal and attracts fines of up to \$220,000 for killing a threatened species.

This bill does not present a free-for-all for recreational shooters. The only change most visitors will notice is a reduction in feral animal species and increased opportunities to observe native fauna. It is a sad fact that such programs are necessary, but we must do everything we can to protect our precious wildlife and neighbouring livestock. Protecting our native fauna and livestock from feral animals involves killing feral animals—an ugly, unpalatable fact. Each occasion involves a degree of cruelty. It is an awful business but, sadly, a necessary one until someone develops superior methods. However, species, such as quolls, curlews, broad-toothed rats and others, require protection. Allowing an increased shooting presence in our precious national parks will enhance their ability to compete.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [12.43 p.m.]: I oppose the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. The Shooters and Fishers Party in the upper House has forced the Government to cease debating the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill and its cognate bill until the bill we are debating has been dealt with. That could have some implications on people's plans. It is interesting that the Shooters and Fishers Party has forced the Government to make an unprecedented move. It really demonstrates who is actually running the show in this place. Clearly, it is not the Government if the Shooters and Fishers Party is able to achieve that in the upper House. In my contribution to the second reading debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill I shall focus on two issues regarding the proposed amendments.

A few weeks ago I was reading the *Sydney Morning Herald* letters. One short letter caught my attention. It was from someone who knew a lot about the current regime in New Zealand, which is not dissimilar to what we are debating, that is, allowing recreational shooters to shoot in national parks. The alarming thing is that that letter cited approximately 10 deaths, with a woman being killed most recently, since recreational shooters have been allowed to shoot in national parks in New Zealand. Whilst we can sugar coat those events and say we have this regime in place, the Games Council will have a monitoring role, and we will do all those things, the facts cannot be ignored: this legislation will result in a fatality. If we think that is not the case, we have only to look across to New Zealand, which has exactly the same regime in place as proposed in this bill. I wanted to get that information onto the *Hansard* record as I truly hope that we will not have any human deaths but, unfortunately, that is a logical outcome after the passage of this amending bill.

My second point is to blow away the myth the Government is perpetrating about this bill that somehow it will be the magic cure-all for dealing with feral animals in national parks. That is just rubbish. Culling feral animals in national parks can be successful only if we know about the problem and there is a systematic eradication program. It is fanciful to suggest that somehow the outcome of this legislation will be a magic culling system for feral animals in national parks. For example, our national parks have an extensive number of brumbies and feral animals. I ask someone from the other side to explain how a recreational shooter wandering through a national park will be able to discern or know about the systematic, well-planned eradication programs.

It is quite bizarre that the Government thinks we could buy this preposterous position. The other noticeable thing is that Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is not in the list, but I guess there are feral animals over that way. As other members have stated, this amending bill represents an incredible breaking of trust with the people of New South Wales. The O'Farrell Government promised it would do two things. First, it would not do deals with minor parties and, second, it would not allow hunting in New South Wales national parks. Nothing

could be more clear: those two promises are on the public record. Nor could it be more clear that those two promises have been completely smashed. When one adds that to the amendments to the workers compensation scheme and yesterday's great undelivered promise of the North West Rail Link—

Mr Nathan Rees: The tram.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: The tram, which does not quite make it to the city; passengers will have to change their mode of transport to get into the city. I enjoyed reading today's *Daily Telegraph*, I normally do not—it was a smash-up. I underline that issue of safety. At the Shires Association conference the Premier answered a question about this initiative of allowing cowboys into national parks with high-powered guns. He likened it to back-burning. Someone might want to explain to me what the connection is. How can one liken people with guns in national parks where people are participating in recreational activities such as having picnics, camping and bushwalking, to a back-burn? If ever there was an example of down-playing a problem that is it.

The Game Council has said that a total of 14,161 game and feral animals were killed in New South Wales forests last year by recreational hunters. Almost half of them were rabbits. In that period there were 15,080 game hunting licences issued in New South Wales. Each hunter killed, on average, less than one animal. The figure is minute compared to the total number of feral animals in New South Wales. It underpins the points I have been making about the myth perpetrated by the Government that this is the answer to feral animal control in national parks. It is nonsense. I note the Minister for the Environment has joined us. I am sure that, knowing the Minister, if she were completely honest with herself she would come to that conclusion. The Shooters and Fishers Party has forced the Government to suspend the debate in the upper House in relation to workers compensation.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: That is simply not correct. I have just been to the upper House and they have moved on to another bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Does the Minister seek the call?

Mr Brad Hazzard: It is unrelated; completely disconnected. It is fiction.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The member for Canterbury has the call.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: That is my information. In closing I reiterate my two points: we have an example only two hours flight from Sydney—New Zealand—of why this legislation is not a good idea. The danger posed to humans cannot be outweighed by painting this bill as the magic answer to the feral animal problems in national parks.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services) [12.52 p.m.]: As the member for Bega I will make a contribution to debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I have listened to the members for the electorates of Marrickville, Sydney and Canterbury and I find it hypocritical that they are lecturing country communities about what should happen in terms of feral animal control. These members were Ministers in the former Labor Government and they sat around the Cabinet table and approved a licensed, regulated regime in State forests. You both sat around the table approving a regime in State forests.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Often recreational users utilise State forests for picnics. The Government will transfer the State forests regime to national parks. I encourage some of the members who live in metropolitan areas to go out and see how big the national park estate is in this State. Look at the quality of the national park estate in the many areas where it has been ignored and where feral animals are out of control. It is outrageous for the Opposition to shed crocodile tears over this issue. What the Minister for the Environment will do is put in place a transparent process that will include consideration of public safety and the rights of other users of the public lands. She will put in place proper plans of management and an evidence-based approach to the feral animal eradication program in national park estates. As the grandson of a grazier I saw firsthand at five in the morning 150 sheep torn to shreds by wild dogs that had come out of public lands; much of it national parks.

While the 1080 baiting program has had some success in the management of wild dogs, particularly in the south-east, the management program can be further enhanced by allowing the shooting of feral animals in national park estates. The member for Charlestown, with his expertise, made a completely clear point to those opposite. In recovery action plans for some species that are under threat Bob Debus identified shooting to be a component of the programs to eradicate the feral animals placing those species under threat. It is hypocritical for the Opposition to say it does not support any form of shooting in the national parks estate. When in government the Labor Party was happy to support shooting as a means to protect native fauna.

This bill makes complete sense. I point out that this is not a case of allowing people to go in willy-nilly and start shooting as they see fit. It is a highly regulated program. I reiterate that we are not talking about people who go out and shoot. A shooter has to obtain the relevant hunting licence, he or she has to be regulated and trained under the requirements of the Game Council and then he or she has to observe the regulations in relation to the 79 nature reserves and national parks that will be made available. All this will be done under the authority of the Minister for the Environment, and it will be done in a way that adds value to the work done by the park service in eradicating feral animals. That is what the Government is talking about. This is sensible legislation.

This legislation is similar in nature to the legislation that those opposite, the member for Canterbury and the member for Marrickville, approved at the Cabinet table when it came to State forests. It will be news to those opposite, but the nature and the quality of the public estate in many areas when it comes to State forests and national parks is similar in a lot of areas and regions. The high-end conservation areas such as the wilderness and world heritage declared areas will not be open to shooters. The statements by the member for Marrickville and the member for Canterbury in relation to world heritage areas are outrageous.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Another prominent member of the former Labor Government is going to stand up and cry crocodile tears, when it was the former Labor Government that allowed recreational and conservation hunting in State forests. The bill reflects the same principles, applied more broadly, and it will require the same degree of regulation and competent management that we have seen in State forests to be applied in national park estates. I find the hypocrisy of those opposite a little bit rich. I am a member who represents a rural constituency, and to have inner-city members of Parliament portray this legislation as enabling people to run amok, shooting in national parks is outrageous. It is a scare tactic. It is evidence of the sops to The Greens that the Labor Party went on with when in government. It has learnt nothing from the lesson of March 2011.

[Business interrupted.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [12.58 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit consideration of the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill to continue until 1.30 pm.

I am conscious of the fact that at 1.00 o'clock there would be an expectation that there we would move into deliberation on committee reports. I have had a discussion with the member for Maroubra and indicated to him that because of the urgency I expressed earlier in the day about this bill, it might be sensible to proceed with the debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill until the usual lunchtime at 1.30 p.m.

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

Motion agreed to.

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second Reading

[Business resumed.]

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [12.59 p.m.]: I speak on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. This is another backroom deal by the O'Farrell Government—backroom deals that are

occurring much too frequently, and to the detriment of the people of New South Wales. This backroom deal will allow shooting of feral animals in national parks—something the O'Farrell Government said it would never allow. When in opposition the Coalition vehemently opposed any shooting in national parks and condemned anybody for even thinking of allowing shooting in national parks. But now that the Coalition is in power it needs to get legislation through.

When the Government cannot do that because it does not have control of the upper House, it does a deal with the minor parties—another thing that the Coalition said it would never think of doing. That the O'Farrell Government is breaking another election promise and will allow recreational hunting in our national parks is a crying shame. Seventy-nine national parks will have hunters ready to aim and shoot, and I can bet there will be cowboys out there ready to shoot anything that moves. This is completely unacceptable. I refer to an email from Frances and William Holland, directed at the Government, in which they say:

We are extremely disappointed that you will allow shooters to conduct shooting in national parks and reserves. This is completely contrary to a promise made by the Premier when the Coalition was elected to government. Your party's decision is distasteful in the extreme, and shows complete disregard for public safety. We are very angry voters.

The anger in the words of this email is palpable and shows the growing discontent amongst the electorate with this Premier and his Government. It is another broken election promise from this Premier; he has already broken 100 promises, and this is just another notch to add to his belt. What did that Premier say when questioned about this broken promise? According to the Australian Associated Press [AAP], Mr O'Farrell said the Government "had to live with the Parliament that the people of New South Wales have given us". He is now blaming the people of New South Wales for his inability to get legislation through. What a great shame.

If the Premier cannot take the heat, he should not blame the voters or the people. Let me tell you something, Barry: If you are not up to the job, there is one simple thing for you to do—resign. Resign from the premiership; do not blame the voters for your bad management and your untrustworthy Government. Do everyone a favour and just walk away. He has already cut the Community Building Partnership program by \$50 million, taking money away from builders, trainees and community groups desperately seeking funding. His backbench has had enough, and so have the voters of New South Wales. Fancy that—blaming the voters for backroom political deals.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! What is the point of order?

Mr Kevin Anderson: It is Standing Order 76. Madam Acting-Speaker, I ask you to direct the member to return to the leave of the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Cabramatta will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr NICK LALICH: Barry O'Farrell's backflips are greater than those in a three-ring circus. Make no mistake, under this bill our national parks—which really should be sanctuaries—will become danger zones. The danger from the trigger-happy cowboys will be to families enjoying important leisure time in our pristine national parks. They are places for them to go to unwind from their hectic working lives, and to enjoy the sights, sounds and scenery of native flora and fauna. Park visitors should not have to be concerned that there could be some idiot with a rifle out there endangering the lives of humans and animals. We know that a deal was done to get the electricity sell-off and to the workers compensation legislation through. The Government said that it would not do deals with the Shooters and Fishers Party, but it did. Some members have said that feral animals are on the increase in national parks.

But we have licensed shooters trained to shoot feral animals, not ratbag cowboys who will go out there with a couple of mates for a day or two on the weekend to try to get as many animal scalps as they can—we hope not other scalps. What mother in her right mind would allow dad—because she probably would not have too much success stopping dad from going into our national parks on the weekend—to take their sons or daughters on a walk through the park? I know my wife would never allow me to take any of my children through national parks if these recreational shooters are allowed in national parks. We will have to walk through these national parks wearing flak jackets and steel helmets to ensure we have a chance to protect ourselves from some of these idiots who will be in our national parks. Mark my words, there are a lot of idiots out there with guns.

Mr John Williams: There are a lot of idiots without them, too.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Government members will remain silent. The member for Cabramatta will not incite them.

Mr NICK LALICH: I try not to incite them, but they are easily incited. I concur with the Coffs Harbour-Bellingen National Park Association, which said:

National parks are for the protection of nature and for the enjoyment of the New South Wales public, not for blood sport. This decision by the government shows complete disregard for public safety and for the purpose of our National Park system.

They are livid in Dorrigo, and they are fuming in Sydney. The National Parks Association of New South Wales southern Sydney branch president, Brian Everingham of the Sutherland shire, has expressed the following:

The decision of the O'Farrell Government to allow recreational shooters into 79 national parks and reserves is the most retrograde step ever taken in this state by a conservative government.

This is a conservative Government that is doing this. Before the election the Coalition said that there was no way it would even think about letting this happen. But in order to get its legislation through and hit the working class of this State it will do anything; members opposite will sell their soul. Mr Everingham continued:

The public will be appalled and will feel at risk.

Members of the Macarthur branch of the National Parks Association of New South Wales in Campbelltown, which is closer to my area, have expressed similar outrage. They are working hard to preserve the koala and platypus habitats in south-west Sydney. Individual executive members of the organisation have publicly expressed their concerns about recreational hunting in national parks. Dr Tom Grant is a member of its executive and is a visiting fellow at the University of the New South Wales School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences. There should be no recreational hunters in national parks. I seek an extension of time.

Extension of time not granted.

Government members know that this is bad policy. They said so before the election, and they know it is bad policy now. What has changed is that the Government has caved in on its promise not to do deals with minor parties. This is another broken promise by the O'Farrell Government. This bill should be condemned by all in this House, including members of the conservative parties. Recreational shooting in national parks should not be allowed. There are other ways in which the Government can get its legislation through—whether by amendment or otherwise. It should do that in this case and not allow shooting in national parks. But the Government should also be more humane in its attitude to the workers of New South Wales in progressing its workers compensation legislation and the electricity sell-off. Of course, the O'Farrell Government wants to get everything through in a hurry. It does not care how it gets it through—as long as it gets through. And if that endangers the lives of people in our national parks, that will be on the head of members opposite and the O'Farrell Government.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [1.08 p.m.]: I speak on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 as the member for Tamworth representing country and regional people. The debate that has taken place over the past couple of hours has firmed my belief that those opposite simply do not understand rural and regional New South Wales. In particular, the member for Cabramatta disgracefully labelled hardworking landholders and farmers—who are trying to protect their property and livestock and earn an income, people who have given this country the platform of riding on the back of sheep—as trigger-happy cowboys. How disgraceful. These farmers and landholders have been crying out for support in protecting their properties. Invasive species pose one of the greatest threats to biodiversity and primary production in New South Wales. It is estimated that the annual economic loss to New South Wales agricultural industries—beef, lamb, wool and grains—is almost \$70 million.

The Game and Feral Animal Control Act provides for the effective management of pest species through responsible and orderly recreational hunting. A major component of the New South Wales invasive species plan is to harness the efforts of licensed and accredited hunters to assist in the management of pest species. The member for Cabramatta should note that it is licensed and accredited hunters, not trigger-happy cowboys going willy-nilly through national parks. If Opposition members looked outside the sandstone curtain they would see that national parks border some of our prime agricultural land in rural and regional New South

Wales, as well as State forests and natural reserves. It is not like The Domain; the land I refer to holds some of the most dangerous and feral animals in Australia—dogs, foxes and pigs—which do untold damage to property and livestock.

I meet regularly with landholders and I met recently with representatives from the New South Wales Wild Dog Control Association. David Moore from Niangala and Peter Schofield from Nundle quite often tell me that feral animal numbers are growing. In the Nundle and Hanging Rock State forests a local landholder of 30 years, New South Wales Wild Dog Working Group member Brian Tomalin, spoke about pig dogs and said that he would prefer to see State forests undertake more effective control measures such as aerial shooting and trapping. These landholders, who are at the forefront of this terrible problem, say that this is the sort of program needed to drive down the populations of feral animals. Those landholders' properties border national parks, which are safe havens for wild dogs, foxes, pigs and other feral animals.

The Goonoo Fox Baiting Group has worked for 10 years in Goonoo National Park and neighbouring properties. Livestock Health and Pest Authority rangers Rhett Robinson and Jason Gavenlock ran a meeting of the group, with coordinating farmers and other representatives, focusing on the upcoming July baiting season targeting pregnant vixens. Both rangers emphasised the importance of not only sheep farmers but everyone on the land becoming involved in an effort to reduce fox numbers through a coordinated approach involving baiting, trapping and shooting. The same problem runs right across rural and regional New South Wales. On 11 June 2012, a *National Rural News* article headed "Wild dog battle unites stakeholders", stated:

One of the greatest threats facing the sheep industry is being addressed through collaboration between [stakeholders].

That collaboration involves the culling of feral animals, such as foxes, pigs and wild dogs. Russell Murdoch from Tea Tree Springs in Khancoban says that the wild dog problem in his area is getting worse every year. He said:

When I first started farming 30 years ago it was a novelty to see a dog, which were pure Dingoes then, now they are more hybrid wild dogs and numbers have increased two-fold.

He said that each attack costs farmers in income and increases in animal health bills. We need to ensure that we stay on top of this problem. This is a highly regulated program that has been introduced by the good Minister. It is a common-sense approach to assist our landholders to run their businesses. How heartbreaking would it be each morning to go out and find some of your livestock slaughtered by dogs just for the thrill of the kill? The dogs do not eat the livestock; they kill it and disappear. They do not disappear back into kennels or other areas, they disappear into national parks, wild reserves and other areas that border some of our prime agricultural land, including prime grazing and livestock country.

For the purpose of the Act a game animal does not include any animal that is or is part of a threatened species, population or ecological community within the meaning of the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, or that is protected fauna within the meaning of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. A game animal is currently defined as any of the following animals that are living in the wild: deer, California quail, pheasant, partridge, peafowl, turkey, pig, dog, cat, goat, rabbit, hare or fox. I commend this bill because it provides for lawful hunting only by licensed shooters and accredited hunters—not trigger-happy cowboys, as implied by the member for Cabramatta and other members opposite. I encourage members opposite to come to the country; I encourage them to come to the Tamworth electorate and I will take them to that beautiful place around Nundle—

Ms Robyn Parker: A national park.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I will take them to a national park, as the Minister has kindly suggested. I will take them up to Nundle; I will take them up to Niangala and show them some of the beautiful country that houses and gives a safe haven to these feral animals. We will spend a night on one of my friend's farms, a sheep farm, and I will show them exactly what happens. I will get them to pick up the dead carcasses and the injured sheep that are maimed and in great pain. This bill will assist our farmers to get on top of what they do best: farming our country and assisting a very important part of the New South Wales economy—primary industries. I congratulate the Minister on allowing just a small section of national parks to be used for recreational hunting and on assisting our farmers to get on with what they do best. This country was born out of riding on the sheep's back; we want to continue to do so. I support our farmers wholeheartedly and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NATHAN REES (Toongabbie) [1.16 p.m.]: Let us work methodically through the pap that is the Game and Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. Let us deal with the Orwellian title first. I go to the dictionary

of choice for the New South Wales Parliament: the *Macquarie Dictionary*. It would not be my choice but it is the Chamber's choice. The first definition of "hunt" is "to chase (game or other wild animals) for the purpose of catching or killing". So let us dispense with this fiction that this bill is not about hunting. There is the definition in a dictionary that the Coalition has chosen to use in Australia's oldest Parliament.

I turn now to the science. Earlier the member for Dubbo and the member for Charlestown made passing references to the sort of science that might pass in the Government's Cabinet but certainly does not pass in the shadow Cabinet. The numbers speak for themselves. Population biology is not a very complex science so I expect Government members to follow this. These figures explain why recreational hunting is generally ineffective, the point being that a large proportion of the young of invasive animals normally die. In scientific terms it is called the doomed surplus. There are not enough resources for all that are born—unless they are spreading in the new territory—and the youngsters die of disease and predation.

For example, a feral pig study in Kosciuszko National Park found that about 85 per cent died within the first year and 95 per cent in the first four years. Only 1 per cent to 10 per cent of rabbits survive their first year. This means that hunters have to kill more feral animals than can be replaced each year to have an effect on the population, because a feral animal killed by a hunter is likely to be part of the doomed surplus—destined to die anyway—or be quickly replaced by another that would otherwise have died. The figures before me—now well-documented figures from scientific journals—indicate the following. For the brown rat—and they have been topical in the past few days—

Mr Michael Daley: Is that Torbay?

Mr NATHAN REES: Torbay and friends. For the brown rat the maximum annual rate of population growth is in the order of 471 per cent. They start reproducing when they are three months old and can more than triple their population in a year. In order to halt that population growth, 95 per cent of them have to be killed. The maximum annual rate of population growth for foxes is 105 per cent. To halt that growth 65 per cent of the foxes must be killed. For pigs the figure is 69 per cent to 78 per cent for the maximum annual population growth. In order to keep their numbers under control 70 per cent must be killed. For fallow deer, or Dama dama, the figures are 45 per cent and 34 per cent respectively. The maximum annual rate of population growth for goats is 53 per cent. In order to keep them under control 45 per cent of the population must be killed.

The difficulty with that is the rate of hunting and culling that the Government intends will not go anywhere near dealing with those figures. Feral animals killed in 2010-11 were in the order of 14,000. Rabbits accounted for 50 per cent of that number. In terms of government funding, through the Game Council, that equates to an amount in the order of \$180 per animal killed. The report states that some recreational hunters are highly skilled, but many are not. That is self-evident. It goes on to point out that a game council licence does not test whether a person is a good shot; it involves a written exam. Game Council President Robert Borsak is quoted in the report as saying:

For the Hunt Returns that are coming in ... for the 4 months to the end of October, 12,824 animals have been sighted and 2,035 (16%) of all kinds, have been killed. Not a great success rate.

Those are the words of the architect of this legislation who has been leading the Government by the nose through this policy miasma. The effectiveness of the policy is clearly substandard. I will read now a contribution to a journal I have only recently come across called *NitroExpress.com*.

Mr John Sidoti: It is good to see you've got a lot of time on your hands.

Mr NATHAN REES: This is an important debate and it is important the member hear this so that he understands the derivation of this policy. This is a story about some gentlemen who were hunting elephants:

Deon called us to a quick & silent halt, as he strained to listen, desperate whispered words were exchanged with the trackers as they moved ahead. Next a thundering crash as Deon passed me heading in the opposite direction, the bull was coming! I turned & dodged behind the largest tree I could find some 10 metres away, then nothing. The bull was not headed in our direction, but away from us, phew!! We had frightened him just as much as he had frightened us, we were about 5 metres from him when Shorty saw him and the bull took off. Apparently he had not winded us, but was frightened away by the small noise that we made, on the wet grass and sand.

...

"Get ready Robert" Deon whispered, "he may feed up to us", the bull turned slowly and revealed a tusk, I stood up.

I took a deep breath to settle my nerves & let it out slowly, it looked like he was going to walk right up to us through the green screen of bush. Mentally I went through the routine, rifle ready, safety off here he comes. In a matter of 5 seconds he was there, not walking straight up, but angling to my left, a great huge head with a small hazel eye stared down at me, clearing the jess, as I swung the Heym onto him. My reflexes took over as the rifle fired the right barrel at 6 paces from the brain of the giant, he went down, as if in slow motion. Deon on my left whispered "fire again", I put the second barrel into the top of his head and it was all over. He flattened a vast area of jess as he hit the ground, as silently as his approach. It was awesome, he did not know what had hit him.

The gentleman who wrote that article was Legislative Council member Robert Borsak. The breathless and exhilarated tones in which he gives an account of shooting a bull elephant is frankly sickening. I challenge anyone in this place to be excited by that. Yet he is the architect of this legislation. If members are in any doubt that this is part of a tawdry deal, they need look no further than the Legislative Council where at the moment, upon the urging of the Shooters and Fishers Party, the Government has suspended debate on the workers compensation bill until this bill is passed. For a period I was Premier—

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Yeah, we remember.

Mr NATHAN REES: You are about to get a bit more of a reminder. At frequent intervals, urged on by a cabal of people on my side who were at odds with my policy position on this matter, to wit Tony Kelly, Ian Macdonald and Eric Roozendaal—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The member will be heard in silence.

Mr NATHAN REES: Members of the Shooters and Fishers Party would visit my office on regular occasions, urged on by the aforementioned cabal, saying that they wanted to be allowed to shoot and hunt in national parks and that they would hold up legislation unless the Government allowed it. They also wanted to shoot ducks, et cetera. There was no shortage of people telling me that as a government we had to accede to their demands, which included the shooting of animals in Kosciuszko National Park and the shooting of deer in Royal National Park and so on. I showed them the door on every occasion, not because it suited me but because it was the right thing to do. I cannot grasp the fact that off the back of the biggest election win of the past century the Premier is prepared to do a deal like this.

Instead of doing a deal, he ought to back the policy integrity that he believes is behind the sale of the electricity assets and the policy integrity he asserts is fundamental to the workers compensation bill. He should argue the merits of those pieces of legislation from the rooftops to the people of New South Wales and challenge the Shooters and Fishers Party to withdraw this tawdry bill as part of this tawdry deal. Government members always remind us that they were elected with a thumping majority, and that is the position Barry is in. But when we look at the whites of their eyes we know that they will fold. We know that Government members are not even going to try it. When I was Premier it was asserted to me that members of the Shooters and Fishers Party would not let legislation through. Guess what? They did not fundamentally knock back a single piece of legislation. The position I took as Premier to reject hunting in national parks— [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

My position as Premier, emphatically backed by my Cabinet, was that we should not allow shooting in national parks, and we did not have anything like the majority that this Government has.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Government members will remain silent.

Mr NATHAN REES: Barry O'Farrell is being led around by the nose by these characters. He has done a dodgy and tawdry deal with these characters to allow them to wander around the forests of New South Wales and shoot at what they believe are feral animals. Next there will be a bid for the shooting of ducks. The Government folded this time so it will probably fold on that issue as well. Government members should spare a thought for the stoicism, quiet resolution and dignity of their environment Minister. She has to eat this sandwich of mammoth proportions as part of a dodgy deal because Barry would not stare down these characters who threaten to bring the State to a standstill unless shooting is allowed in national parks. They also advocate for the killing of ducks, shooting as a sport in schools, and the list goes on.

The Government has a thumping majority. If it is not prepared to stand on its moral authority at this point in time after the biggest win in Australian election history when will it ever do it? I can put up with the policy differences that the Opposition has with the Government around electricity assets and the offensive workers compensation bill. What I will not cop is Government members masquerading a tawdry deal as being necessary for the running of the State. This is capitulation to a group led by a man who is arguably unhinged.

I can quote further from *NitroExpress.com*. Government members are being led around on this issue. It is bad for national parks and it is bad for the people of New South Wales. There is no demonstrated scientific evidence that it will have any effect on the rate of feral animal increase.

Instead of the Government using its majority in a responsible way and arguing its case for changes to the poles and wires or workers compensation, it is trying to ram this stuff through off the back of a deal done with characters who openly gloat about the pleasure they derive from putting a bullet into an elephant. They are the Government's bedfellows. This is an offensive and unnecessary bill. It does not help national parks in New South Wales. I believe that when we look at the effectiveness of this bill in 12 months time it will be abundantly clear that it is neither necessary nor effective. It should be rejected for the reasons I have outlined. To summarise, the science of it is dodgy. It has been drafted by someone who is clearly obsessed with killing live beasts and it is a function of political cowardice rather than a statement of serious policy intent. I condemn the bill and urge its rejection.

Pursuant to resolution business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

[Acting-Speaker (Ms Sonia Hornery) left the chair at 1.30 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The SPEAKER: I welcome Dr Neil Conn, AO, the Chancellor of St John Ambulance Australia, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills and member for Vacluse.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I direct my question to the Premier. There are hundreds of firefighters on Macquarie Street who walked off the job over the Premier's changes to workers compensation. The Opposition is prepared to suspend question time to allow the Premier to meet with them and resolve the issues. Will he take up this offer?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Fire Brigade Employees Union lost its opportunity to meet with me when its members took a decision this morning to go on strike. That is one of the most irresponsible actions I have ever heard of by a public sector union in the history of this State. As this House sits during the next five hours, people across Sydney, the Illawarra and the Hunter will be without fire services.

Government members: Shame.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Premier has the call. I warn members, particularly the member for Keira and the member for Auburn, that if they continue to interject they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Fire Brigade Employees Union could have decided to go on strike and leave a skeleton crew, but it rejected that offer which would have provided protection for communities across Sydney, the Illawarra and the Hunter. Why? It is because the members of that union want to be treated like the police. The facts are that the police have their own statutory WorkCover scheme, the death and disability scheme, and last year that scheme was subjected to significant reform by this Parliament. For employees who do not have statutory forms of workers compensation, the Government is making the tough but necessary decisions to bring WorkCover back into the black. We are making the tough but necessary decisions

to ensure that workers who may be injured at work get the support they deserve because the scheme will be financially sustainable. Madam Speaker, if you think I am angry, you are right. That is because what the Fire Brigade Employees Union has done today is to threaten the safety of people across this city, in the Illawarra and in the Hunter.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. It was a serious offer because this is a serious issue. The Premier has not indicated whether or not he will take up the offer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The point of order is not upheld.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I assure the Leader of the Opposition it is a serious response. The Fire Brigade Employees Union forfeited its right to meet with me when it decided to put community safety at risk by deciding to go on strike without leaving a skeleton crew to protect public safety.

FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYEES UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr TIM OWEN: My question is addressed to the Premier. Will he advise what arrangements have been put in place to protect the community during this firefighters strike?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Newcastle for his concern. Concern has been expressed also by people across this city, the Hunter and the Illawarra about how for the next four hours families, businesses and others will cope without the services provided by Fire and Rescue NSW. As we speak, the management of Fire and Rescue NSW is operating a coordination centre to try to manage the remaining firefighting resources that are available to the Government. Following notification of the proposed industrial action there has been liaison between the acting commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW, the New South Wales police commissioner and the heads of other emergency services to ensure that any contingency operations are well coordinated. Community safety is paramount. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the management of Fire and Rescue NSW have assured me that they are as satisfied as they can be with the contingency arrangements that are available to them.

During the strike NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers will be strategically located in Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra to respond to 000 calls for assistance. It will not impact on people ringing 000 in the event of a fire. From the community's perspective the protocol is unchanged. If the help of Fire and Rescue NSW is needed, people should phone 000 as usual and ask for its help. In the case of a fire the response will be made by the Rural Fire Service. I know that the community is appreciative of the efforts of Rural Fire Service firefighters not just today in these urgent circumstances but also throughout the year. In the case of a rescue, the NSW Police Force and the Ambulance Service of NSW will respond. In the case of a chemical spill or any other incident to which the NSW Fire Brigade's Hazmat unit ordinarily would respond, scientific officers from Fire and Rescue NSW will respond as they are not on strike.

We have tackled the difficult but critical issue of WorkCover reform because there was no alternative. The scheme is in deficit and that deficit threatens its future viability. Our reforms would get injured workers back to work where possible and, where that is not possible, generous safeguards are in place. No-one can seriously argue that it is better for injured workers never to return to work if a proper program of medical treatment and rehabilitation can get them back into the workforce. The best interests of the workforce and the community would be served if we can get as many people as possible back to work. Sadly, some injured workers will never be able to go back to work. Our reforms provide generous benefits for the most severely injured. For example, let us say that a 35-year-old firefighter earning \$85,000 a year burns his arms and sustains scarring, muscle damage and loss of strength, and is unable in those circumstances to return to work.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Under the old scheme total benefits payable would have been around \$770,000. If the same thing occurs under the scheme being proposed by the Government the total amount that would be paid would be around \$2 million.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease arguing with the Premier.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: In the case of a 50-year-old sustaining a catastrophic spinal cord injury, the old scheme would have provided around \$430,000. The scheme being proposed by this Government would provide \$1 million.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: As I said before, there is a simple reason—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: There is a simple reason why police are being treated differently. Police have their own statutory scheme. That statutory scheme was the subject of reforms that went through this place last year—reforms that the Opposition also opposed. We make no apology for getting that scheme back in the black. We make no apology for putting forward proposals that will ensure that injured workers across the State get the protection they deserve.

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

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Will small stations on the North Shore line like Artarmon, Wahroonga and Warrawee lose direct trains to the central business district under the plans the Minister announced yesterday?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members opposite have a nerve asking me about the north-west rail line when they had 16 years to deliver that rail link and they blew it.

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

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have barely answered the question, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is only 30 seconds into her answer. I call the member for Canterbury to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. She was not taking a point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition in particular never has the guts to ask me a question about public transport. When he was transport Minister he did nothing for public transport. He did nothing for the residents of north-west Sydney.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They can scaremonger all they like, but the reality is that this Government will build the north-west rail line.

Dr Andrew McDonald: No, the private sector will.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I cannot help but note the interjection. I was going to state all the great things we are doing with the north-west rail line, but I might return to what the former Labor Government did not do about it.

[Interruption]

I love it when the member for Toongabbie interjects.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Toongabbie, who axed the north-west rail line in favour of the central business district Rozelle Metro—

Mr Nathan Rees: You've got Ziggy's tram happening now.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question asked about Wahroonga, Warrawee and Artarmon.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's answer is absolutely relevant. The Minister has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will get to the North Shore in a second. Do not worry; the North Shore is well taken care of. I return to the former Government's failure in relation to the north-west rail line. Those opposite did everything they could not to deliver the rail line and now they are trying to thwart it. Do they support the north-west rail line? Clearly, in government they did not.

Mr Nathan Rees: Ziggy's tram.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite cancelled the north-west rail line in favour of the central business district Rozelle Metro and wasted half a billion dollars. That is their record. They first announced the north-west rail line in 1998 and said it would be delivered by 2010.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The ribbon should have been cut for the north-west rail line, but those opposite are an abysmal failure. In 2005 they announced it again but axed it again in 2008. They re-announced it and axed it. Their record is absolutely appalling.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For those opposite to ask such a silly question demonstrates that they do not care about the north-west and certainly do not care about the future of public transport.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I place on the record again what we have done and what we are doing. I am very proud to say that since we have come into office it has issued 15 tenders for the north-west rail line and 25 contracts.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: I am conscious that the Minister is running out of time.

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

Dr Andrew McDonald: I ask that the Minister be brought back to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! What standing order has been breached?

Dr Andrew McDonald: The question was about Wahroonga, Warrawee and Artarmon, which she has not yet mentioned.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the standing order that has been breached?

Dr Andrew McDonald: Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! Standing Order 129 has not been breached. There is no point of order. The Minister is being relevant to the question. Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: During this process I am pleased to say that geotechnical drilling started in September last year. We have also listened to the community. For example, we initially announced 300 extra car spaces. After consultation we now are delivering 4,000 car spaces. We have lodged planning documents, including the environmental impact statement, which comprised over 2,000 pages compared to the six or seven pages those opposite prepared. After 16 years those opposite produced a couple of pages; we have been in government for just over a year and we have made sure that we are doing our homework. I thank the Treasurer because over the next four years there will be \$3.3 billion for the north-west rail line. I thank our great

Treasurer for giving us that unprecedented amount of money for a project of this scale. The announcement yesterday demonstrates that the north-west rail line will be delivered in the best way possible in the interests of the community and of wider public transport users. I welcome further questions on this issue. [*Time expired.*]

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. How has the community reacted to the New South Wales Government's plan to modernise Sydney's rail network?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Castle Hill for his question and commend him for his excellent advocacy on behalf of his constituents. Yesterday we announced Sydney's rail future, the biggest change to our rail system for more than 80 years—changes those opposite were incapable of making.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time. The member for Toongabbie probably will be next.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Macquarie Fields left the Chamber at 2.35 p.m.*]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Unaccustomed as I am to spruiking all the positive comments, I will answer the member's question and respond to some of the positive comments we have received about this project.

The SPEAKER: Order! There may be some Government members as well.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: From day one we have engaged with community and industry experts about what customers need and the best way to deliver the project. The north-west rail line is the biggest infrastructure project in Sydney since the Harbour Bridge and we are building it. The following are comments from community and industry members. The Hills shire mayor, Greg Burnett, welcomed our announcement of high-frequency single-deck trains to the north-west. He said:

Our number one priority is that the people of the North West can get where they need to go, when they need to get there.

He also said:

High-frequency trains will mean that we will see more services, carrying more people, more effectively and more efficiently.

I could not have said it better myself. Since yesterday's announcement I have received emails of support from members of the public. I received this one just before I came to question time from Damien. I will not disclose his full identity in the House. He said:

I have grown up in a family that has always traditionally voted Labor. Putting politics aside I just wanted to say thank you for all your work in attempting to bring New South Wales public transport back in line with the first world.

This is a Labor voter. He said:

You have done more in the last year than has been done in the last 20.

That is not my comment; it comes from the Labor voter. Someone familiar to those opposite is Tourism and Transport Forum chief executive, John Lee. We all know what John Lee used to do. He said:

The plan will save commuters from increasingly crowded and slower journeys.

Brendan Lyon, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia chief executive, said:

Today's announcement represents a rail revolution.

We cannot help but agree with him. Sydney Business Chamber Executive Director, Patricia Forsythe, said the plan shows how the North West Rail Link will fit into the rail network, and is an important initiative. More community support came from the 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney who said:

Finally, there is a far-sighted plan bringing Sydney into the 21st century.

Mr John Robertson: What did your dad say?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know the Leader of the Opposition cannot handle all the positive comments because he failed when he was transport Minister. The Australasian Railway Association Chief Executive Officer, Bryan Nye, welcomed our plan. He said:

The ARA supports the overall aim of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and is encouraged by the commitment of the NSW Government to embark upon this critical task.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The list goes on. I will continue. Glenn Byres, Executive Director, Property Council of Australia, NSW Division, said:

More efficient use of the existing network through deploying single-deck high-frequency services will deliver an economic dividend, particularly in major economic hubs.

There we have it, whether it is community, the experts or industry. The lone sole voice not supporting the north-west rail line is the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is very close to being removed from the Chamber.

[Interruption]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite need to explain to the people of Sydney why they were not able to deliver the rail line and why they will not support it being delivered now. They had their chance in government to deliver this rail line and they blew it. If they believe in public transport, in the north-west and in improving our rail network for the future, they need to support the rail project as has everybody else. Every time those opposite ask about the north-west rail line I will remind them of how they failed the people of this city and this State. I will remind them because they blew it in government and now they should get on board and support the project because we will deliver it.

CITYRAIL SERVICES

Mr RICHARD AMERY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. As there are currently 16 direct services from St Marys and Mount Druitt arriving at Wynyard between 6.59 and 9.01 a.m., will the Minister guarantee that none of those direct services on the western line will be axed under the changes to the CityRail timetable?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I welcome that question because it allows me to remind the House that the Labor Party cancelled 416 daily rail services when it was in government.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite have the nerve to talk about front-line services when they axed 416 daily rail services, which equates to 2,000 services every week. It is a good opportunity to reiterate what this Government is all about: It is about restoring front-line services. I was very pleased back in October that a new timetable reintroduced 61 of the services the Opposition axed, and 15 of those services were specifically in western Sydney. The Government knows commuters in western Sydney are doing it tough. Labor ignored western Sydney for 16 years, which is why the Labor Party is on that side of the House and the Coalition is on this side of the House. I want to assure the people of western Sydney that this Government will keep its commitment to providing additional express and semi-express services. For the first time in many years the Government is conducting a complete rewrite of the CityRail timetable, something Labor could not be bothered doing when in Government. The new timetable will ensure the return of the services slashed by Labor.

The Government will ensure that it not only brings back the slashed services but also improves express services for the commuters in western Sydney doing it tough. The message is not just for western Sydney, but for the long-suffering commuters on the Central Coast and also in the Hunter. The Government announced an additional 30,000 seats per week for Central Coast commuters and an additional 20,000 seats per week for Hunter commuters. This will be achieved by increasing many of the services from six-car trains to eight-car

trains. This Government will restore services and improve frequency, and that is what yesterday's announcement was all about. This Government is not going to sit on its hands and do nothing. The definition of reform for those opposite is not to do the hard yards in reforming organisations like RailCorp by slashing services. That is not what should happen. If the Opposition cared about transport services it would not have slashed the services. It is not just services that are being brought back; commuters deserve to have a better experience.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I welcome the member for Kogarah to question time; she is only about half an hour late.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not sure why the member was running late or what she was interjecting about. I just noticed the member's absence from the Chamber. For the member's benefit I will go through the restored western Sydney services again. Going through the list will give me an opportunity to discuss all the rail lines promised for western Sydney by the former Labor Government that were never delivered. Not only did the Opposition axe services but it did not deliver the rail lines it promised over its 16-year period in government. Should I go through the list?

Government members: Yes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Due to popular demand I will go through the list.

Mr Richard Amery: Point of order: Standing Order 128 and Standing Order 130 direct that members asking or answering questions should not debate the point. The member is going into a broad-ranging debate.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is not required to answer a specific question, nor do I have the power to direct her to answer a question, as the member well knows. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given the point of order I will save it for another day. I reiterate that the former Labor Government slashed 2,000 weekly rail services and this Government is re-establishing them, especially in western Sydney. The process has started.

STATE BUDGET AND TOURISM

Mr BART BASSETT: My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. Will the Minister inform the House how this year's tourism budget reaffirms the Government's commitment to growing the tourism industry?

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I thank the member for Londonderry for his question. The recent budget is good news for the State's tourism and events industry as well as for our arts and cultural life. This Government's commitment to tourism is unquestionable. It is a key plank of our commitment to revive the State's economy by selling Sydney and New South Wales to the world and making this State number one again.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member Wollongong to remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Wollongong left the Chamber at 2.46 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will shortly have friends from the Government side joining her.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I certainly do not want to be credited with that scalp, Madam Speaker. In this budget, the Government is providing \$125 million each year for the next four years to Destination NSW. This will give the industry the stability for which it has been asking and allow it to plan investments and work towards our common goal of doubling visitor expenditure by 2020. It represents a budget boost of \$167 million over four years above Labor's budget and forward estimates that we inherited last year; a shortfall of some \$42 million per annum. The Government is serious about getting on with the job of promoting New South Wales to the rest of the world.

Ms Cherie Burton: What about partnerships?

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: What was that, you are proud of the shortfall?

Ms Cherie Burton: What about partnerships?

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Minister not to enter into a debate with the member for Kogarah.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: If this Government had not rectified the shortfall in the budget the entire industry would have suffered, affecting the 150,000 employees and the thousands of small businesses and communities that rely on tourism across the State. I am particularly proud to confirm that Destination NSW will oversee a \$12 million injection for the regional tourism industry over the next 12 months. The Chief Executive of the peak industry body, the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF), John Lee, stated:

The New South Wales budget including increased funding for Destination NSW and maintenance of this funding over the forward estimates, has reconfirmed the government is taking the visitor economy seriously.

He went on to state:

The NSW tourism industry welcomes both the funding and the message of consistency that today's budget provides. Consistency is the key; if the private sector has confidence that Destination NSW has the resources to market the State, they will get on with what they do best—providing services to visitors and tourists.

He also praised the O'Farrell-Stoner Government and stated:

It was good to see the Government did not shy away from the investment despite the challenging fiscal environment. We understand that this was a tight budget, but this commitment shows that when times are tough, the tough get going.

Then there is the Chief Executive Officer of the Accommodation Association of Australia, Richard Munro, whose media release was headlined, "Budget set to drive tourism in NSW" and said:

The continuation of strong support for tourism and major events in NSW has been reflected in today's State Budget, which is being welcomed by the accommodation industry.

The Accommodation Association of Australia says commitments by the O'Farrell-Stoner Government of \$125 million per year for the next four years to Destination NSW, a \$377 million boost for the arts/cultural sector and a 50 per cent increase in funding for the 'Small Biz Connect' program, are set to have a positive impact.

The General Manager of the Tourism Industry Council NSW, Andrew Jefferies, said the budget delivered a real commitment to tourism and major events, and forms the cornerstone of the Government's strategy to double the overnight visitor expenditure by 2020. He added that this budget confirms that Destination NSW, the statutory authority with responsibility for promoting Sydney and regional New South Wales, will be funded to the tune of \$127 million per annum for the next four years, ensuring there will be no funding shortfalls throughout this term of Parliament. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Peter Sheppard, Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Snowy Mountains, said:

We congratulate the New South Wales Coalition Government in recognising the value of the visitor economy to regional areas such as Snowy Mountains.

There are more. The regional component of the accolades that the Government has received for its tourism and major events budget and its cultural and arts budget flow through to the regions, including the area I just mentioned, the Snowy Mountains region. That remark has been replicated from most of the regional tourism organisations.

Mr Clayton Barr: Name them.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: There are 13 of them. I bet you cannot name them. Those are just a few of the glowing references from industry heavyweights who are only too well aware of this Government's commitment to doing everything possible to enhance and promote the State's \$25 billion tourism industry and make it the envy of the world. To this end, a year ago we established the Visitor Economy Taskforce, made up of a group of eminent and expert people, to advise on how best to do just this. I expect its important recommendations soon for consideration. This tourism budget is a clear demonstration that the development of the visitor economy in Sydney and regional New South Wales is at the core of our plans to restart the New South Wales economy and to enrich the quality of our everyday lives.

CITYRAIL SERVICES

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. There are currently five direct services from Schofields, Quakers Hill and Marayong arriving at Wynyard station between 6.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. Can the Minister guarantee that none of those direct services on the Richmond line will be axed under her changes to the CityRail timetable?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This question brings two things to my attention. First, since the member for Blacktown has been Leader of the Opposition he has decided to consult the rail timetable. Secondly, he has decided to work out where the north-west is. I reiterate that when he was Minister for Transport he did not do a single thing for the north-west. However, the question gives me the opportunity to talk about some of the other things we have done for north-western Sydney since we have been in government. Not only are we making the biggest contribution to an infrastructure project in the history of this State since the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge but, since we know that commuters are doing it tough, we have increased the number of bus services in the north-west. I know members of the north-west and their communities have been very appreciative of that—and there is more to come. But that is something the member for Blacktown did not do as Minister. We have also increased the number of NightRide bus services to the north-west—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Are you going to answer the question?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You do not like the answer I am giving to the question. We also increased the number of bus services to the north-west. In our planning for the north-west—as members for the north-west would know—we also have plans for future transit corridors in that area. We put our plans to the public. But what really galls me is that Labor had the chance in its 16 years in office to make a difference, and those opposite fluffed it. I ran out of time when I was giving my previous answer, but given that—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: We have listened for eight minutes now without getting anywhere near an answer to the question. The question is specific: Will the Minister rule out removing any of these services? It is very simple.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know that Mr Middle Manager wants me to employ more middle managers, not provide more services. But that is not what this Government is about. It is about more services. In the previous answer I gave the House I wanted to refer to some of the western Sydney rail lines those opposite promised but never delivered. Given that this is the last question time of the session, I think we should go through it, just to show how badly they failed western Sydney. They were going to build the Parramatta to Epping rail link. Did they do that?

Government members: No.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They promised the North West Rail Link. Did they do that?

Government members: No.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What about the south-west heavy rail link?

Government members: No.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What about the second harbour crossing?

Government members: No.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What about the—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume her seat. Government members may think that behaviour is amusing, but I do not.

Mr John Robertson: Throw them out.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will make that decision. Does the member for Maroubra wish to take a point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: If the Minister is refusing to answer the question and will not give the guarantee sought, that is one thing.

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

Mr Michael Daley: The point of order is that Speakers' rulings made in the past—

Mr Barry O'Farrell: That is not a point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Sorry?

Mr Barry O'Farrell: It is not a point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Don't you act tough, mate. You're the one who has pushed the fires into this action—

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

Mr Michael Daley: You're the one that pushed the fires into this action.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Maroubra to remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 2.57 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will not engage in disruptive behaviour. There is no need to answer rhetorical questions asked by the Minister.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I accept your ruling, Madam Speaker. I will continue this another time. But I wanted to reiterate that those opposite failed the people on public transport. I have already said that we are rewriting the CityRail timetable to provide additional services. We have already brought back those extra services, and there will be more. Those opposite were wreckers; they cut front-line services. We bring them back. And we build major projects as well—unlike those opposite.

RURAL AND REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr TROY GRANT: My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales. What is the Government doing to help people in rural and regional areas access expert mental health advice?

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: I thank the member for Dubbo for his question. This morning I had the privilege of attending Westmead Hospital for the launch of the outreach program that we are now providing in New South Wales targeting perinatal services. For the young people in the gallery today, perinatal services support women prior to childbirth and post childbirth. That statewide service, which was launched today—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call. Members will ignore whatever noise they can hear coming from outside the Chamber.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: The member for Kogarah thought the bar had reopened.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will continue with his answer.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: This is an important statewide service. I was joined by the member for Parramatta and the member for Lismore.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Kogarah to remove herself from the Chamber for the rest of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 2.59 p.m.]

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: As I was saying, I was joined by the member for Parramatta and the member for Lismore, and we highlighted the fact that in the metropolitan areas, particularly in the tertiary-based teaching hospitals, we have a hothouse of expertise, especially in mental health, but that, unfortunately, those services were not outreaching to the regional and rural areas of New South Wales. However, we have remedied that situation. I was also joined by Professor Philip Boyce, who heads up that unit, which is a partnership with the University of Sydney; Josey Anderson, who heads up the Child and Youth Services (Mental Health) for the western part of Sydney, and also Beth Cozzi, who heads up Mental Health Kids.

The reason we have put that statewide service back together—and it is wonderful that our members were there experiencing that—is that there are 95,000 births in New South Wales every year, and about 25,000 of those births are in regional areas, and we know that at least one in six women will experience some form of mental illness around the time of giving birth. In regional New South Wales some 3,000 women and their babies have not been able to access mental health support during a very, very important time in their lives. To pull that team together out of Westmead and to now provide outreach and in-reach support is fundamentally important. In the first six months we were in government I had the opportunity, as did other members, to meet with many young families, particularly young women and their babies. Many of those women who experienced reasonably significant mental illness or health issues around the time of childbirth were at times separated from their babies. We said we would provide health services for all the State, no matter where a person lived or in what circumstances.

It is not acceptable that at the time of birth babies are separated from their mothers unless there are extreme circumstances. For people who live in Bourke, in Moree, in Batemans Bay, in Orange, which has videoconference facilities as we discussed today, or in Lismore, which can access outreach services, there is support for those mothers, their babies and their partners, and particularly staff in those centres. I thank the Minister for Health for supporting the ongoing improvement in mental health issues right across the State and I thank the Minister for Family and Community Services, who has highlighted the issue of supporting young mothers in particular at vulnerable times in their lives. We heard this morning from staff in Orange and Lismore that this outreach team, these clinical experts, are supporting the staff in their regions. One of the things we want to ensure is that those clinicians, allied health workers and general practitioners are able to access professional clinical support that is currently located in places like Westmead. *[Extension of time granted.]*

One of the things that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to doing, particularly in the area of health and mental health, is continuing to build the capacity of our staff and our workforce, no matter where they are. One comment made by the staff at Lismore was that when they were dealing with the mental health of young mothers with babies they were not quite sure whether the method of care they were providing was appropriate. They felt that it was very worthwhile being able to access Professor Philip Boyce and the clinicians in the team, either on an in-reach basis or an outreach basis, just for reassurance that they were doing the right thing. For approximately 3,000 women across the State we now have a better model of care that will keep mothers and babies together, particularly at a very vulnerable time in their lives.

It is all about improving the quality of life for people right across the regions. We will watch this pilot program very closely over the next year and a half because we think there is more unmet need out there. The Mental Health Drug and Alcohol team helped put this project together with some interdisciplinary work between some of our departments and our ministries. The program will be very worthwhile and very well received, as it was by that centre of excellence in the electorate of Parramatta. More mental health services will come out of that region as well as out of the Penrith electorate, which has a new headspace coming its way as we seek to build better services, particularly mental health services, across the State.

RURAL AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr RICHARD TORBAY: My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Will the Minister update the House on progress of the review into the flawed model used to project population changes in rural and regional New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his question and I acknowledge his ongoing advocacy on this and other issues of importance for his electorate. The House may recall that the member for Northern Tablelands first flagged this issue with me in November last year. At the time I undertook that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure would engage in real consultation with the local community—something Labor rarely did. As I recollect, there was a disparity between the Australian Bureau of Statistics and census forecasts—which indicated an increase in the numbers that were likely in the regional areas, particularly the area of the member for Northern Tablelands—and the figures of the Department of Planning, which indicated a decline. That showed quite clearly, and I said to the House at the time, that the Department of Planning had to do a lot more work to determine what would be the accurate forecast.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of official New South Wales population projections. As part of preparing these next projections, the department has been out in the field consulting with local government on specific local issues that might impact on those projections. Ten of these sessions have been held around the State. The latest consultation was in Maitland on 31 May and prior to that sessions were held in Sydney east on 24 May, in Queanbeyan on 22 May, in Dubbo on 17 May, in Wagga Wagga on 15 May, in Gunnedah on 10 May, in Sydney west on 8 May, in Coffs Harbour on 2 May, in Ballina on 1 May and in Wollongong on 29 March. To my knowledge, this on-the-ground approach did not happen under the former Labor Government.

During April and May these population roadshows were attended by representatives from State and local governments to discuss population issues in New South Wales and the assumptions that underpin the projection model. The modelling of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to project population growth and distribution across the State uses a methodology that is the international industry standard. This modelling parallels that used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and leading academics. The department uses this information for land-use planning and to understand the infrastructure and service needs of an area. The department will continue to use international best practice methods supplemented by this detailed local input in the production of the next official population projections.

I stress that the local input has to be at the centre of whatever goes on in determining these figures. Today the first results of the 2011 census have been released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This data will, in conjunction with other official statistics and valuable information from local stakeholders, inform the next round of population projections. I note that the last time the member for Northern Tablelands asked this question interjections were made by the member for Shellharbour, who indicated that we did not know what consultation was about. I hope the member for Shellharbour now understands what consultation is about. It is not what her side of the House has done in the past.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not appropriate for the member for Shellharbour to respond. This is not the time to argue. There are few of you left on the Opposition benches; I do not want to have to direct you to leave the Chamber to join your colleagues.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is fascinating to hear the member for Shellharbour tell us that we do not know about consultations and forecasts. I think that on the last occasion she interjected I said that the member for Shellharbour was only here because of who was sitting next to her. The member for Wollongong was sitting next to her on that occasion back in November last year. They went from the caucus to the cauldron, the Wicked Witch of the West and the Wicked Witch of the West.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: "Like a hell-broth boil and bubble. Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn, and caldron bubble."

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: Brad, you should have taken a red nose this morning.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: "Eye of newt, and toe of frog, Wool of bat"—sorry about that. The member for Shellharbour is lucky to have the member for Cessnock separating her from the Wicked Witch of the West. The Government knows how to consult and we are doing that. The Government is making sure that the figures will be accurate from here on in.

NEW SOUTH WALES OLYMPIANS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. What contribution are the New South Wales Institute of Sport and its athletes making to the 2012 Australian Olympic team?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I thank the member for Cronulla for his question. I am feeling a little lonely up here, but I am sure we will get through.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call. I am sure that Opposition members will listen to the Minister in silence.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I am sure, Madam Speaker. Friday 27 July marks the commencement of the 2012 London Olympic Games and for 17 days the eyes of the world will be focused on the efforts of athletes from nations as diverse as Kiribati, with a population of around 100,000, through to powerhouse China and its 1.3 billion people. With just over a month to go, all around the globe aspiring swimmers, athletes, hockey players, rowers, and cyclists—to name just a few—are already dreaming of representing their country at a future Olympic Games. In 2000 I had the privilege of running with the Olympic torch in the lead-up to the Sydney games and it was an experience I will never forget. I also had the good fortune to attend a number of games events. I am sure that anyone who attended the Sydney Olympics would have similar great memories. I am certain many members of the House remember the deeds of the great Cathy Freeman in achieving sporting immortality by winning the 400 metre gold medal for Australia. The Australian team finished fourth on the medal count and once again showed the world that sport really is part of our DNA.

I am proud to inform members that in 2012 New South Wales will again feature prominently in supplying gold medal hopes to the national squad. As of Monday June 18 there were 53 New South Wales Institute of Sport athletes on the 2012 Australian Olympic team, who are scheduled to compete in 15 different sports. With the Olympic team to be named in full by the end of June, the New South Wales Institute of Sport is expected to contribute approximately 80 athletes to the team across 17 different sports. Of the New South Wales Institute of Sport athletes already selected to the team, there are a number of exciting medal prospects, including: swimmer James Magnussen, the "Missile"; equestrian Edwina Alexander; sailors Tom Slingsby, Malcolm Page, Nathan Outteridge and Iain Jensen; divers Matthew Mitcham and Melissa Wu; women's water polo players Holly Lincoln-Smith, Alicia McCormack and Nicola Zagame from the Cronulla Water Sharks, men's hockey players Matthew Butturini, Kieran Govers and Simon Orchard; canoe sprint athlete Murray Stewart; and cyclist Kaarle McCulloch.

New South Wales boasts several athletes who are not only contesting medals but whose path to the Olympics makes for great stories. For example, Jessica Fox who will compete in canoe slalom. Jessica is coached by her mother, Myriam Fox, a canoe slalom bronze medallist at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, and is the daughter of Richard Fox, a 10-time world champion in the sport of canoe slalom. As well as her sporting talent, Jessica excelled academically during her final year of school in 2011 to be named dux of Blaxland High School. Holly Lincoln-Smith plays water polo and is the sister of 2010 Winter Olympic team member Emma Lincoln-Smith. When Holly lines up for the women's water polo team in London it will mark the first time siblings have competed at a summer and winter Olympic Games.

Thomas Whalan and Gavin Woods also play water polo. Thomas and Gavin will each compete at their fourth Olympic Games in London after campaigns in Sydney, Athens and Beijing. It is estimated that approximately 400 athletes will represent Australia at the 2012 Olympic Games. Since its inception in 1996, the New South Wales Institute of Sport has a proud record of success at the Olympic Games. I am sure that all members of the House will join with me in wishing the very best of luck to the New South Wales Institute of Sport athletes who will represent this great State and to Australian representatives who will do us proud in London.

FIRE BRIGADE EMPLOYEES UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

BARRY O'FARRELL: Earlier in question time I was asked a question by the member for Newcastle about emergency arrangements in relation to fires. I can advise that those emergency arrangements are being effected. Shortly before question time there was a fire at the corner of Campbell Street and Ramsgate Road,

Ramsgate, which was responded to by the local Fire and Rescue NSW duty commander. Personnel from Sydney Airport's Rescue and Fire Fighting Service also responded, along with volunteers from the Rural Fire Service.

I am delighted to inform the House that three fire engines, manned by crews from Hurstville and Kogarah, which were originally en route to attend the strike turned around to respond to the call. The firefighters searched the buildings and checked that no residents had been hurt. They also helped to attack the fire. The firefighters remained on the scene until the personnel from the Sydney Airport Fire and Rescue Service and the Rural Fire Service attended. I am delighted that some firefighting personnel are not responding to the call of the Fire Brigade Employees Union leadership.

Question time concluded at 3.15 p.m.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

Mr Mark Speakman, as Chair, tabled the reports entitled "Review of the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Annual Reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption", Report 1/55 dated June 2012 and "Review of the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Annual Reports of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption" Report 2/55, dated June 2012, together with transcripts of evidence.

Reports ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Mark Speakman.

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**.

Eastern Suburbs Bus Service 311

Petition requesting the retention of the 311 bus service link to Central and Circular Quay and improvements to the frequency and reliability of the service, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Eastern Suburbs 300 Series Buses

Petition requesting the addition of express buses along the Eastern Distributor tollway from the southern suburbs to the city and the expansion of the 300 series bus services to adequately serve the increasing inner-city population in peak travel period, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Pets on Public Transport

Petition requesting that pets be allowed on public transport, 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**.

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

Twofold Bay Wind Farm

Petition requesting the rejection of a development application for a wind farm at Twofold Bay or, alternatively, an assessment of the proposal in accordance with the NSW Wind Farm Guidelines before any determination on the development application, received from **Mr Andrew Constance**.

CHILD PROTECTION (WORKING WITH CHILDREN) BILL 2012

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

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Membership

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution: That this House agrees to the request of the Legislative Assembly in its message dated 21 June 2012 that clause (4) of the resolution of 22 June 2011 appointing the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters be amended to read as follows:

"(4) The Committee consist of ten members, as follows:

- (a) five members of the Legislative Assembly, and
- (b) five members of the Legislative Council."

Legislative Council
21 June 2012

DON HARWIN
President

PRINTING OF PAPERS

Motion, by leave, by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That the following papers be printed:

Report entitled "Child Deaths 2010 Annual Report – Learning to improve services"
Report of the Independent Transport Safety Regulator entitled "Rail Industry Safety Report 2010-11"
Report of the Community Relations Commission entitled "Community Relations Report 2011"
Consolidated Financial Report of Snowy Hydro Limited for the period 4 July 2010 to 2 July 2011

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2011:
Official Community Visitor Scheme
NSW Climate Change Fund
Office of the Legal Services Commissioner
New South Wales State Emergency Management Committee
State Rescue Board of New South Wales
National Environment Protection Council
Administration of Agricultural Statutory Bodies
Murray-Darling Basin Authority
Chipping Norton Lake Authority
Hunter Region Sporting Venues Authority
Professional Standards Department of the Law Society of New South Wales
Law Society of New South Wales

Report of the Maritime Authority of New South Wales (trading as NSW Maritime) for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 October 2011
Report of the Roads and Traffic Authority for the period 1 July to 31 October 2011.
Report of the Community Relations Commission entitled "Community Relations Report 2011"

Reports for 2011:
Parramatta Stadium Trust
Youth Advisory Council
NSW Department of Education and Communities
Charles Sturt University
Macquarie University (Volumes One and Two)
Southern Cross University (Volumes One and Two)
University of Newcastle (Volumes One and Two)
University of New England
University of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two)
University of Sydney (Volumes One and Two)
University of Technology, Sydney (Volumes One and Two)
University of Western Sydney (Volumes One and Two)
University of Wollongong (Volumes One and Two)

Half Yearly Reports for the period ended 31 December 2011:

Ausgrid
Delta Electricity
Endeavour Energy
Eraring Energy
Essential Energy
Hunter Water Corporation
Landcom
Macquarie Generation
Newcastle Port Corporation
Port Kembla Port Corporation
State Water Corporation
Superannuation Administration Corporation (trading as Pillar Administration)
Sydney Ports Corporation
Sydney Water Corporation
TransGrid

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.20 p.m.]: As I indicated previously, the House currently is dealing with the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012, on which debate will proceed until its conclusion. I am not certain when it will conclude because that will depend on the number of members who speak. The main issue that will be exercising my mind as Leader of the House over the next few hours will be what is occurring in the Legislative Council in regard to the workers compensation bills. The latest information I have is that the Committee stage will not commence until approximately 4.15 p.m. I understand there are more than 100 amendments to be considered.

I will reserve my decision until five o'clock, but my estimate would be that the procedure will involve this House waiting until possibly 11 o'clock tonight to deal with those bills. If it appears that that is the case, I will be adjourning the House in the normal course to the ringing of one long bell and we will resume tomorrow to deal with amendments that will be received from the upper House. In other words, I will not require honourable members to wait for four or five hours, or possibly longer. The Whips on both sides of the Chamber will ensure that there are appropriate numbers of members tomorrow. I will report back to the House at 5.00 p.m. or 5.30 p.m.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I am sure all members appreciate the updated information provided by the Leader of the House.

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [3.22 p.m.]: I participate in debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 to correct a few spurious comments made not only by the Opposition but also by people in the community who are doing their very best to make this bill appear to be something it is not. This bill will assist a program that already exists in our national parks. One would think that there is no shooting in national parks, but nothing is further from the truth. An effective shooting program is already underway, and that gives the Government an opportunity to have volunteers to assist in expanding the program.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members who wish to have private conversations should do so outside the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: There is no government that is more committed to protecting and conserving our precious national parks and reserves than is this Government. The State's parks cover more than seven million hectares from the shores of Sydney Harbour to the far reaches of the gullies and gorges of the

Blue Mountains to the pristine panorama of, for example, Bundjalung National Park near Ballina. Members of the Opposition would have no idea because they live in Sydney electorates and have not demonstrated any understanding of what feral animals can do to our national parks.

Mr Clayton Barr: Come on. Don't be like that, Robyn. You are better than that.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: I am waiting for the Country Labor member, the member for Cessnock, to step up to the plate and tell us about his experiences.

Mr Clayton Barr: You should be ashamed of that comment.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: I look forward to participation in this debate by Opposition members who represent areas similar to the electorates of the Government members who have spoken, because Government members have participated in this debate from a country perspective and provide information about feral animals and the destruction they cause. Our parks provide a safe haven for scores of our flora and fauna. They are a precious habitat for flora. Fauna, such as mountain pygmy possums, brush-tailed wallabies and feather-tail gliders, foster special ecological areas such as the mountain environments of the Australian alps, old-growth forests near Gloucester and the coastal dunes of Yamba. Our parks provide places of seclusion and serenity for our bushwalkers and families, and challenging trails for mountain bike adventurers.

Ms Anna Watson: If you say it often enough you might start to believe it.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Shellharbour walked to the centre table to get a drink of water. She is not taking part in the debate.

Ms Anna Watson: I am.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate at a later stage. The Minister has the call.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: So good are our national parks that New South Wales is hosting the International Union for Conservation of Nature's World Parks Congress in 2014, which is recognition from the international conservation movement of what we offer in New South Wales and what this Government is able to deliver. The congress will involve \$25 million in expenditure when 3,000 people travel to New South Wales to see what the Government is doing with the State's national parks. In contrast, the previous Government simply added hectares to the State's reserve system without due consideration of how values can be protected. This Government is much more about protecting our reserves system and understanding that active management of conservation values is the most important thing. In that context, I assure the House that this bill will not change the Government's commitment to national parks.

The Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill introduces a program of volunteer pest control in certain national parks. The bill allows trained volunteers to assist with feral animal eradication. Members of the Opposition who so far have participated in debate on the bill have referred to wide-ranging recreational shooting, and that could not be further from the truth. The objective of the bill has been made very clear by the Premier, by me and by other Government members who have participated in this debate: It is to ensure that the State has trained volunteers to assist with feral animal eradication. The managing of pest animals, weeds, fires and other basic land management issues are fundamental core business for national parks. Moreover, this Government works in collaboration with its neighbours and other land management organisations across land tenures. Government members who represent country electorates have spoken from the perspective of farming about the need to manage feral animals.

The program is a logical expansion of existing professional pest management programs that already are being undertaken in our national parks. It will make use of trained and licensed volunteers to cull pests including pigs, dogs, cats and goats in a limited number of areas and under controls established by the Minister for the Environment. Feral animals are a huge management issue for land managers across the State including managers of national parks in New South Wales. I make abundantly clear the form a controlled program of shooting feral pests will not take. It is all very well to cite accidents in other countries such as New Zealand and frighten people in our community by using language that incites fear and is far from factual. New Zealand has an open hunting season and 30,000 licensed recreational shooters take to the wilds to track and kill mostly deer.

We will not be opening our parks and reserves to an open hunting season. We will be extending the current controlled and safe program to eradicate feral animals that wreak havoc in our national parks. In anyone's language, that is not recreational hunting.

The member for Toongabbie referred to the dictionary for a definition of "hunting", but this bill does not involve recreational hunting and it will not involve thousands of shooters gathering once a year; nor is it about letting people out into parks and reserves without supervision, without control and without proper management. Penalties will be in place and will be brought down hard on people who think they can go into the parks and shoot whatever they see. Safety will be paramount under our program, as it has been for years. Let me dismiss this idea being peddled that we are opening up our parks, as they do in New Zealand, to everyone who wants to engage in hunting. This program is not modelled on the game hunting program currently operating in State forests. This will be an extension of the ground shooting programs that are part of our regional pest management strategies. This program will be aligned more closely with the volunteer pest control programs operated by Parks Victoria.

I took a group of union members to Victoria last week to talk with Parks Victoria about its programs and the use of volunteers in partnership can be an effective adjunct to other techniques such as trapping and baiting. Trapping and baiting will not stop. We are not reducing our current practices in pest management. This is simply about using more volunteers to deal with feral animal eradication. We looked at the practices of Parks Victoria. Why would we not look at best practice in these circumstances? The tight controls that will be put in place under this program, particularly around safety, have the clear objective of restoring damaged ecosystems. More than 6,500 volunteers are currently registered and working with parks staff on a range of conservation projects across New South Wales. This does not include the significant contributions made by the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service, which help to manage incidents and emergencies in parks. These volunteers are required to meet certain accreditation and have appropriate skills and experience.

It is anticipated that the volunteers who assist with pest eradication will have to meet the same requirements. They must be experienced, skilled and highly motivated to achieve the desired conservation outcomes. Another program that is working well and has won an environment award is the Bounceback program operating in South Australia. That program forms strong partnerships with members of the community and volunteer groups, including the hunting and conservation branch of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and Conservation Volunteers Australia. I anticipate that over the next few months senior staff at national parks will be focused on developing the appropriate framework for how this program will work on the ground, with clear arrangements about how and when it will operate. The threats posed by pest animals and weeds across the Australian landscape are well known. The damage caused to livestock and crops costs farmers dearly. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The damage caused to our native species and ecosystems is immeasurable. It is estimated that more than 20 Australian mammals have become extinct due to introduced species, including foxes and cats. This Government is committed to protecting and restoring habitat by addressing the impacts of pests and weeds at priority sites across our national parks system. We are aiming to have improved land and water habitat in at least 50 per cent of these sites. Feral pigs, which eat and destroy grain crops and native plants, can be removed under a shooting program. They wreck our dams and waterways, they damage fences and they destabilise stream banks. Why would we not take the opportunity to have extra people on the ground to help eradicate feral pigs? Why would we not take the opportunity to expand our program of control and management—not unlike the way we manage hazard reduction, working side-by-side with volunteers who abide by the same undertakings—in order to get rid of feral pigs?

The National Parks and Wildlife Service prioritises programs that have multiple benefits for neighbouring farmers as well as for parks. The service manages 9 per cent of the State and works in partnership statewide to fight against pests. Many country members today talked about the way feral animals destroy our cattle and sheep on farms. Let us not forget that the biggest threat to koalas is feral dogs. Why would we not take the opportunity to have a program involving extra people on the ground to get rid of feral dogs? Appropriately trained and licensed volunteers will assist us to undertake pest control.

The bill gives me the power to limit volunteer pest control to certain areas at certain times. Areas will be selected, with public safety the paramount issue and due consideration given to the rights of other users. Conservation outcomes will be a priority when considering where volunteer pest control can occur. It is important to note that, as an extension of our existing pest control efforts, volunteer pest control will be conducted under the guidance of regional pest management strategies. These strategies determine priorities for

pest control across the national parks system. We have developed a suite of regional pest management strategies following extensive stakeholder consultation across New South Wales. We have held forums and talked to farmers and conservationists alike about what they need in order to achieve the desired outcomes for our national parks. They tell us conclusively that pest animals and weeds move across the landscape. They do not know borders or understand fence lines. We need to do the best we can through our combined efforts to properly manage pest control.

This is an opportunity, under the guidance of strong requirements, to get extra volunteers on the ground to help with these programs. Unlike the approach taken by those opposite, this is a sensible approach. It is not about people rampaging through parks; it is not about recreational hunting. This is about conservation, using a highly regulated program to make sure we have extra people on the ground. This is not about a reduction in staffing or programs; this is making sure we have extra people on the ground to help. Volunteers will be required to hold a restricted licence and to abide by a mandatory code of practice. The program has the potential to build on similar projects in other countries and in Victoria.

I give an assurance to the House that this program will deliver better ecological outcomes for the people of New South Wales. The program will be managed sensibly and properly, unlike the way those opposite managed the environment portfolio. We are about properly managing the environment and using volunteers sensibly. We are caring for our community and making sure we do not frighten people with mistruths. Do not underestimate our capacity to make sure this program can be operated within the regulations. Those who choose to flout the regulations will be brought into line and face strict penalties. I support the bill.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [3.37 p.m.]: I join with other members on this side of the House in opposing the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I was not going to start my speech by commenting much on what has been said by other members, although I note the member for Charlestown and the member for Dubbo repeated some of the information just given to the House by the Minister for the Environment, which I reject. That is, that this bill is about the important issue of controlling feral animals within our national parks. Of course, controlling feral animals in our national parks is important and they should be controlled. The Minister for the Environment just gave this House an assurance that things would be looked after, monitored and watched.

Is this assurance any more honest, accurate or heartening than the one she gave this House not so long ago when she said that shooting in national parks would not be permitted? Was she telling it as it is today or was she telling it as it was then? I will say no more than that about the Minister for the Environment. Whoever decided that the Minister should speak in this debate is beyond me. I genuinely have sympathy for many of the policies and arguments put up by the Shooters and Fishers Party. As a member of the Sporting Shooters Association and, therefore, a licensed firearm owner, occasionally I would like to shoot on someone's farm a few of the feral animals that people have talked about. But not for one minute do I believe I am qualified, or should be allowed, to enter a regulated national park, a recreational area for the residents of this State and country, as well as for our tourists, with my firearm. It is scandalous to suggest that we should.

I have an extensive history with the people behind this proposal. As Minister for Agriculture, I was involved in establishing the Game Council. Proudly hanging in either my electorate or parliamentary office is a photograph of me with the first Game Council, which includes a photograph with Robert Brown. I fully support decent citizens being registered as firearm owners and enjoying the pastime of shooting. As a Minister in the previous Government we dealt with many Shooters and Fishers Party representatives—John Tingle, Roy Smith, who tragically passed away, and of course the two current Roberts. On many occasions we negotiated legislation through the Parliament. At least we were honest enough never to say that we would never negotiate with the crossbench members. How can any government without a majority in this place say it will never negotiate with crossbench members? This Government did say that but, of course, we know it negotiated with crossbench members because that is the reason this bill was introduced.

Whilst the previous Government negotiated, made concessions and attempted to accommodate the different arguments of the various political parties, the old reliable chestnut was raised by the Shooters and Fishers Party that its member volunteers, not employees of National Parks or contract shooters be allowed into national parks. This good old chestnut was always raised but was never accepted because it always was one policy too far. I have no problems with people using firearms to control feral animals, but that should be carried out by those who are licensed, experienced, trained, insured and have the responsibility to carry out this function in a controlled manner. Some members referred feral animal control to being just like controlled burn-offs in our

national parks. Who performs that function? Do we ask people down the street to bring a cigarette lighter and tell them, "We need a few acres burnt out, so just set fire to that paddock over there" and just let them do their own thing? Of course not. Who carries out those controlled burn-offs?

Mr John Williams: Volunteers.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: Yes, and employees. But the volunteers are trained members of the Bush Fire Brigade, et cetera. Comparing controlled burn-offs to feral animal control is so silly it is embarrassing. Members of The Nationals and the Minister for the Environment advocated an incredible argument about the importance of feral animals. We know the damage feral animals can cause. I once received an estimate that the cost of damage to agricultural pastures in this country just from rabbits amounted to over \$600 million. Sheep farmers will talk about damage from foxes, et cetera, to their flocks, particularly during lambing time. We understand also the arguments of neighbouring farmers that feral animals come out of national parks marauding through their properties.

That is why National Parks has properly trained, licensed, regulated and qualified people to cull using firearms. However, for all the dangerous reasons that members of The Nationals said feral animals are in national parks, why are they only a pest and problem requiring extra shooters in regional areas? What about the infestation of domestic cats and dogs that have gone wild in national parks around the Sydney area? Why do Nationals members not want extra shooters in metropolitan national parks? If feral animals are such a problem in national parks that they require all these extra shooters, there should be no boundaries on which national parks we are talking about.

Mr John Williams: Move an amendment. I'll support it.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: Although I am pointing out the problems with feral animals, we all know the sole purpose for this piece of legislation. This chestnut was granted by the Government to get the Shooters and Fishers Party numbers in the upper House on two or three matters. One matter is proceeding through the Legislative Council today but has been delayed subject to the bill we are debating being passed—that is, the workers compensation bill. Of course, the other reason for granting this chestnut is to secure the electricity privatisation. I am not asking to be given the Discovery Award for making that announcement otherwise I would have to be given a degree for stating the bleeding obvious. We are debating this bill so the Government can secure the privatisation of electricity. Members opposite can argue all they like about culling feral animals because of the problems they cause, but they can never say the Labor Government was seriously lobbied by people saying that not having enough National Parks employees and contractors culling these pests warranted a vigilante group or members of the public helping the professionals do their job.

If the Government is serious about eradicating the feral animal problem it should employ more people or pay more contractors. Do not argue in this place with a straight face that this bill was introduced to address new problems that are not controlled by the appropriate experts. I oppose the bill. As I have said, I have a lot of respect for the Shooters and Fishers Party. Another reason I oppose this bill is that as a licensed shooter and a member of the Sporting Shooters Association which has had to accommodate continual legislative changes resulting from irresponsible behaviour, I know what will happen when some mishap occurs in a national park and some kid or parent gets shot. When that happens, the legal shooters of this State will pay.

Firearm owners will have forced on them another round of regulations when they contributed nothing to the disaster that eventuated. We are tied up with so much red tape, policing and regulations of guns because some lunatic in Port Arthur shot a lot of people many years ago. That is the reason we have the present gun regulations. The reason I and other shooters do not want this bill passed is that one terrible incident in a national park will result in those opposite introducing a stack of new regulations to tie up decent gun owners in this State. Those gun owners do not want that and certainly I do not want that. I wish this House would reject this bill.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [3.47 p.m.]: I support the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I am probably one of the few people in this House who has some experience in dealing with feral animals. For 20 years I lived on a property next to a State forest with a national park at the rear boundary. I experienced problems with dogs, pigs, foxes and the like. As stated by the member for Charlestown—our resident vet in the House—nothing is worse than seeing animals that have been attacked by feral dogs. I have also seen calves that have been attacked and mauled by feral dogs. As with any property owner, I also had chooks and have seen what foxes do in the chook house. My electorate has problems with feral dogs—a subject of constant news for the past two years—and problems with feral pigs. Coomba Park,

which bounds Myall Lakes, has problems with wild deer. This bill proposes an extension of what happens already with culling feral animals. Licensed people already go into national parks and shoot feral animals. Those people are licensed shooters.

Last year 24,000 feral animals were culled and this proposal is an extension of that project. The members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Marrickville, Toongabbie and Mount Druitt were all Cabinet Ministers in the Government that Rodney Cavalier, custodian of Labor history, said was the worst Government in the history of New South Wales. Steve Hutchins, former president of the Federal Australian Labor Party, said that Labor is now a shell of a party and that those four years were the most shameful years in its history. During that time the former Government could have done something about feral animals but it did not. Contrary to the scare tactics espoused by the member for Marrickville and others, what this Government is proposing will not be its only policy in the eradication of feral animals; it will be in addition to existing programs. It will go hand-in-hand with other methods of feral animal control.

Those opposite talk about this legislation as being a dodgy and tawdry deal. In 1993 I was a member of the policy committee of the National Party and it was our policy—it has been our policy the whole time—to allow controlled shooting as part of a feral animal eradication program in the national parks and forests of New South Wales. It is incorrect for Opposition members to say that this is merely some dirty deal. The Nationals have always advocated that this is needed to assist in the eradication of feral animals in New South Wales; it is not a deal done with the Shooters and Fishers Party.

Mr Robert Furolo: You were so hopeless you were in opposition all that time.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: On 26 March 2011, after 16 years of giving Labor a go, the community said that it would have no more of it. The scandals and corruption that exposed people such as Milton Orkopoulos meant that Labor had a one-way ticket to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Whatever Labor was doing to control feral animals has not worked. For that reason assistance is needed in eradicating feral animals in our national parks. New South Wales's flora and fauna is unique and is recognised throughout the world. Feral animals are ruining our national and State parks. Something more has to be done; continuing to do what we have been doing is not enough. The 1080 poison has had a significant impact on our quoll population. Under the former Government 20,000 aerial baits were dropped in the Dingo Tops National Park. Because it was not done properly it killed a large number of quoll and other native animals. Aerial baiting will now be done properly. The Government will ensure that this legislation will assist in feral animal control. For every feral animal that is killed our breeding stock is reduced; it is wrong for people to argue otherwise. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [3.53 p.m.]: I cannot support the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 which would establish in national parks and other reserves a dangerous new class of sport that is incompatible with other uses. My electorate of Lake Macquarie would be directly affected by the introduction of amateur sport shooting in Watagans National Park but many other electorates would also be affected. The member for Myall Lakes said that controlled shooting as part of a feral animal eradication program in the national parks and forests of New South Wales was National Party policy in 1993.

I do not believe that prior to the election last year anybody in New South Wales knew about that policy. It might have been Nationals policy but The Nationals form only a small part of the Coalition Government. It is clear that shooting in national parks will not be controlled. The only honesty that has been exhibited has been the admission by the Premier that this Government made a deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party to enable it to sell State-owned electricity assets. Everything else is retrospective. That is the reason why the Government is supporting the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill. The problem with which we are faced does not relate to feral animals; it relates to political expedience.

There are better ways of controlling feral animals on public land but they all involve a level of expertise and corporate responsibility which does not exist under this legislation. The shooting of animals on private land is better regulated than it would be in national parks under this bill. Currently our national parks are managed by professionals working in or for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which infers a level of responsibility and accountability that the general public deserves and expects. It is not a matter of simply closing the gates of national parks to the general public. Access to national parks cannot be controlled in that way due to the nature of their borders.

Under this bill amateur shooting in public places would not be as tightly regulated as amateur shooting on private land. At present feral animal control on private property is currently managed by the Livestock

Health and Pest Authorities which report to the Minister for Primary Industries via a State management council. The control of pest animals is one of four core responsibilities of the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities and the only vertebrates declared as pest species are rabbits, dogs and pigs. The authorities specify acceptable control measures and the only shooting that is supported is that of wild dogs. Advice to the Minister for Primary Industries, which has not been countermanded or questioned, is that this is the only acceptable shooting of pests by amateur shooters on private land.

This unjustified and dangerous proposal will now enable amateur shooters in public places to shoot a broad variety of species which is ludicrous. Worse still is the prospect that this could be considered without first quantifying the problem and developing a method to evaluate the success of amateur shooters. No baseline data will be available to determine the benefits that will be claimed by shooters in support of future extensions or to maintain shooting in national parks. No credible argument exists for allowing amateur shooters into national parks. In the view of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the only safe and effective method for shooting vertebrate pests in national parks is the planned and monitored deployment of professional marksmen.

What we have before us instead is legislation that will allow amateur shooters into public places in our national parks. This legislation is not the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment. I regard as folly the Government's openness to the retrograde step of handing national parks to amateur shooters. That has been made even worse by the absence of a comprehensive plan for controlling vertebrate pests. On 14 June I asked the Minister for the Environment whether she would ensure that assessments establishing baseline information about feral animals were carried out in order to measure any alleged benefit to native fauna. The Minister for the Environment said, "We do not know exactly how many feral animals are in the parks." The Minister went on to say, "It will be done scientifically." That might sound like an honourable intention but there is no quantification, evaluation or action to alleviate that problem.

Any hyperbole about solving the problems caused by feral animals is purely speculative and any claimed benefit would be spurious without a yardstick to measure it. The only legitimate way forward is to conduct comprehensive fauna surveys and to set baselines for subsequent use when evaluating the success or otherwise of any shooting program. A census of feral animals and a comprehensive plan are essential prerequisites and form the only justifiable yardstick against which success can be measured, yet those things are not included in this bill. The unquantified claim that this will benefit national parks and native fauna is a serious problem in itself. However, the bigger issue is its impact on the safe use of public open space.

There are real questions that must be answered on risk and equity. Will it be safe to visit national parks? How is the public to assess the risk, or even know of it? How will people walking in national parks have any knowledge of the timing and location of risks? Members of the public are rightly concerned about how they will know where it is safe to go or, worse still, whether they could unknowingly place themselves at risk by visiting these parks. It is fallacious to describe opening up national parks to sporting shooters as a step towards eradicating feral animals when it is really only a way of accommodating a sporting activity. In saying this I do not wish to criticise the participants; I just question whether the equity and risk issues were adequately considered and whether the decision is the right one.

In September last year Lake Macquarie City Council resolved to write to the Minister for Primary Industries expressing concern over local State forests being opened for recreational hunting, citing the negative impact on other recreational uses of State forests. In its letter to the Minister, the council also requested that the Government engage in professional methods of feral animal control to ensure that it is carried out in the most effective and humane way possible. Concerns raised last year about State forests are paralleled by concerns raised this year about national parks. Opening any area in a national park to shooters will eliminate the certainty of safe access for a variety of other recreational pursuits. To do this without a view to a measurable benefit for conservation would be a folly.

Another folly in this sad exercise is the misrepresentation that this is somehow to the benefit of more than a small minority of shooters. Since this bill was foreshadowed I have been told by sporting shooters—people who I know and respect—that they do not want to be associated with this dangerous and unpopular change; that as responsible sportspeople, they do not want anything to do with something that will impact so strongly on the community's acceptance of their sport. The member for Mount Druitt hit the nail on the head when he said that problems will fall on sporting shooters when an incident occurs. The member is absolutely correct; and Government members will have that hanging over their heads. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The most widely quoted figure for the cost of invasive animals in Australia is from the report "Counting the Cost: Impact of Invasive Animals in Australia, 2004", which records the cost impact nationally of

11 feral animal species as totalling \$720 million per year. This figure is quoted by the NSW Game Council on its website as a justification for amateur hunting. The member for Tamworth said a figure of \$70 million annually for New South Wales was correct. Surely the enormous financial cost of dealing with feral animals warrants the allocation of financial resources to solve the problem. This certainly seems a reasonable proposition. But instead we see a plan for amateur shooters to create a new risk to the general public. Feral animals are a serious problem and they deserve a better solution than this.

The entire notion of national parks screams that they are not for shooting for sporting purposes. This is wrong on so many levels; and the fact that the bill has come about in order to deliver other intentions of the Government, rather than being produced to deliver the good argued by so many members of the Government, shows how cynical this bill is. If all the benefits argued by members of the Government were so genuinely felt, this bill would not have been attached so cynically to other legislative measures that the Government wanted to be passed by this Parliament. This bill should have stood alone. Perhaps it should have been announced in the community as policy prior to the last election. Certainly, it should have been introduced in isolation from the workers compensation legislation. But it was not. Unfortunately, as the Premier has admitted, there was a deal with the Shooters and Fishers. Even if there were not, the Government could not make a silk purse out of this sow's ear.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [4.04 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2012. It amazes me that members from the concrete jungle of Sydney have been telling us what goes on in the country. We have listened to the member for Marrickville—whose biggest trip is to go to the shopping centre on a Saturday morning—advised by The Greens and the Australian Conservation Foundation, telling us about what happens in national parks on the other side of the Blue Mountains. I invited The Greens member for Balmain to come to the Murray Darling electorate and to have a look at our national parks. He did not come because his party told him he was not allowed out; he was not allowed to leave the concrete jungle. Yet the people of the concrete jungle are quite happy to dictate what we must have in the bush. I can tell them that we know what is best for us; we do not need their advice; we do not need them to dictate the terms and conditions for us. We are doing very well, thank you. And father does not know best. They should worry about their own backyards.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Opposition members will have their opportunity to make a contribution to the debate. I do not want to hear from them before they seek the call.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: If Opposition members went out and saw shooters operating under the supervision of the Game Council, they might find out a few things. They might find out that licensed shooters are not the rednecks that they would have the public believe. The fact is those who engage in recreational shooting are well supervised; many of them are members of shooting clubs. In many instances these shooting activities are undertaken with safety officers in those clubs. Opposition members can keep on dreaming about what will happen; but they should worry only about their little square mile in Sydney. They should look after their area of concrete and make sure it does not crack, because that is all they are qualified to have an opinion on. The fact is that professional shooters are engaged to shoot in national parks in western New South Wales. We have seen the evidence of that in the Werai National Park, where a deer eradication operation was done by a helicopter shoot.

Complaints came to me as the local member when mortally wounded deer lay dying in the forest. That will not happen with a ground shoot. Those animals are put to death in a lot better manner by having licensed shooters on the ground. In western New South Wales we continually have complaints from graziers whose properties adjoin national parks and who are confronted in the morning with livestock dying in the paddocks as a result of attacks by feral dogs and feral pigs. Labor gazetted more national parks in New South Wales than any other government in this State's history, but it did so without giving any consideration to the resources needed to manage those national parks. Government does not have the capacity to manage them. This Government now has that management responsibility. We are taking an opportunity to manage an aspect of those national parks by using volunteers.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [4.08 p.m.]: As we debate the Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2012, I want to draw the attention of the House back to 2 August 2011. For the benefit of those in the public gallery, I want to make very clear what this Government told me in answer to a question that I asked on the floor of this place. I asked:

What assurances can the Minister give that hunting in national parks will not be reconsidered in return for the support of the Shooters and Fishers Party for her Government's legislative agenda?

That is pretty clear. But the Minister for the Environment answered:

How predictable. The policy of the New South Wales Government is clear: hunting in national parks is not permitted.

Fair enough—it may be a bit doubtful at that stage, but I will go on. The Minister continued:

I say that very slowly for the slow-learner on the Opposition backbench. Parks receive over 35 million visits per year and we provide among other things facilities for visitors to our State, and I advise the member opposite—

and this time I will say it really, really slowly for that lot on the other side—

that shooting is not compatible with visitations to our national parks ... For the benefit of those opposite I repeat that the policy of the New South Wales Government is clear: Hunting in national parks is not and will not be permitted.

I have a two-year-old son and at times I struggle, as a new dad, to work out some things he says. I cannot always pick it up; it is a bit unclear, sometimes a bit doubtful, and I have to get close to him to make sure I understand what he says. But that was not said by a backbencher, that was not said by my very good friend the member for Murray-Darling or any other member; that was said by a Cabinet Minister—the Minister responsible for protecting the environment. That is the same Minister who also said, "I remind you that logging is good for koalas". That is the same Minister who forgot to tell a community that there was a small amount of pollution going on in their local neighbourhood.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 76. The member is not addressing the leave of the bill. I ask you to bring him back to the relevance of the bill, and I look forward to hearing the rest of his speech.

Mr RYAN PARK: I cannot make it clearer than that. During the election campaign members on the other side talked about not doing deals with minor parties. What is this? A Minister on the floor of the New South Wales Parliament says to a backbencher in opposition unequivocally that there will not be shooting in national parks and less than 12 months later that Minister says that there will be shooting in national parks. That stinks of a deal to me. This is dumb, and the Minister for the Environment knows it is dumb. She has been rolled in Cabinet and she has been rolled out here to try to defend herself. I felt sorry for the Minister for the Environment.

Mr Michael Daley: I wouldn't go that far.

Mr RYAN PARK: Maybe I shouldn't. It was somewhat pathetic that the Premier asked the Minister for the Environment today to come here and give a speech, when she knows very well that in August 2011 she said on the floor of this place that shooting in national parks was not going to happen. This is a Government that was given a very clear mandate by the people of New South Wales to improve the situation and to improve the lives of the communities they live in. Never once did the Coalition take this legislation, this proposal or this policy to the people of New South Wales before the last election. Never once did they say they would allow shooting in national parks. In fact, time and time again they have said, both in this place and outside, that shooting in national parks is not their policy.

Time and time again what we see with this Government and its members is that what they say they will do on one day they do completely the opposite the next. I know, and my community is starting to have a gutful of this, that this Government—elected overwhelmingly by the people of New South Wales not to do deals with minor parties, not to break promises and to deliver on the mandate it had—decided that it is all too tough now it is on the other side of the House and it starts to do deals, it starts to break promises, it starts to make changes and it starts to forget the very reason it is here, which is to advance the lives of the communities of New South Wales. I do not know one person in my electorate who has in the past few months while this legislation has been floating around said that they want shooting in national parks.

If shooting is good enough for Barrington Tops and it is good enough for Kosciuszko, it is good enough for Ku-ring-gai. If it is good enough for the people in Barrington Tops, if it is good enough for the people in the Snowy Mountains and if it is good enough for the people out west, let us start bringing the .22s into Ku-ring-gai. Let us start shooting up Ku-ring-gai. Why not? That is what the Government wants. But hang on, the member for Murray-Darling said that Labor just thinks about city folk. Government members have got to be kidding—they are hypocrites. If they are thinking about people out in the bush why the hell would they not have shooting in Ku-ring-gai? The member for Murray-Darling is a disgrace saying to this side of the House that we only think about the city. We are not thinking about the city; we are trying to defend every national park in New South Wales.

This is a dumb policy. This is a policy that was brought to the former Labor Government and was thrown out because Premier Keneally, Premier Rees and every other Premier who thought for five minutes about this had the foresight to say, "This is not on". Every single member on the other side should be ashamed that today we are debating legislation that should never have even made it to the floor of the New South Wales Parliament. It is embarrassing that the men and women in the visitors gallery of the New South Wales Parliament today have to listen and be exposed to a Government that says one thing one day and does another thing the next. It is an absolute disgrace that a Minister can say in Parliament in August last year to another member of Parliament that something is not going to happen and then in under 12 months the Government is back here ramming the legislation through. If people in the gallery are wondering why this bill is conveniently going through on the last day of the parliamentary session, it is that we are about to cop another spray—the workers compensation laws.

The deal done by our friends in the Shooters and Fishers Party is very simple. They should watch very carefully and make sure that their friends in the Government tick this one off before the Shooters and Fishers Party ticks one off for them. This is a government that said it did not do deals. This is a government that said there would be no shooting in national parks. This is a government that is completely out of touch. I find it offensive that the member for Murray-Darling can come in here and criticise the member for Balmain and Opposition members and make out as though we do not know anything about country New South Wales and our broader regional areas, when the Liberals and The Nationals are the ones who are allowing shooting in national parks but are happy to make sure that it does not go on in downtown Ku-ring-gai. This is a bad policy by a bad Government that is completely out of touch. What is happening on the floor of the New South Wales Parliament this afternoon is disgraceful.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.18 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I note that the member for Keira showed a lot of passion in his speech, but he clearly misses the point. This bill does not allow shooting in national parks in a willy-nilly fashion. If the member was really concerned about rural and regional communities he would be out there speaking about those concerns that have been expressed to me. He can stand in this House and say it was the former Labor Government that cared about regional New South Wales, but that was a government that clearly neglected regional New South Wales. The former Labor Government did not believe that people existed west of the Blue Mountains. For far too long people in regional communities were treated like second-class citizens. It is hypocritical for the member for Keira to say that Coalition Government members with electorates in regional areas got their fair share under the former Labor Government.

I have spoken to stakeholders and to people who live next to national parks. One of their greatest concerns is wild dogs. Following the recent period of drought the number of wild dogs has increased. I come from the land. When I speak to good, hardworking farming communities the people are concerned about wild dogs coming out of national parks and when the farmers wake up in the morning they find that quite a number of their livestock have been ripped apart by wild dogs. It is horrific. It is very disheartening for farmers to witness their livestock in that condition. The farmers also have to destroy livestock that has been seriously injured by wild dog attacks. Opposition members can try to take the moral high ground, but they have forgotten about the communities in regional and rural New South Wales that need this control brought in. I have listened to a lot of the rhetoric during this debate and the diatribe from Opposition members. But they forget that controls will be introduced to ensure that shooting in national parks does not occur on an ad hoc basis. Signage will be put up and notices will be distributed. There are also the regulations that have to go through the Minister. This situation will be controlled and sensibly addressed by this legislation.

The Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2012 provides for the management of pest species through licensed hunting on private and public land. The Act establishes the Game Council of New South Wales, a statutory authority subject to the control and direction of the Minister for Primary Industries. The council has a number of functions associated with facilitating and managing hunting, including administration of a licensing regime, making recommendations with regard to public land that may be declared open for hunting, and provision of educational courses and material to licensed hunters to minimise risks to public safety and protect animal welfare. The Game Council has issued more than 17,000 licences since it was established. Last year licensed hunters collectively spent the equivalent of more than 230,000 days pursuing hunting activities. No life-threatening safety issues were reported during this time. However, during this period more than 730,000 game and feral animals were removed from public and private land. I note that this did not include national park estate land.

The national park estate does have significant numbers of pests—many of which are listed as key threatening species under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. The National Parks and Wildlife

Service estimated that they removed more than 45,000 animals from the national park estate land in 2010-11, many as a result of shootings by staff or commercial contractors. Whilst this number is impressive, those who live near or make use of our national park estate land know this is only the tip of the iceberg. Feral animals are destroying the habitat within our national parks and displacing native species. Pest species are considered the second biggest threat to biodiversity in New South Wales after habitat loss. These pests do not stay within the confines of our national parks but roam onto other public and private land, impacting on community safety, agricultural productivity and environmental values.

Hunting in national parks already occurs in Victoria, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania. Shooting is also allowed in some national parks in the United States and recreational shooting of a range of feral animals is allowed in conservation lands in New Zealand. It makes sense to utilise licensed hunters who have been accredited as responsible hunters to assist with the battle against feral animal pests in national parks. The Game Council, as part of its charter has contributed to the development of the Firearms and Hunting Safety guide; conducted many workshops to help hunters develop skills to hunt safely, more effectively and ethically; approved 190 clubs and organisations for the purposes of the restricted licence to hunt on public and private land; approved 900 voluntary assessors for the restricted licence; and implemented the Blaze Orange hunting clothing safety awareness program. The proposed amendments will not allow public hunting in national park estate that is generally in or adjacent to metropolitan areas.

Inspectors have strong powers under the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2004 to regulate hunting activity, and these powers will be enhanced with the proposed offence provisions and powers to stop and inspect vehicles. As I said, Opposition members stand high and mighty and speak about the needs of people living in regional and rural communities, but the fact is many of them have not seen the damage done by wild dogs coming out of national parks. They have not been asked to do inspections on rural properties. They have not spoken directly with the rural constituents who are affected by this problem. It is a problem that has to be addressed. The member for Murray-Darling has had firsthand experience with this issue for a number of years and he spoke about its impact upon our communities. The member for Keira does not understand regional and rural communities.

The member for Murray-Darling has the relevant background and experience, and has seen what feral animals have done to the livelihoods of hardworking men and women in our communities. Therefore this amending bill is a sensible bill that is needed to address a growing epidemic in our communities. Effective management, proscriptions and public notification along the lines of the proven system that has been operating with Forests New South Wales and Crown lands will be used so that other park users are not put at risk. These amendments provide an effective tool to complement management activities that are already in place to respond to pest animals. It gives me pleasure to support the bill. I commend the bill to the House and congratulate the Minister on her work.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [4.30 p.m.]: I move:

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

- (1) consideration of Government business after the conclusion of Private Members' Statements;
- (2) the Speaker to leave the Chair until the ringing of one long bell, no earlier than 10.30 a.m. on Friday 22 June 2012, for the continuation of Government business; and
- (3) the House to adjourn on motion.

The reason for the suspension of standing orders is to allow progression of the very important petition that the member for Auburn has before the House. The public gallery is full of guests this evening; obviously this petition is important to her electorate. A motion also was moved to allow Private Members' Statements to be made in the normal course of events. Later the House will continue with debate on the very important Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill.

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

Motion agreed to.

HUNTERS HILL RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [4.30 p.m.]: I wish to discuss my community's opposition to the removal of radioactive waste from the old Hunters Hill radium smelter to the Office of Environment and Heritage [OEH] facility at Joseph Street, Lidcombe. More than 13,000 people signed our petition in just a few months. I thank all of my constituents who signed the petition, many of whom made the trip to Parliament House from my Auburn electorate today, and members of the Suburban No-Nuclear Action Group, which was formed around this issue. I acknowledge the hours they have put into fighting the O'Farrell Government's decision to store radioactive waste very close to where many of us live. For many months they have worked hard, speaking to experts, organising rallies and signing petitions—on top of caring for their families and working. The decision to send radioactive waste from the site of the former uranium smelter at Hunters Hill to western Sydney is yet another betrayal by the O'Farrell Government.

Just before the election the Premier stated that it would be "stupid to send radioactive waste to Western Sydney". It seems he has changed his mind. The waste was a big deal before he formed his Government. The member for Mulgoa was certainly worried about it and threatened to organise pickets and petitions. But now Coalition members are in government, it is a totally different story. Suddenly there is a press release stating, "In the unlikely event that any hazardous material is detected [at Hunters Hill], it will be separated and taken to a secure storage facility". We are now being told in numerous letters and press releases that the most likely case is that all the Hunters Hill soil on site will be sent to Kemps Creek. The very same radioactive soil the member for Mulgoa opposed being stored at Kemps Creek is now coming her way. She is fine with that because it is classified as non-hazardous. That is very clever spin.

Tell the people of Kemps Creek: "It's okay. The radioactive waste that's coming isn't hazardous. The bad stuff is going to Lidcombe", and tell the people of Lidcombe, "It's okay. There's no hazardous radioactive soil, so nothing's coming to Lidcombe—it's all going to Kemps Creek". Well, my constituents have spoken to the experts, read the reports, done the maths and they are not falling for it. Let us look at the facts. Why is it a stupid idea to send radioactive waste to western Sydney? It is because we are talking about uranium tailings. Let us not forget that the 2008 inquiry into the former uranium smelter at Hunters Hill found that there were " ... significantly elevated concentrations of radionuclides at the site, some at hazardous levels". There is plenty of radioactive material there, mixed among the soil; but on this site, hotspots were found, some exceeding the 100 becquerel a gram benchmark and requiring this radioactive waste to achieve the classification of "hazardous".

That is not surprising, given it was formerly a radium processing plant that was operating before anyone had any idea of radiation risks and when tailings were dumped willy-nilly around the site. In fact, we will only really know what exactly is there during the clean-up—if it is done properly—and when all the soil is removed and tested in situ. Dr Gavin Mudd spoke at the inquiry and gave information to the Government when it was in opposition. He says that uranium tailings require careful storage. Based on the International Atomic Energy Agency's [IAEA] requirements and looking at other sites around Australia, such as Ranger Uranium, the waste should be isolated in a dry and above-ground area, with groundwater monitoring that is available for public scrutiny. What do we have instead? This Government picked one of the 900 sites that stores waste in New South Wales—a storeroom that is the size of a garage underneath the Office of Environment and Heritage offices and is half-filled with domestic, not industrial, radioactive waste, such as old compasses and watches.

Is there any sign of the dry, above-ground storage with groundwater monitoring that Dr Gavin Mudd speaks of? No. Would the Minister for the Environment not want that, if she lived within two kilometres of the site, as many people in the gallery do, and as I do as well? Would she not want that, if she were an Office of Environment and Heritage employee who is working in an office above the storage area, many of whom have signed my petition? My community is saying loud and clear to the Minister for the Environment, who represents the Government during this debate, that it is not good enough. The Premier is right: It is a stupid idea to send radioactive waste to western Sydney. It does not belong at Lidcombe. It does not belong at Kemps Creek. The Government should stop playing with semantics and trying to make it somehow disappear after spin. Send it where it will be properly stored. Negotiate with the Federal Government to send it where it will be properly

stored—Lucas Heights or Olympic Dam. It is time for this Government to come up with a long-term solution for this radioactive waste, for waste containing uranium 238, 235 and thorium 232 with half-lives of many millions of years. Given that the Government is now exploring for uranium, it might just need that.

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [4.35 p.m.]: The Government has developed a solution to a long-term problem, based on scientific evidence. I will clarify the nature of the soil contamination at Hunters Hill. The soil has been tested many times in recent years under the close scrutiny of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO], the Environment Protection Authority [EPA], and an independent site auditor. Although the soil on those lots does not pose a health risk, the contamination must be appropriately resolved with proper disposal in a manner that is safe, lawful and in the best interests of the whole community. Much of the confusion in the community arises from the scare campaign undertaken by Opposition members and their peddling of misinformation regarding the nature of the material at Hunters Hill.

Let me be clear. In fact, let me use the precise words of the former Labor Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly. In answer to a question without notice asked by the Hon. Ian Cohen, he said it was "not ... nuclear waste". In fact, it is mostly clean soil, some of which had been contaminated with a mineral ore dug out of the ground in South Australia 100 years ago. Regardless, all members of the House would agree, and particularly people in communities who are affected by this ongoing issue, that this is not an issue that should be used as political football. Opposition members do not like what I am saying. They do not want to hear it. They have frightened the community and they do not want to hear the truth.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Auburn has had an opportunity to contribute to debate. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: It is rank hypocrisy that when in government Opposition members were so quick to insist that the material at Hunters Hill was, in the words of the then Labor environment Minister, Frank Sartor "in situ restricted solid waste in accordance with the New South Wales waste framework", but now so flamboyantly Opposition members are trying to mislead the public. Let me be clear that those soils have been classified as restricted solid waste, in accordance with the Environment Protection Authority's Waste Classification Guidelines. This classification replaces the old industrial waste classification and applies to things such as furnace slag, soil from service station clean-ups, and other by-products that are not contaminated enough to be classified as hazardous waste.

The O'Farrell Government will ensure that this material is disposed of in a manner that is safe and in the best interests of the community. The material will be disposed of at a state-of-the-art waste facility designed to take this classification of waste at Kemps Creek, which is the most secure landfill in the State. The State Property Authority, which is part of the Department of Finance and Services, is the agency managing the remediation under the watch of my colleague the Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. I am advised that the State Property Authority is in the process of finalising a remediation action plan, which will guide the manner in which the remediation is carried out. This plan will be reviewed by an independent Environment Protection Authority accredited site auditor to ensure it is scientifically robust. I am also advised that the State Property Authority is in the process of preparing a thorough environmental impact assessment.

In addition, the remediation proposal will require the consent of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. It will be subject to a rigorous development assessment process, ensuring that there is an extensive and transparent public consultation process. Importantly, the remediation works will be overseen by relevant agencies, including the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation and the Environment Protection Authority. In the unlikely event that there is any material exceeding the restricted solid waste classification, such as residual fragments of radioactive material, it will be set aside and stored at a facility specifically designed for this type of material. Currently 269 premises are registered to store material that exceeds the restricted solid waste classification.

As would be expected, the Environment Protection Authority has a registered storage facility, a facility that was upgraded under the former Labor Government, which it does not now see as a valid storage facility. This is why the Government has nominated the purpose-built storage facility at Lidcombe as one option in a contingency to store any material that may be found at Hunters Hill that does not comply with the restricted solid waste requirements. Let me remind the House that based on the extensive testing done to date, it is not expected that any material requiring such storage will be found at Hunters Hill. This proposal is based on a

significant amount of scientific testing and the plan has considered the most suitable management options. The Government has rigorously considered and approached this matter and we will deal with this legacy site for the community once and for all.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [4.40 p.m.]: I thank my colleague the member for Auburn for bringing to the attention of the House this petition signed by 13,000 residents of western Sydney, thereby forcing the Government to take note that these residents will not live under the threat of an unseen enemy—radioactive waste. The O'Farrell Government should stand condemned for its decision to transfer radioactive waste from the old uranium smelter site at Hunters Hill to Lidcombe and Kemps Creek in western Sydney. What a shameful decision by this Premier, who has once again proven that he does not care one iota for the people of western Sydney. He calls himself the Minister for Western Sydney. It has been more than 12 months since the Premier has been seen in my electorate of Cabramatta—not since the election last year when his candidate went down terribly. At that time the Premier slapped the people of western Sydney in the face by imposing that candidate on the people of Cabramatta and he is slapping them again with this shameful decision to send radioactive waste into western Sydney's backyard.

As has been mentioned, the radioactive waste from Hunters Hill contains uranium 238, uranium 235 and uranium 232, which have half lives of millions of years. I applaud the member for Auburn for standing up to this Government on behalf of her community and saying that this is not right. Just as concerning is the waste that is being moved to Kemps Creek. There is deafening silence from the member for Smithfield, Mr Andrew Rohan, and the member for Mulgoa. Where are they today? They are not speaking on this issue. That is all the more shocking because their electorates are among the most affected by this disastrous O'Farrell Government move. I do not think the residents of Elizabeth Drive will be too pleased by the news that their newest neighbour is radioactive waste, nor would they be too pleased with their members' lack of representation on the matter.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: Attacks on members must be made by way of substantive motion. The member for Cabramatta should be dealing with the petition which members have come to the House to listen to, not attacking other members who are not here to counter those attacks.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Cabramatta has the call.

Mr NICK LALICH: Once again, this shows the Liberal Government's sentiments towards western Sydney—"Here you go, take our garbage". The people of western Sydney will not be bullied. We will not open our arms to radioactive waste and we will not be hoodwinked by the O'Farrell Government into thinking that this is safe and a good thing for the community. The Minister for Western Sydney needs to get his act together and start advocating for, not against the people of western Sydney. This is an unseen enemy. It can cause diseases that can creep up and affect a person's health much later in life. Our families and communities do not deserve to live with these threats, nor do they deserve to be treated like garbage. Let us not forget which Minister will be presiding over this whole operation—the Minister for Orica, Ms Robyn Parker, who is an expert on leaks and also an expert on covering them up. [*Time expired.*]

Discussion concluded.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The 10,000 signature petition having concluded, private members' statement will now be proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WAGGA WAGGA BASE HOSPITAL

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [4.45 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a momentous occasion that occurred in Wagga Wagga a week and a half ago when the Minister for Health joined me and other community members to turn the soil for the new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. Over the last 30 years the community has campaigned hard for a new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. It was with great pride that I joined the Minister, doctors, nurses and others to turn the soil at the new \$400 million Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. The first stage of the hospital is to build a new mental health wing, long regarded as desperately needed for our community and region. This new mental health wing will provide an extra 30 beds for mental

health patients, along with 20 acute care beds, bringing the total to 50. It is a great investment by the Liberal-Nationals Government in our city and region of Wagga Wagga. This development has been warmly welcomed by all. It means that by the year 2016 we would have invested \$282.1 million in Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

I have great pleasure in telling the House that we are also building a new multipurpose service [MPS] facility at Lockhart. Money was allocated in this budget to allow construction to begin on that facility. The community of Lockhart has been campaigning hard for a multipurpose service. It has gone through all the planning processes and now a new multipurpose service facility will be built. I look forward to being there with the community when the soil is turned on that project. I understand the community is very excited about this major investment. Much of the groundwork has taken place over the past 12 months on the new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, with electricity wiring upgrades bringing a higher voltage power to the site and new drainage works. A new car park was built, providing extra car parking spaces. Houses had to be demolished. Sadly, the house of two long-time residents, Don and Noreen Tuckwell, was demolished, but all in a good cause.

They had lived there for 30-odd years, but I am pleased that the Tuckwells now have been re-accommodated in a house very close to where they lived for most of their married life. Clearing the site was another momentous event on the landscape. In a few weeks time bricks and mortar will rise on the site of the new mental health wing. So many people have campaigned long and hard for this new hospital. So many people have given time, effort, blood sweat and tears to the development. The Minister, in her remarks on the project, stated that it will be a state-of-the-art complex. There are questions about further phases of the project. As I have said previously in relation to funding for further phases, there will be opportunities in future budgets and for Federal funding as well. Building a hospital requires a partnership between Federal and State governments. At the turning of the soil ceremony, I reaffirmed that delivering health to the community required a partnership.

We all have responsibilities in the delivery of health delivery. Of a total of \$282.1 million contributed so far, \$55 million was obtained by the Minister for Health from the Federal Government, for which we are appreciative. There will be a need for more funds and the community, together with the Minister for Health, will campaign hard to encourage the Federal Government to partner with us to continue to deliver this long overdue piece of infrastructure that supports an entire region of some 300,000 people. This regional referral hospital is important because it will provide a great opportunity for more nurses and doctors to be taught in rural and regional Australia. I thank the Minister for coming to Wagga Wagga to share this momentous occasion with our community.

TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL PARLIAMENT

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.50 p.m.]: Today I speak about a wonderful achievement and longstanding tradition at a school in my electorate—the opening of the Tea Gardens Public School's parliament. I was honoured to be invited to attend the opening of the school's twenty-third parliament on Wednesday 6 June 2012. The Tea Gardens Public School parliament truly is the voice of the children. It was established following a visit to Federal Parliament almost 25 years ago when staff and students were inspired to introduce a similar system in their school to help formulate rules and, more importantly, involve the students in that process through organised, healthy debate. It was wonderful to see Mr Daryl Martin, the principal who started the school parliament at Tea Gardens, in the audience to support the children and teachers.

Quite a distinguished gallery was present to show support, including former New South Wales Governor Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, who calls Tea Gardens home and is always so supportive of local events. Based on the Westminster system, the Tea Gardens school parliament comprises students from years 3 to 6 who make up the lower House, teachers who make up the Senate and the principal who takes up the role of Governor-General. Year 6 students are elected to the House of Representatives and take on roles as Ministers and are responsible for particular portfolios. Equally important is a shadow ministry made up of year 5 students to allow different viewpoints to be addressed. As in this House, there is a Speaker and Deputy Speaker, Hansard reporters, Sergeants-at-Arms, an Usher of the Black Rod and a parliamentary adviser.

This year former adviser Ms Annette Benton drew special praise for her involvement in more than two decades of school parliament, as she handed over the reins to another advisor. The Governor-General on the day of the opening was Mr Ross Weightman, who has been the relieving principal at the school. I am advised that the new principal, Mr Mark Clemson, took up his role a week after the opening of the parliament and is now

ensconced as the Governor-General. Former principal Mrs Sue Estens, who is now principal at Hamilton South Public School, also was present at the opening, taking the opportunity to show a group of her new school students and teachers how the successful parliament operated.

I advise the House that the 2012 Tea Gardens school parliament is made up of the following members: Prime Minister, Jacinta Fa'Asolo; Leader of the Opposition, Jade Hunter; parliamentary advisor, Mrs Jody Edwards; Minister for Transport, Luke Rochester and shadow Minister, Nicholas Baker; Minister for Education, Hayden Cooke and shadow Minister, Bailey Battle; Minister for Sport and also Deputy Prime Minister, Leilani White and shadow Minister, Rex Shelton; Minister for Pupil Welfare, Brent Johnson and shadow Minister, Myisha Edmonds; Minister for Special Events, Stacey Price and shadow Minister, Molly Perry; Minister for the Environment, Ben Jacobsen and shadow Minister, Susie Webb; Minister for Building and Health, Tyler Warren and shadow Minister, Rogue Bowman; Speaker of the House, Cassy Reilly; Deputy Speaker, James Stevenson; Sergeants-at-Arms, Ryan Cohen and Katie Nolan-Slaterry; Usher of the Black Rod, Bailey Freebody; and Hansard reporters, Jonah Brumby, Akira Carloff and Jessica Johnston.

The parliament sits each fortnight and ideas, motions and questions are put to the student members for discussion or vote. At the official opening, several motions were put to the house. These included that year 5 students be allowed exclusive right to play in the new garden area and that it be declared out of bounds for the rest of the school. Alas, only year 5 students voted in favour and the motion did not have the numbers to be passed. My personal favourite was that students be allowed to sign an IOU at the canteen if they would like to purchase a treat but have no money. After energetic debate, this last motion was carried but my heart tells me that with the number of hands in the air voting against it—the parents in the audience—it would not get through the senate. Still, that is democracy and it was worth a try. Some colourful and controversial motions have been put to the house over the years—some popular, some not so popular. They include that students do not have to tuck in their shirts; that the school get some new sports equipment, including pogo sticks; and that classrooms get screen doors.

Obviously, not all motions pass through the senate, but it is inspiring to see children of this age fiercely debating the issues and passionately fighting for what they believe in. It is a wonderful way to learn to have courage and to stand up and have a say if you are passionate about an issue, to respect another's point of view even if you do not agree with it and, importantly, that we do not always get what we want. The Tea Gardens Public School parliament has been a model to many other schools in setting up their own parliaments and is an outstanding example of student leadership within a school. I congratulate the Tea Gardens Public School's parliament.

FREEMAN OF THE CITY OF MAITLAND AWARD RECIPIENT KAY SHARP, AM

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [4.54 p.m.]: With great pleasure I inform the House that a well-known Maitland electorate resident, Kay Sharp, AM, has been recognised with the honour of Freeman of the City of Maitland. This honour is bestowed by Maitland City Council on a local person who has provided the highest level of service. The award recognises eminent achievement and merit of the highest order for service in Maitland, Australia or for humanity. Kay Sharp is the seventeenth Freeman of the City of Maitland and one of the six living recipients of this noble honour. The council resolved unanimously to bestow this honour on Kay Sharp, and I fully understand why. While Kay has performed many roles throughout her professional life, it is her three decades of contribution to the trade training of young people not only in Maitland but beyond for which she is best known.

Kay has been actively involved with that fine Maitland institution known as the Hunter Valley Training Company, which tomorrow celebrates 31 years in operation. Kay has been involved with the company since its establishment in 1981 as a facility for training apprentices for the construction of the Bayswater power station. At last year's thirtieth anniversary of the company, Kay recalled how she arrived at the job on her first day and started work with not much more than a desk, a telephone and the daunting task of helping guide the future of 197 apprentices. Kay dug in and tackled the task head-on, and for the next 23 years was Hunter Valley Training Company's general manager. To this day, Kay continues to be involved with the organisation as executive director and company secretary. Kay's own experience with vocational training started in the 1950s after she left Maitland Girls High School and studied office administration before completing a TAFE teacher training course in advanced secretarial skills.

This training provided Kay with the skill set that saw her working with the Town Clerk of Maitland council before moving on to start her own business and taking up an appointment as electorate secretary to the

then member for Maitland, the Hon. Milton Morris. Throughout that time, Kay unselfishly shared her knowledge and enthusiasm for vocational training by serving on a range of bodies, such as the North Coast Institute TAFE Advisory Council, the board of Hunter Trade College and the Hunter Apprenticeship Advisory Council. She also held various roles with the NSW Apprenticeship Council, the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training, and WorldSkills Australia. Kay has also devoted her time and experience in the global arena as a WorldSkills International Foundation Advocate, a role in which she encourages more developed countries and skills-development organisations to help other less developed countries and organisations to raise skill levels.

The former member for Maitland, Milton Morris, AO, is quoted as saying, "Kay is truly full of good works". This is exemplified by her vast contributions to the Maitland community in a variety of other roles. Kay's involvement includes organisations like the Mai-Wel Group, Carrie's Place Women's Refuge, Hunter Youth Mentor Collaborative and the Maitland Steamfest Committee, to name just a few from a long list. One can also find Kay volunteering at school and sports canteens, and visiting hospitals for the church. When Kay was asked about being made a Freeman of the City, she told the *Newcastle Herald*:

This is the highest honour in the city and to receive it from the people in my home town means a great deal to me. There is no recognition greater than that.

Kay now finds herself in some fine company. Dorothy Crouch, OAM, Margaret Sivyer, OAM, Gwyn Murphy, Milton Morris, AO, and Hilton Grugeon, AM, have all been recognised with the honour. Many people would agree that the contribution and service Mrs Sharp has given to young people through the Hunter Valley Training Company to vocational education and to Maitland's community organisations make her a truly worthy recipient of this title. To Kay I say, your efforts to date have been truly inspirational and I know that anything you pursue in the future will be equally inspirational. Today the Hunter Valley Training Company is a sound, well-oiled machine. Over the last 31 years it has created a reputation as one of Australia's oldest and largest group training organisations, providing apprenticeships and traineeships in New South Wales and Queensland. I am sure all constituents of Maitland and the 20,000 apprentices and trainees who have qualified through the Hunter Valley Training Company will join me in congratulating Kay Sharp on her prestigious honour.

BELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOL SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [4.59 p.m.]: Like Queen Elizabeth II, Belrose Public School, under the excellent leadership of principal Jan Cohen, marks a significant occasion in 2012. Last Friday I was delighted to join in celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of this wonderful school. Staff at Belrose Public School and the local community work together to ensure children reach their full potential in all aspects of school life. Our aim in the community, together with the school, is to produce self-motivated learners who can work independently and cooperatively, showing respect for each other and the environment. I am aware that the school has been providing students a broad range of educational areas such as enrichment programs, gifted and talented education, special education programs, a kindergarten transition program, an inclusive leadership program in year 6, sport and fitness programs, students' health, safety and wellbeing activities, and special religious education or scripture. The school has highly experienced, professional and caring teachers and office staff who together help elicit the enthusiastic best from each student.

The school has an active parents and citizens association, led currently by its president, Sharon Lacey. Parents volunteer and organise many fundraising activities every year to help provide resources for school activities. These fundraising events are also important occasions for community building. While on financial matters, I was pleased to recently note the \$8,309 in extra minor maintenance funding allocated to the school by the Department of Education. I thank the Minister for Education on behalf of the school and the community. Friday's sixtieth anniversary celebration included an official opening, cake cutting, band performances, sausage sizzle, photographic and memorabilia displays, and dance and choir performances. Special guests included June Penze, the school's cleaner for its first 54 years; mayor Michael Regan; and past principal June Wait. I congratulate Belrose Public School for its 60 years of achievement and continuing to live out its motto: courtesy, truth and honour.

Private members' statements concluded.

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [5.05 p.m.]: I speak to the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. At the outset I will say that it is a travesty that hunting will be

allowed in our State's national parks. It is wrong. It cuts to the core of the philosophy and ethos of national parks. Labor is proudly a party that supports national parks. One of the many great achievements of 16 years in Government was two million hectares of new national parks, the country's best protected wilderness estate, and the coastal forests north and south running from the escarpment to the sea. The bill before the House was arrived at on the back of a dirty deal. It was a dirty deal that was done simply so that the Government could sell off the electricity assets of New South Wales. It was done not for the benefit of national parks, nor for the benefit of feral animal control, as those on the other side have tried in vain to convince people is the case.

It was done because this Premier is unable to manage the Parliament and unable to negotiate legislation through the Parliament. Instead he sacrifices the sanctity of national parks in New South Wales. When I was an environment Minister in a previous Government, the Shooters and Fishers Party came forward with a similar proposal to that now being considered in the bill before the House. At that time they were given a fair hearing and we had a robust discussion in the then Government. In the end, the proposal did not stack up and the plan was rejected. The plan was rejected because our national parks are sacred. The Labor Party knew it was inappropriate to allow this sort of activity to go on in the State's national parks. National parks in this State are a quiet and peaceful legacy for us and for future generations to enjoy nature.

Mr Troy Grant: If you leave the feral animals—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Dubbo will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I could talk about some of the ferals on the other side. The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 states at part 3, division 2, section 30E:

- (1) The purpose of reserving land as a national park is to identify, protect and conserve areas containing outstanding or representative ecosystems, natural or cultural features or landscapes or phenomena that provide opportunities for public appreciation and inspiration and sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment so as to enable those areas to be managed in accordance with subsection (2).

Subsection (2) (c) to (e) states:

- (c) the protection of the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations,
- (d) the promotion of public appreciation and understanding of the national park's natural and cultural values
- (e) provision for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values,

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Dubbo will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Labor rejects allowing shooting in national parks because it is fundamentally wrong. National parks are about nature; they are for animals, plants and contemplative recreation.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: There are 1,000 endangered species of flora and fauna. We reject hunting in national parks as ineffective, expensive and downright dangerous. The infestation of feral animals across the State is a problem. It is probably the only issue that both sides of the House agree on. It is a huge problem for the State.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Dubbo will cease interjecting. I will not refrain from using the sessional orders to remove the member from the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: The member needs a spell, maybe a magic spell. All those involved in public policy agree that feral animals are a problem that we must try to remedy. Together with habitat loss, feral animals are the greatest threat to Australia's biodiversity. To manage this problem requires huge funds and dedicated public policy making. Often both are lacking. Handing the keys to our national parks over to recreational shooters is not going to impact on this problem one iota. Recreational shooters hunting in national parks will not eradicate feral animals. It will not make a dent in the millions of foxes, cats, goats, pigs and rabbits that infest and undermine our landscape. Even the experts say that we need to be killing half of the feral

animal population each year to manage this problem. There is a challenge for the chest-beating Nationals on the other side who grandstand about feral animal management. The Nationals know this is not going to solve the problem.

As anyone who understands this issue knows, effective feral eradication requires killing large numbers over large areas in short time frames. It requires expertise, planning, multiple approaches and evaluation. It seldom focuses on ground shooting, as aerial shooting, trapping and mustering achieve better and more humane results. A bunch of shooters taking pot shots in our park will not do anything to control the feral animal problem, and in many cases it will make it worse. The taxpayer funding to administer and promote recreational hunting in parks could be more effectively spent on professional feral eradication programs. Shooting in national parks is not a free service to help manage the feral animal problem; it is an expensive drain on taxpayers and will deliver no conservation outcomes. Most importantly, shooting in national parks is dangerous. I draw the attention of the House to an event that occurred in October 2010 in New Zealand when Rosemary Ives was shot in the head while cleaning her teeth in a national park camping area.

In that case, the recreational hunter mistook her for a deer. I am not sure how someone brushing his or her teeth could be mistaken for a deer. Nonetheless, this poor woman lost her life. The 38 million visitors each year to our national parks means that our parks are full of people. Hunting in national parks will create a huge risk for all those visitors. None of us could feel safe enjoying picnics with our families in beautiful spots in our State's national parks. As a party committed to worker safety, Labor is concerned also for the dedicated staff in our national parks because their lives will be put at risk managing this program. Shooting risks should not be part of a park ranger's day-to-day operations. The tragedy is that that is exactly what will happen. With this announcement made by the Premier, we heard that shooting will be allowed in only 79 parks. I read directly from the release, "Parks and reserves with areas for immediate consideration", which goes on to list the parks identified for immediate consideration. It does not rule out going beyond those parks; it simply says that those are the parks and reserves for immediate consideration. In fact, we know that only 48 parks have been excluded from this process.

That leaves more than 740 parks potentially exposed to hunting. We have seen in this release already a proposal to allow hunting in some very high profile national parks, such as the Myall Lakes National Parks. Myall Lakes National Parks are places where people go to camp, fish, swim, surf and a whole range of other things. Myall Lakes National Parks are among those great national parks in which people should feel safe when they go camping and bushwalking—but no more. Kosciuszko National Park is used by people to bushwalk and cross-country ski. Their safety will be jeopardised simply because this bill will allow hunting there, or in Barrington Tops National Park, or in the Piliga national parks, Goulburn National Park—all now open immediately for hunting. This is a week in which we have seen so many promises broken by the O'Farrell Government. This bill is just another of those broken promises—and it is a growing list. But this is a promise that should never have been broken. The bill results from a broken promise of the Premier. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The Premier stood and looked the people of New South Wales in the eye and said, "I will not allow hunting in national parks." There were no weasel words or wriggle room—which is pretty unusual. Now we have a bill to allow hunting in national parks.

Mr Troy Grant: This is not a John Wayne movie. It is a feral animal control bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Dubbo and the member for Orange will come to order.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I acknowledge how agitated the member for Dubbo is, and rightly so, because I would be very agitated if I had to go back and front my constituents and say, "We lied."

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Bathurst will come to order. Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: There is no other way to explain this bill; it is a straight-out broken promise—and it is a lie. I quote the Premier's statement made on 13 April 2011:

We have no intention of doing deals with minor parties, to sell out those plans. There will not be a decision to turn our national parks into hunting reserves.

That is what the Premier said on 13 April 2011, just after he took office. But he has done this dirty deal. This bill is the pound of flesh to get this deal up—nothing counts, nothing holds; we simply end up with hunting in our national parks. The alarming part of this is that the Minister responsible for oversight of this legislation is the worst performing Minister in this Government.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: That is a bit unfair.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Maybe the Minister will correct me and tell me who is; but that is my judgement. The Minister who has oversight of this legislation is the worst performing Minister in the Government. The Legislation Review Committee is chaired by The Nationals member Steven Bromhead and its deputy chair is Geoff Lee. They said in their report:

The Committee is concerned that the subordinate legislation-making powers of this Bill may deny Parliament its proper role in scrutinising alterations to legislation.

Two subordinate legislation-making powers in the Bill are:

- Minister may declare which animals can be hunted;
- Minister can add any national park to the list by regulation.

The bill before this House enables a Minister by regulation to open up more national parks and allow shooting of more animals in those parks.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Dubbo will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: This is, by the way, the Minister—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Drummoyne has just returned to the Chamber. I will not tolerate any interjection. The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: The Minister will be able to decide what animals can and cannot be hunted in our national parks. This is the Minister who thinks that chopping down trees somehow protects koalas. She is on record at a budget estimates hearing last year telling the world that chopping down trees protects koalas.

Mr Stuart Ayres: Point of order: My point is taken under Standing Order 73. Reflections on a member should be made by way of substantive motion.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: It is a worrying feature of the bill that that Minister has responsibility for it. That concern is confirmed even by members of The Nationals and the Liberal Party in saying that the Minister can declare which animals may be hunted in national parks. That is alarming. What is before the House today is nothing more than a dirty deal. Before us are the remnants of that dirty deal being rammed through this House on the last sitting day of this session. It is being rammed through even though it will completely ruin our national parks, destroy our national parks. It will destroy the safety and sanctity of our national parks. Those on the other side are prepared to sell out the native flora and fauna, and the protections provided for native flora and fauna, by allowing this bill to pass this House. This bill will not make one iota of difference in reducing the number of feral animals in our national parks. But it will compromise the safety of every person who visits them. It will compromise the safety of flora and fauna and allow the worst performing Minister in this Parliament to decide which parks will have hunting in them and which animals will be hunted in those parks—and hunted in the most inhumane way. We oppose the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! Before calling the next member to speak on the bill I remind members that this will be an even longer afternoon if interjections continue from both sides of the Chamber. Members will have an opportunity to speak on the bill. From this point, I will not tolerate interjections, and I will not refrain from taking action that will see members removed from the Chamber.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.18 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2012, introduced in the other place by the Hon. Robert Brown. I speak as a member whose electorate is comprised largely of national parks, being the Ku-ring-gai Chase

National Park to the north and Garigal National Park to the south. The Ku-ring-gai National Park was created in 1894—the second oldest park in New South Wales, created by Eccleston du Feu. The Garigal National Park was created by the Greiner Liberal Government almost 100 years later, in 1991. As the local member I am keen to see extensions to reserved areas in Pittwater, such as Narrabeen lagoon and Currawong.

On the subject of Currawong, I will make some observations on the speech inflicted on us by the Leader of the Opposition. He said, and I noted his words, that he was a proud protector of national parks, and that he condemned dirty deals. Yet that is the very same John Robertson who was seeking to flog off waterfront bushland reserve surrounded on three sides by national parks—national parks that are listed on the World Heritage List because of their outstanding biodiversity values. He wanted to flog that off for a subdivision for a private suburb for the wealthy elite.

Ms Kristina Keneally: Point of order: The member is misleading the House. It was not a reserve. He darn well knows that and he is deliberately misleading this House.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I do not uphold that point of order. The member for Heffron will resume her seat.

Mr ROB STOKES: I suggest that the member for Heffron read the standing orders to gain an understanding of points of order. I can see this is a sensitive issue but I noted that the comments of the Leader of the Opposition were laced with a significant degree of venality and that there appears to be verisimilitude in those comments in light of his role in Currawong. With national parks having such an important footprint in my electorate this issue has raised debate in my community and, accordingly, as Pittwater's representative in this place, it is incumbent on me to explain my position on this bill, although it is important at the outset that no national parks in Pittwater or, indeed, throughout the metropolitan area, are affected by the provisions of this bill as they are listed in schedule 3A.

I also note that another constituency in my electorate at Duffys Forest has a large number of registered firearm owners and is the location of one of New South Wales's leading gun clubs. Unsurprisingly, I have listened to comments emanating from my community arguing both for and against the provisions of this bill. I agree with members on both sides of the House that the underlying purpose for national parks is to be what they were conceived to be and always should be—places of sanctuary, of significant intrinsic value and places to be handed on in an equal or better condition than we inherited them. As John Muir, the famous forefather of the national park movement in the United States of America, commented:

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.

Yet national parks are not places pickled in time. It is not possible to conserve a living landscape in situ without management, and national parks simply cannot thrive without active intervention to ensure the natural values that make them are conserved. Management includes identification and elimination of destructive activities, whether from invasive weeds, feral animals or other human impacts. On its terms the bill is designed to address the need to control feral animals. It does not allow for uncontrolled recreational shooting for fun, as some members opposite like to characterise the bill. The bill seeks to channel volunteer efforts into feral animal control. On its terms, therefore, I do not believe this bill is contrary to the purposes for which our national parks have been created and are maintained.

Ms Noreen Hay: You would sell your soul, you would.

Mr ROB STOKES: I will explain that by reference to the objects of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. I note in debate on this bill, despite the reference of the member for Wollongong to selling souls, that it seems as though no-one on the other side of the House has bothered to look at the terms of the bill or its impacts on the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Section 2A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 sets out the objects of the Act as the conservation of nature; the conservation of objects, places or features of cultural value within the landscape; and fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and cultural heritage, but in the context of providing for the management of land reserved under the Act in accordance with the management principles applicable for each type of reservation, whether that is a national park or a nature reserve, and so on.

For national parks, for example, section 30E outlines the purpose of preserving land as a national park is to identify, protect and conserve areas containing outstanding or representative ecosystems, natural or cultural

features, or landscapes or phenomena that provide opportunities for public appreciation and inspiration. All the management principles prepared under the Act have to be consistent with these fundamental objectives. I note that these provisions outline the framework in which shooting as a means of feral animal control may legally occur. Obviously, on any plain reading of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, any activity outside these objects would be beyond the power of the Government to authorise. I also note the control of feral animals contemplated under this bill is subject to a strict regulatory process. I caution, however, that this is obviously an area that requires extremely careful and continuing scrutiny, and the bill addresses that clearly.

The fundamental reason for national parks was, is and must always be that they are to be places of delight, joy and inspiration. That is the reason I visit national parks. I enjoy taking my young kids into national parks, and that is why I will keep a watchful eye on the operation of these laws to ensure they fulfil their role in managing national parks in a manner consistent with the purpose for national parks. One of the key feral pests in our national parks is the European red fox, introduced into our landscape to facilitate the sport of shooting. The irony that shooting has become established as part of the strategy for controlling this pest is not lost on me. It is an example of why this area of public policy needs careful monitoring and supervision, particularly in light of the underlying vision behind the national parks movement.

Excluding a means of controlling pests as a management tool on the basis of ideology is not rational. When shooting by qualified shooters, by owners of licensed firearms, is a useful means of controlling a well-documented problem in our national parks, it should be endorsed, but with care, monitoring and vigilance. I recommend to interested members, and to people reading today's *Hansard* who are interested in this debate, that they read the contribution of the member for Charlestown; it was eminently rational, reasonable and sensible. I also note that there has been a lot of empty rhetoric, posing, posturing and, frankly, some mischief-making. I note the presence of the member for Cabramatta in the Chamber.

I will not make quite as glowing an endorsement of his contribution because he called owners of licensed firearms "idiot, ratbag cowboys". He said that visitors to national parks would require "flak jackets and steel helmets" and that shooting would "stop families having picnics in our pristine national parks". Owners of licensed firearms are not idiot, ratbag cowboys; they have to undergo security checks and they have to undertake courses and registration processes. Also, by definition, the very issue this bill is designed to address is the fact that our parks are not pristine and that they require active management. If people bothered to read the terms of the bill and to reflect on its contents, it would lead to a far more rational debate on what, on its terms, is a sensible bill.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY (Heffron) [5.26 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. Let us be clear what this bill is about and let us be clear why we are here. This bill is not about the best way to control feral animals in our national parks. This bill is not about the best outcome for promoting our national parks to domestic and international visitors. This bill is not about environmental best practice. This bill is about the politics of the upper House and the politics of a Premier who cannot get his way in any manner other than to go back on his word and to put our national parks at risk. Let us be clear why we are here. We are in the lower House debating whether to allow amateur shooters to roam our national parks with loaded guns because Barry O'Farrell cannot get his electricity sale through the Parliament in any other way.

This recommendation, this policy proposal of the Liberals and Nationals, is terrible. This terrible policy proposal to allow shooting in our national parks under the guise of feral animal control is now Liberal-Nationals Government policy because it caved in to the Shooters and Fishers Party and it went back on its word. In this Parliament on 2 August 2011 the Minister for the Environment made it abundantly clear that there would be no shooting in national parks. She said it slowly, she said it clearly and there was no ambiguity, and she has gone back on her word. But she is not alone; she is just following the example of her leader the Premier. The Premier said in April 2011, flanked by the member for Londonderry—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Heffron has the call. I will not tolerate conversations or debate across the table. If members wish to have private conversations they should do so outside the Chamber.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: As I was saying, the Minister is not alone. She is following the lead of her Premier. There he stood in April 2011, flanked by the member for Londonderry and the member for Penrith, and he said, "There will be no shooting in national parks. I will do no deals with the Shooters to get our legislation through." The Premier and the Minister have gone back on their word for a dirty political deal and a

stupid policy for our national parks. Let us be clear why we are here today. We are here at 5.30 p.m. on 21 June because the Shooters and Fishers Party in the other place would not pass this Government's appalling WorkCover bill until the hunting legislation had passed the Parliament.

The Shooters and Fishers in the other place are holding this Government to ransom. Those members said to the Government, "If you want to rip workers' rights off firefighters and nurses you have to give us the right to go out and shoot in national parks." This Government is so desperate to take away rights and protections for injured workers it is willing to give away our national parks. It will allow armed amateur shooters to roam our national parks under the guise of feral animal control. It is bad for the environment, it is bad for our park system and it is bad for the reputation of New South Wales. Why has Labor always opposed this proposal? Labor members have always opposed allowing amateur shooters to shoot feral animals—effectively hunt—in national parks because it is ineffective, it is inhumane, it is costly, it is not strategic and it is dangerous.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Heffron has the call.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will put the facts on the record. According to the New South Wales Game Council a total of 14,161 game and feral animals were killed by recreational hunters in New South Wales State forests last year. Almost half of them were rabbits. In this period 15,080 game hunting licences were issued in New South Wales. Each hunter killed less than one animal on average which is an inefficient and costly way to deal with feral animal control. The Game Council was given \$2.5 million in taxpayer funding last year.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Government members will remain silent

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Each of the animals killed by recreational hunters cost the taxpayer \$249. That is much more expensive than professionally run programs for feral animal eradication. Even skilled shooters say that on-ground shooting of feral animals is not an effective method of feral animal eradication.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Tamworth will come to order. The member for Heffron has the call. I warn members that the next person who interrupts proceedings will be directed to leave the Chamber.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Depending on the animal, aerial shooting by skilled marksmen, mustering, baiting and trapping are more effective. On-ground shooting can often increase feral numbers by dispersing and making animals such as pigs more wary. To shoot an animal humanely requires a high level of skill. There are very limited areas of an animal's body that deliver a quick and relatively painless death. There are no guarantees that recreational shooters can do this. Furthermore, it is dangerous. The Leader of the Opposition has already recounted the story of the woman in New Zealand who was killed by a recreational shooter who mistook her for a deer. The member for Pittwater spoke about taking his children to national parks. I bet my bottom dollar that he will not take his children to a national park that amateur shooters are roaming through with guns.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Government members will come to order. I direct the member for Dubbo to remove himself from the Chamber until the member for Heffron concludes her speech.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 5.34 p.m.]

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: When I was the Premier of New South Wales the Shooters and Fishers came to see me to seek the same outcome that they are getting today: hunting in national parks under the guise of feral animal control. I would say that they were seeking the same outcome but in fact it was a slightly different proposal. The Shooters and Fishers asked for shooting in 60 national parks—and that number is important. What did I say when they came to see me? I said no.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Government members will come to order.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: When they came to me I gave an unequivocal and clear answer. I said I would not horse trade and I would not undercut the safety of our national parks. I stood on sound policy grounds and on my principles. But let us look at what has happened now. The Shooters and Fishers Party came to me and asked to shoot in 60 national parks; today they are getting 79 national parks. So not only is the Premier willing to do a dirty political deal but also he is a lousy negotiator. He is a terrible negotiator who has

given away more than what the Shooters and Fishers wanted. I say to members of this House that someone can be a Premier with principles or a Premier who makes hollow political promises. Someone can be a Premier who believes in something or a Premier who concedes anything. Someone can be a Premier who does what is right or a Premier who does what is expedient. Make no mistake, this bill is nothing other than an expedient, unprincipled, political deal struck by a Premier who will do or say anything that suits his political objectives. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Before the election I spoke a great deal about the propensity of the Liberal Party and The Nationals to take a leaf out of the Greiner playbook. That is, to have top-drawer policies to tell the electorate about and bottom-drawer policies to put into effect once in government. We all know that. That is what Nick Greiner said. That is his policy playbook and that is exactly what is happening today. We know that this is an expedient and unprincipled policy that has no sound basis. If this was the best thing to do for our national parks it would have been part of the Government's policies going to the election. Government members would have told the public about the merits of this policy and would have trumpeted from the hills what a great policy it was. If it is such a great idea to send amateur shooters into national parks, why did the Government not tell the people of New South Wales that it would do so? In fact, it said entirely the opposite and it ruled it out.

Furthermore, if it is such a great idea, why not introduce it in metropolitan parks? Let us have it in Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove and the Royal National Park. We know why the Government will not do that. There is one protected species that it does care about—the people of the North Shore. Therefore it would not want to have amateur shooters running around on the North Shore. Out of sight; out of mind. They will not be in Barry O'Farrell's backyard in Ku-ring-gai. Goodness no. New South Wales is about to turn amateur shooters loose in our national parks so that the Premier and the Treasurer can break two promises—one about the sale of electricity assets and the other about ripping out the rights of injured workers who risk their lives for the safety of the people of New South Wales. The people of New South Wales did not vote for that outcome. They did not vote for workers to have their rights ripped from them, they did not vote for their electricity assets to be sold, and they certainly did not vote for people to be able to shoot in national parks, thereby putting their family, their children and visitors at risk when they visit a national park in New South Wales.

But then again, the people of New South Wales did not vote for slower trains, increased waiting times in our hospitals and the lowest level of new housing construction starts since 1951, either. That is what the O'Farrell Government is doing to this State and to this economy. New South Wales has recorded the lowest number of housing starts since 1951 and the worst on-time running of public transport we have seen in years. Now we have a budget deficit. These are all promises the New South Wales Government kept in a bottom drawer and did not tell the people of New South Wales they would be getting, if they elected a Liberal-Nationals Government. The O'Farrell Government has racked up such an impressive record in its first 15 months—but, unfortunately, that impressive record is a very bad one. This bill should be opposed. Labor members oppose it. We always have, and we always will.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.41 p.m.]: The Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 seeks to make further provision with respect to the management and regulation of the hunting of game and for other purposes. I will comment on the extremely offensive comments of the Minister for the Environment regarding members whose electorates are in the metropolitan area of Sydney. She was offensive not only to Opposition members but also to Government members who represent metropolitan Sydney electorates. I suggest the Minister realise that, as Australians and as proud representatives in this great State, we travel and we enjoy the environmental wonders of this great State. National parks are used by many people, not just regional residents, but also city folk and our international visitors. I express my thanks on the record to the member for Murray-Darling for referring to the concrete jungle of the city. Basically he has relegated himself never to talk about city issues again. Premier O'Farrell again is going back on his word to the people of New South Wales by allowing shooting in national parks. I opposed all changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Act in 1974.

I call on the O'Farrell Government to uphold the principles that were established to conserve ecosystems, natural and cultural features and landscapes. The proposed changes not only will hurt our natural environment but also will not further the promotion of better public appreciation of our wilderness areas; nor does it promote sustainable visitor use and enjoyment due to the discharge of weapons and horseriding in wilderness areas. Labor can hold its head high when it comes to national parks. Our greatest achievement in 16 years of government was the declaration of two million hectares of new national parks. That created the country's best protected wilderness estate. It protected thousands of acres of coastal forests running from north to south from the escarpment to the sea. It created preservations, such as the Pilliga, which sits amid the cleared plains of western New South Wales as a beacon and refuge for nature. We also protected the mighty river red gums that stand tall because of our actions.

In contrast to that, the O'Farrell Government is providing hunters with a free ticket to roam public lands with an arsenal of deadly weapons. The Government is further destroying fragile land that our children will not be able to experience in the future. Even more disturbing is that the O'Farrell Government is ripping away the right of the children of New South Wales to have a safe and healthy backyard. The people of New South Wales no longer will have the opportunity to enjoy their national parks without being placed at a high level of risk. This legislation goes against the very essence of creating national parks. Opening up our natural heritage areas—more than 40 per cent of which comprises pristine natural habitats—to hunters with bows and shotguns, who will take pot shots at anything that moves, is diabolical. Many concerns have been expressed by the community in opposition to this bill. I cite correspondence I received from Mr Steven Woodhall, who is the Treasurer of the Protected Area Workers Association [PAWA] of New South Wales, which states:

PAWA strongly opposes the introduction of non professional hunters for the purpose of feral animal control in national park estates for a number of reasons.

These reasons include, that recreational hunting is ineffective in the control of feral animals on the species and landscape scale. Research has shown that ground based shooting is only effective in very small areas and on selected species, such as rabbits. It is not cost effective on the broad landscape scale and is in fact, ineffective for foxes, goats, pigs, dogs and deer.

According to the New South Wales Game Council's 2010-11 Annual report, 15, 080 licenses of all kinds were issued for hunting on public land. The same report identifies a total animal kill of 14,161. This equates to only 0.9 animals killed per hunting trip, which may last a whole day.

Safety to park visitors, staff and hunters are at risk. Experience in New Zealand unfortunately shows that since 1979, hunters injure and kill each other on average every 9 months.

Tragically, hunters have killed two innocent park visitors since 2010. One poor woman was shot while brushing her teeth having been 'mistaken for an animal' by the hunter.

The New South Wales national park system receives some 35 million visitors a year. Many of these visitors engaged in quiet, passive activities such as bushwalking, bird watching and photography, all of which makes them less visible to hunters and increasing the risk that hunters may mistake them for animals.

Other alternatives exist such as well designed and conducted landscape scale feral animal control programs are much more effective. Existing feral animal control programs conducted by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service such as baiting, trapping and in particular aerial culling are much more cost effective ways of reducing animal populations on the landscape scale required.

Using recreational hunters is not free labour to Government. Many may view the use of recreational hunters as free help, however this is not the case. The government currently allocates the New South Wales Game Council some \$3.5 million per annum from the state budget. When set up, it was envisaged that the game council would be self-funded by hunter's license and training fees. PAWA would argue that the \$3.5 million per annum would be better spent by land management agencies on coordinated large scale control programs as these would deliver much better feral animal control.

Baiting and poisoning is undoubtedly one of the best and most cost effective methods for controlling feral animal populations currently available. Such a policy to ban baiting would see an explosion of feral animal numbers on both public and private lands with consequent environmental degradation and economic impacts on farmers and graziers.

PAWA is totally opposed to the creation of Game Reserves for recreational hunting. This proposal would see the release of new introduced species into the landscape. Some of the species proposed for release are birds for which there are no practical methods for controlling their population growth.

This will lead to a whole new suite of pest species, which private land holders and government agencies will have to control in future years.

PAWA is fundamentally opposed to the listing of any native animal as a game species, whether it is on public or private land.

PAWA strongly believes that dogs should not be used to hunt pigs in nature conservation reserves. With the proposed use of recreational hunting in national parks, the government is yet to clearly define what practices will and won't be allowed. Dogs should not be allowed on national park estate as there is no effective control over what they chase, leaving native animals vulnerable to attack by small packs of dogs.

One of the proposed changes would allow children as young as 12 to undertake bow hunting without adult supervision.

That is absolutely crazy. He went on:

Hunting bows are lethal weapons and their use should therefore be controlled.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

The Government, as we all know, and it has been mentioned in the debate today, has clearly done the dud deal of the century. This Government has done the backroom deal with Guns and Moses to sell off, as has been

stated in this Chamber today, the State's electricity assets and workers compensation. What is most concerning is that this legislation signals the murder of our native fauna in the guise of feral animal eradication. However, simply opening up 79 national parks will not solve the feral animal problem. The Premier promised to protect our national parks from hunters, but now he is turning our protected conservation areas into hunting reserves. Barry O'Farrell stated on 13 April 2011:

We have no intention of doing deals with the minor parties, to sell out those plans.

Where are we today?

Mr Nick Lalich: He sold out, of course.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: He definitely sold out there. He went on to say:

There will not be a decision to turn our national parks into hunting reserves.

Here we are today—

Mr Nick Lalich: A backflip.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Yes, another backflip. The Olympics are coming up. He should be going to London and competing in the diving, but here we are, another backflip. Clearly the Premier has broken yet another promise. I oppose this bill.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [5.52 p.m.]: I will make a contribution to the bill that goes by the euphemistic title of the Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2012. At the outset, I state that I am not particularly fond of guns. I do not own a gun. I do not want to own a gun. I have little interest in shooting a gun. In fact, if there were fewer guns in our community, that would be a good thing. Having said that, I recognise there is a place for them in the reduction of feral animals. I also recognise the problem that feral animals pose in our national parks. I recognise the impact they have in our parks and reserves, as well as on our native fauna and flora. I recognise the risks they pose to our ecological diversity and protected species. I also recognise the adverse effects of feral animals on our farmers, both our livestock farmers and our grain and crop farmers.

However, it is my view and the view of tens of thousands of people across New South Wales that the answer to these problems does not involve allowing recreational hunters into national parks to shoot feral animals. I do not intend to disparage recreational shooters. There is a role and a place for them on private lands assisting our farmers with feral animals. On private property, it is less likely you will find innocent families picnicking or hiking and camping as they are wont to do in our national parks. This is the nub of the issue. National parks, by their definition, are parks. They are places of refuge for our fauna and flora. They are places of peace and tranquillity for nature lovers, picnickers, backpackers—except Belanglo—hikers and families. This use is incompatible with allowing in recreational shooters with guns and rifles to shoot at anything that moves. Let us consider the precautions that are in place and the safety measures that exist for rifle ranges and gun clubs. We understand how gun clubs work.

There are safety precautions, flags, cordoned off areas, strict rules about their use, warning signs and buzzers. People are in charge who make sure everything is conducted safely. These rules are appropriate because places with guns and shooting are dangerous. This is not just the view of the Labor Party or those who do not like shooting and hunting in national parks; this is the view of committed gun club members and recreational shooters. The Cudgegong Valley Hunting Club has criticised these laws, labelling the changes as "absolute madness". In an article in the *Mudgee Guardian* last week the club treasurer and Mudgee gun dealer, Jim Pirie, said:

It's not a case of if but when someone gets shot that it will come back to haunt the lot of us.

By its very name it's a park—a place for the public.

All you'll get is plenty of people showing up to protest on those days, so it's a no win situation.

He went on to say:

I've been involved in getting rid of rabbits, foxes and more over the years and just a few people roaming around a park with a gun isn't going to stop them.

It's got to be planned shooting or poisoning and trapping, otherwise whoever goes in there hunting them will just scatter them all over the place and make them harder to cull.

This is not the view of a member of this House, not the view of a member of the Labor Party. This is the view of a person who has spent considerable time hunting feral animals. It is also the view of a person active in a gun club. He also said:

At rifle ranges, you have to have a fence all around it, warning signage, the red flag up and someone managing the day, yet they're fine to let people go into public places wandering around shooting.

It doesn't make any sense to me, and I'm a gun nut.

Assuming the safety issues could be resolved—and, like thousands of voters in New South Wales, I am not convinced that can be done, but assuming you can wave a magic wand and make it completely safe—let us examine whether allowing shooting in national parks and reserves by recreational shooters would be effective. Research shows, and experts from the Minister's own department—the National Parks and Wildlife Service—say, that effective feral animal reduction requires coordinated and systematic planning and execution, and requires properly managing large areas with aerial shooting by professionals, combined with baiting and other established practices.

Recreational shooting as proposed in the bill is random, uncoordinated, imprecise and lacks the systematic approach required to be effective. So we know that this is not really about game and feral animal control. That has been made clear by the Premier and by all members speaking on this side. It is about workers compensation and electricity privatisation. As many members have highlighted in the debate, we are not debating the merits of game animal control, feral animals and shooting in national parks. We are here because of a deal that has been done, a deal admitted to by the Premier and a deal that he said he would never make, to allow shooting in national parks. That is a disgrace. That is a shame.

The Premier has allowed himself to be the pawn of a political party that secured just 0.6 per cent of the vote at the last election. Let me state once again that I recognise the issues and problems of feral animals in both our national parks and for farmers. I recognise the interests recreational shooters have in shooting animals on private farms and reserves and the role this plays in supporting farming families. But more importantly, I recognise that uncoordinated, sporadic, ground-based shooting by shooters not specifically trained in the eradication of feral animals is dangerous and should be prevented. This is a sop to the Shooters and Fishers Party and the bill should more correctly be called the "we will do anything to flog off electricity and rip workers entitlements away bill 2012".

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [5.58 p.m.]: Of course, I join my colleagues on this side of the House to oppose the Game and Feral Animal Amendment Bill 2012 absolutely. When you are a new member of Parliament starting to give speeches you are always told to start with the purpose of the bill. Let us get this straight: This bill is about getting electricity privatisation through Parliament. It is a hastily put together, poorly reconstructed bill that has absolutely nothing to do with feral animals and everything to do with doing deals. If this bill were truly dealing with feral animals—and there is no doubt we have an issue with feral animals—it goes nowhere near being anything like a solution. This bill should never be passed, but this Government is giving it a second chance. In 2009 it was rightly rejected by the previous Labor Government, which saw it for exactly what it was.

This bill seeks to allow recreational shooters access to national parks ostensibly to help control the feral animal problem in New South Wales. National Parks rangers, those who know more about national parks and feral animals than most, vehemently oppose this bill—that says it all. However, I will outline to the House some reasons for their opposition. Rangers know that this bill not only will not fix the feral animals issue, but also that there is good evidence to show that it may make the feral animal problem worse. The most recent Commonwealth Government figures show that Australia has around 7.2 million foxes, 2.6 million feral goats and around 23 million feral pigs. Effective feral control requires killing half the population each year in carefully targeted planned programs. Unless more feral animals die than can be replaced by migration or survival of those that would otherwise die, populations will not reduce. Furthermore, last night in the upper House Luke Foley pointed out:

Recreational shooting is not related to any coordinated program. It is random; it is ineffective. Often, too, hunters' priorities are not those of feral eradication. For example, recreational hunters prefer to shoot male deer so as to get their antlers as a trophy. Females are the reproductive sex so the removal of males has no impact on the birthrate in polygamous species such as deer and pigs. It has been documented that a small minority of rogue hunters move feral animals into areas to improve hunting prospects. I note an article entitled "Illegal Translocation and Genetic Structure of Feral Pigs in Western Australia" from the Journal of Wildlife Management. A small minority of rogues could not be effectively policed in the system that is proposed in the bill. That could make the feral animal problem worse as new gene pools strengthen populations. Skilled shooters say that on-ground shooting of feral animals is not an effective method of feral eradication. Depending on the animal, aerial shooting by skilled marksmen and mustering, baiting and trapping are more effective. On-ground shooting can sometimes increase feral numbers by dispersing and making animals such as pigs more wary.

Not only is on-ground shooting ineffective and inefficient, but the plan is not cost effective and is risky. Each animal killed by recreational hunters last year cost taxpayers around \$239 dollars—far more expensive than professionally run programs for feral eradication. Risks also are involved with regard to human injury. One does not expect to be shot in a national park, and nor should anyone. This brings me to the examination of what national parks are really about. National parks are an inspired idea that the Labor Party has much to be proud about when it comes to the establishment and extension of national parks in New South Wales and Australia. In 16 years of Government we added two million hectares of new national park from the Pilliga to the Blue Mountains.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has large areas of land set aside for their predominantly unspoilt landscapes, fauna and flora. They are permanently declared for public education and recreation, and are protected from interference, other than for essential management, so as to preserve their national state. A price cannot be put on beauty. These parks exist for public appreciation and inspiration of the natural world. They are not for the interference of special interest groups at the expense of others. They are too important for that. This bill goes against the whole ethos and philosophy around national parks. This bill is 30 pieces of silver for a Government doing a dodgy deal. I oppose this bill in no uncertain terms.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [6.03 p.m.]: I oppose the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. However, I commence on a positive note by saying that I am delighted we are discussing feral animals. This topic has not been much of a discussion point in this place, whether it has been about invasive species or feral animals. It seems the only reason we are discussing this matter is for the Government to justify its deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party. We all agree that the threats to our native flora and fauna are urgent and are growing. We Greens strongly advocate measures to encourage the eradication of feral animals and invasive plant species. Unfortunately, this bill fails to meet that test. No evidence has been presented to support the claims that uncoordinated voluntary ground shooting will make any appreciable difference to feral animal numbers.

To the contrary, the evidence is that hunting is not conservation and actually can be counterproductive. I shall address some matters specific to the bill regarding lack of control measures. It is important to note that this bill masquerades as an effort to manage feral animals, but is purely part of a deal the Government felt it had to make—at least the Premier has admitted as much, and let us not pretend it is anything else. It is important to examine the evidence. The Invasive Species Council of Australia is an organisation that works on invasive species affecting flora and fauna, and on 26 March 2009 published an important paper taking into account the body of literature referring to conservation hunting. This document outlines the issues clearly and states:

Of all conservation NGOs, the Invasive Species Council has the strongest potential reasons to support recreational hunting on public lands, for it campaigns for more effective control of feral animals. But the council opposes recent moves to open up state forests and national parks—

this is in 2009—

—to recreational hunters because evidence shows that recreational hunting usually does not provide effective feral animal control and creates a serious risk of worsening feral animal problems.

Not only does it not work, but it creates a risk of worsening feral animal populations. The paper provides detailed evidence on three points. First, that there is an abundance of scientific evidence that recreational hunting is not effective; secondly, it addresses the claim that recreational hunters offer free or low-cost service, which is not the fact; and thirdly, that the motivations of hunters are aligned to conservation and provide the most effective basis for conservation. I refer members to the research of each of these claims in reasoned detail highlighting that that is not the case, not because there are not good intentions or because a lot of shooters are not good people; rather, because the evidence demonstrates that it is not the case. The bill contains weak provisions that need to be addressed, which the Government has not done. After reading the amendments that were voted down in the other place, the weaknesses will become obvious.

For example, the bill proposes to allow Game Council inspectors to operate on National Parks and Wildlife Service land, but offers no specific powers of supervision to ensure the safety of members of the public or hunters. The National Parks and Wildlife Act has powers to regulate the public and for pest control. This power rests with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, not with Game Council representatives. However, the council seems to get things all its way. Basically, the Game Council is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Shooters and Fishers Party; its two chairmen are members of the upper House. The reason they are members of the upper House results from 10 years of subsidies through the Government's support to enable the shooters' council to use its two votes to support the appalling precedent of allowing amateur hunters in national parks. In

2002, when the Shooters and Fishers Party pushed hard for the establishment of that precedent in its deal with the then Labor Government and John Tingle, the proposal was introduced to try to promote the view that recreational hunting of feral animals was somehow valid and legitimate.

The evidence proves that that is not the case. Therefore, this bill should not proceed. The Game Council has no independent monitors, regulators or authorities; the shooters police themselves. We have seen an endless stream of publicly funded lobbying for the introduction of this fringe right-wing pro-gun law. Newspapers in my electorate published a picture of a member of the Shooters and Fishers Party, who at that time was the chairman of the Game Council, promoting gaming as a way to deal with feral animals using the council's resources, which are the resources of the New South Wales Government and taxpayers. In its first six years of operation, despite supposedly being self-funding, the Game Council sucked up \$9.4 million of public funding. That \$9.4 million came from redirected funding from professional feral animal control and management of our forests to fund this rabid State authority that runs its pro-hunting and pro-shooting propaganda.

That is the tax dollars of Barry O'Farrell's Government at work: supporting the functions of the recent program. There is not enough money for hospitals or transport, yet \$2.56 million will be spent this year on subsidising the Game Council. It is not an effective use of funds. That money could be spent on protecting native forests and eradicating feral animals. It is clear from the evidence that amateur recreational shooting is not an effective or humane method of feral animal control and cannot replace proper conservation pest control programs such as those implemented by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. To truly address pest populations requires an integrated plan that is controlled by field workers and rangers. Opportunistic, land-based recreational hunters cannot and will not be a substitute for specialised officers. There are serious concerns about the notification requirements in the bill. The bill does not include any requirements regarding the proposed closure of parks for shooting.

This will impact on tourism operators and bushwalkers. At the very least there should be a requirement for warning the public via publication in newspapers or notices, but that is not the case. I note the serious concerns of the national parks rangers and field officers and the representations received from the Public Service Association and the Australian Workers Union. To this end, the concerns of the Protected Area Workers Association of NSW are relevant. They are opposed to this bill. People have talked about proximity. The people who work in the national parks, not the members that represent the areas, do not support the bill. The reasons for their opposition have been raised and canvassed extensively in the upper House. I will mention some brief points about the concerns raised. On 30 May the Government announced 79 parks, nature reserves, State conservation areas and regional parks that would be eligible for hunting. The bill only specifies 48 parks, nature reserves, State conservation areas and regional parks where hunting will not be allowed.

There are 799 parks, nature reserves, State conservation areas and regional parks in New South Wales. The bill specifies 48 parks, nature reserves, State conservation areas and regional parks. That means that 751 parks, nature reserves, State conservation areas and regional parks are now eligible for hunting. The Government has opened the crack in the door and the Shooters and Fishers Party will be driving a truck through it and demanding more concessions. The Government capitulated so easily on the workers compensation issue. The Government in the upper House was not prepared to accept various control measures that The Greens and other members moved that would protect public safety.

The Government would not accept a requirement that the Minister has to be satisfied that recreational shooting will be of benefit to the national parks and wildlife pest eradication program. It would not accept a review after three years and was not prepared for the legislation to allow hunting only in the 79 parks, nature reserves, State conservation areas and regional parks listed in their initial announcement. That says it all. The provisions will be extended to more areas. This bill should not proceed. The evidence indicates that it should not proceed and the facts make it clear that it will fail in its aim to deal with feral animals. This bill allows the Government to privatise power and strip away the conditions that workers currently enjoy under the existing workers compensation arrangements. The bill should be opposed.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [6.13 p.m.]: I will speak against the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I condemn the deal that has been done by Barry O'Fibber—that is what he is, a fibber—and the Shooters and Fishers Party. It is a travesty and a disgrace. It has come at the cost of selling electricity and ripping away precious protections from workers compensation. This bill cuts to the core philosophy and ethos of our national parks. Labor is a party that supports national parks, and that will never change. We are a party that respects our country's wilderness estate. Over the past 16 years a Labor Government

has preserved and been the custodian of coastal forests north and south running from the escarpment to the sea. Unbelievably, it has now been signed away by this Government. The members opposite should understand that our national parks are sacred.

National parks have multiple uses and they should remain as a quiet and peaceful place for us and future generations to enjoy in safety. That is not going to happen. We heard tonight during the debate about a lady in New Zealand who was killed in a forest while brushing her teeth. She had been mistaken for a deer. One can only imagine how that woman's family and the shooter felt. It is only a matter of time before a similar tragedy happens here. It will happen. Our national parks are being opened up as shooting galleries—nothing more, nothing less. No-one will want to take their family to a national park.

Guns have no place in our national parks and for Barry O'Farrell to do a deal involving the State's national parks is unthinkable and stupid. The guns of the Shooters and Fishers Party have been held to the head of Barry O'Farrell and he has caved in. Labor rejects hunting in national parks: it is wrong, ineffective, expensive, dangerous and just plain stupid. Labor rejects allowing shooting in national parks because it is fundamentally wrong. National parks are about nature, animals, plants and recreation. As I said before, who is going to take their family to a national park and risk being mistaken for an animal and shot? The Labor Party rejects the bill because it is ineffective, expensive and dangerous. The infestation of feral animals across the State is a huge problem that every parliamentarian must continue to track and attempt to solve.

Along with habitat loss, feral animals are the greatest threat to Australia's biodiversity. The management of this problem requires huge funds and a dedicated public policy. That has not been forthcoming. Such a policy is lacking, and that will be noticed. By handing the keys to our national parks to recreational shooters the problem is going to get bigger. The Government could not care less. Imagine going to a national park with your family only to see shooters trotting down the track with guns over their shoulders. Even the sound of the guns will be enough to frighten away people who use our national parks. It is a disgrace. The Game Council claims that hunters offer a free or cost-effective hunting service for the benefit of the public. It is not effective and, therefore, recreational hunting cannot be cost effective. It is far from free. From 2003 to 2011, \$14.5 million of public funding has been granted to the Game Council. From 2007 to 2011 the cost to the public is on average \$264 per animal killed on public lands. Substantial outcomes for conservation could have been achieved with that money.

The \$2.5 million granted last year could have paid for effective fox control over a substantial area in State forests. National parks in New South Wales will be open to recreational hunters; that is a fact of life. That is due to a dirty deal done with the Shooters and Fishers Party by Barry O'Fibber—I mean Barry O'Farrell—to ensure the passage of the Electricity Generator Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2012 and the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill and Safety, Return to Work and Support Board Bill. This decision represents a significant backdown by a Premier who has repeatedly ruled out allowing shooting in national parks. It is another broken promise, it is another backflip and it is another lie. The people of New South Wales will remember this. They will remember Barry O'Farrell for this dirty deal, for the workers compensation bill and the public sector stitch up. The Premier will be known as Barry O'Fibber because that is what he is. Our national parks are recognised as icons in the protection of flora and fauna.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: Point of order: The language of the member is unparliamentary in the extreme. I ask the member to withdraw that nasty turn of phrase used in relation to the Premier.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Shellharbour to curb her language and withdraw the remark.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I withdraw, and I will curb my language. Our national parks are recognised as icons in the protection of our flora and fauna. To add insult, it is frightening that the environment Minister, the member for Maitland, is in charge of part of this process. She said at a budget estimates hearing that logging would protect our koalas. The mind boggles. Recreational hunters are a risk to the safety of not only domestic and overseas visitors but also the staff who work in national parks. Given the workers compensation legislation amendments going through this Parliament now, those who work in our national parks will be at even greater risk of security. I condemn the O'Farrell Government for what it has done. I predict this will tighten the noose around the necks of those opposite.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Before I call the next member, I remind members that they should refer to each other by their electorates or official titles. If members do not do so, action will be taken against them.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [6.20 p.m.]: The Game and Feral Animal Control Bill 2012 is already being referred to as the shooters' bill. That is because this is not a piece of legislation; this is an invoice. Bills are invoices, and this is an invoice from the Shooters and Fishers for services to be rendered. The bill is not about national parks; it is about electricity privatisation—the elephant in the room. I use the term advisedly given the speech delivered by the member for Toongabbie about the senseless killing for pleasure of an elephant, far from the inner-west Sydney home of the shooter. That is what this bill is about. These are the people who are telling the residents of New South Wales that this dangerous practice is safe. The Premier said:

We have no intention of doing deals with the minor parties, to sell out those plans. There will not be a decision to turn our national parks into hunting reserves.

We have heard all this Orwellian rubbish about the difference between hunting and feral animal control. It is precisely that, rubbish. Those opposite know that and their electorates know that. The previous Government refused to deal with this bill for very good reasons. This bill should never have seen the light of day. It is bad policy; it legalises a practice that is inherently dangerous and it does not have community support. Despite the jeering, catcalls and meaningless hubris of those opposite, they know that. This legislation would not win a conscience vote in the party rooms of those opposite. I know that because none of them mentioned this prior to the election, and few of them will speak in favour of the bill. This bill would lose a conscience vote in the party room of the government of the day, yet this Government is still going ahead with it because it is all about 30 pieces of silver. Minister Robyn Parker said the opposite on 2 August 2011:

How predictable. The policy of the New South Wales Government is clear: hunting in national parks is not permitted. I say that very slowly for the slow learner on the Opposition backbench.

Parks receive over 35 million visits per year and we provide, among other things, facilities for visitors to our State. I advise the member opposite that shooting is not compatible with visitations to our national parks.

I note that the Minister used the word "shooting"—not hunting, not feral animal control, but shooting, because that is what this bill is all about. And shooting is inherently dangerous. I quote further from the Minister:

The member has wasted yet another question. For the benefit of those opposite I repeat that the policy of the New South Wales Government is clear: Hunting in national parks is not and will not be permitted.

I was there on that day, and I watched the Minister speak today. All of us can read body language. I can tell members that the Minister clearly believed on 2 August that that policy was correct. In her speech today—which, when read in Hansard, will not reflect her body language—it was obvious to everybody watching that the Minister clearly did not believe what she was saying. She knows that this is dodgy policy should never have seen the light of day, and that it would never have seen the light of day if the numbers in the Legislative Council were not what they are. This is a dirty deal run through with unseemly haste at the point of a gun. The Shooters and Fishers are holding the Government at gunpoint, and they are not afraid to use the gun. This Government has caved in. It will adopt a policy that it did not campaign on, that is inherently dangerous, and inevitably will result in deaths. You cannot have 35 million visitors and a bunch of guns and not expect someone to be killed. It is just a matter of time. That is simple mathematics. I quote from the speech made by the Hon. Duncan Gay last night:

The word pathetic comes to mind, but I will resist using it.

That was in a different context, but I will not resist using it. This bill is pathetic. As Winston Churchill said:

The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it and ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.

The bill before the House is all about electricity. That is the truth, Government members know it to be the truth, and the electorate will tell them it is the truth. I would like to give the House the definition of "wilful blindness". I note the presence in the Chamber of a number of lawyers: the member for Cronulla, the member for Coogee, the member for Orange and the member for Wakehurst. They know about wilful blindness because it is an important legal principle. For the non-lawyers among us I will read the definition into *Hansard*: knowledge that you could have had, should have had, and chose not to have. It means you are still responsible. How anybody could think that letting a bunch of people with guns into national parks will not result in serious injury or death is a clear case of wilful blindness.

Guns are inherently dangerous. Even professionals cause death through the use of guns. That is how the phrase "friendly fire" was coined in the first place. Another principle of law is "primum non nocere", which is

Latin for "first do no harm". If we maintain the status quo, we will first do no harm. This bill is being rushed through without any consultation with the community and without any objective, disinterested view as to whether it is good policy. This is all about electricity. Not all shooters are safe with guns. Despite the reassurances of the Shooters and Fishers, every member in this place knows that shooting in national parks is not safe and that people will be seriously injured or killed. Rosemary Ives was killed in New Zealand by shooters who were illegally spotlighting and shot her from 20 metres away. This sort of accident is inevitable. It is merely a matter of time. I move on to the specifics of the bill. This legislation is:

An Act to amend the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 to make further provision with respect to the management and regulation of the hunting of game; and for other purposes.

The "other purposes" are poorly defined. Effectively, they are a blank cheque for the Shooters and Fishers to do as they deem fit. For example, proposed section 5 (2) provides:

The Minister may, by order published in the NSW legislation website, amend Schedule 3:

- (a) by adding the name or description of any animal (other than an animal of a species that was native to Australia before European settlement), or
- (b) by omitting or amending any such name or description.

That enables the Minister to order duck season whenever the Minister wishes to do so. I want to hear from the Minister in her reply that any attempt to reinstitute duck season will require further legislation.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: Are ducks on the list?

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: The Minister says ducks are not the list, but they can be at any time, and I want to hear that the only way the duck season can start is for new legislation to be introduced. Currently, there is nothing to stop this Government from caving in yet again to the next Shooters and Fishers invoice and that will be duck season. Section 6A (2) states:

For the purposes of subsection (1) (a), an *activity associated with hunting* includes carrying a firearm or other hunting device.

That means people can be allowed to carry guns by just saying they are going hunting. That is inherently dangerous. It is dreadful law. I am not a lawyer but the lawyers here also know that. They are studiously ignoring every word I say because they know that this is dodgy law. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Section 13A, which relates to delegation, states:

The Game Council may delegate to the chief executive officer of the Game Council the exercise of any of its functions other than this power of delegation.

This gives a blank cheque to the Game Council to do whatever it likes. As the Hon. Robert Borsak from the Shooters and Fishers Party said, the Minister has absolute discretion as to how and when hunting occurs. The Minister has absolute discretion, and there is nothing to stop the Shooters and Fishers from sending another invoice for services rendered for another bit of legislation and we will have duck season. There is nothing specific as to which parks will be available. The Hon. Robert Borsak said to Richard Glover, "Do you look like a sambar deer?" Accidents are surely a matter of time. Hunting is inherently dangerous. That was proved when the American Vice President was shot on a hunting trip, albeit on a private reserve. If there are a lot of shooters in national parks there will be injuries and deaths—maybe among the shooters themselves. Last night the Hon. Luke Foley said:

... we do assert, unapologetically, that there needs to be a balance, and we say that our national park estate is not a place where shooters should be allowed access.

This bill will not work. It will not control the feral animal problem in New South Wales; it will make it worse because it will stop the deconcentration. It will not be an effective form of feral animal control. Feral animal control requires the culling of large numbers of animals in a short period over a large area. This is not a coordinated program; it is random, ineffective and expensive, costing a total of about \$250 for every feral animal killed. Hunters' priorities are not feral eradication. Recreational hunters prefer to shoot male deer to get their antlers as a trophy. Those of us who have been in the Shooters and Fishers party room have seen all the animal trophies there. What the Shooters and Fishers need is a bust of the Premier's head because that is the trophy they got this time. On-the-ground shooting is dangerous. This is ineffective legislation and will certainly

cause death and serious injuries to innocent people. This bill is all about electricity. It contains bad policy and it would never win a conscience vote in the party rooms. It is extremely unpopular in the electorate and this Government will be judged by its actions over time.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [6.33 p.m.]: I speak on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012. I say from the outset that my contribution to this debate may differ significantly from the contributions made by other members of my party because I present as a member of a regional community. I support the eradication of feral animals in our national parks. We need to preserve our national parks, and I do not believe that our national parks can possibly be deemed to be preserved if we allow the proliferation of these insidious pests. The question before the House today is: Does this bill achieve that end? I must say no to that. Shooting in national parks may indeed form part of the arsenal we need to address the situation but it is not a panacea. This is not a tick the box and move on approach, as some members opposite have said today.

I note that it has been primarily members of The Nationals who have presented here today as fodder for the cannons. Undoubtedly, with their pride hurt by the ammunition bill, their absence of a vote on it and their leaving all the heavy lifting to The Nationals in the upper House, any talk of guns and ammunition and shooting right now would definitely be in the domain of our Nationals characters across the Chamber—and today the fodder has turned up. I refer to that great movie called *Gallipoli*. There is a scene in the movie where a whistle is blown and the guys go up over the trenches and then got mowed down. I liken that scene to this bill today. The Premier is sitting somewhere safe, warm and cosy. He is the one who has done the deal, but he sends the fodder down to the Chamber with their ill-informed contributions.

This is a bill to amend the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 to make further provisions with respect to the management and regulation of the hunting of game, and for other purposes. In speaking to this bill I say from the outset that the Shooters and Fishers have stayed their course for almost a decade now. They have never waned or waived from what they wanted from government. One of the reasons that they were established as a shooters party was to represent shooters, and the shooting and fishing communities across New South Wales. The Shooters and Fishers find themselves in this Fifty-fifth Parliament with the balance of power in the upper House. The privatisation of electricity landed in their laps. In a deal to get that through they sent their shopping list off to the Coalition Government. The Premier spoke tough about not doing deals and about not allowing hunting in national parks.

For three months the privatisation of electricity bill sat in the Premier's office with the shopping list from the Shooters and Fishers, and the week before the budget the deal is done. It is not a coincidence; it is a fact. If a government goes into a budget needing \$3 billion and it needs to privatise electricity, then it needs to fill the shopping trolley. That is what has happened here. Imagine the Treasurer walking into this Chamber with a budget deficit of \$3.8 billion instead of \$800 million. Even though they still had a deficit, I do not think anybody would accept that—not even those opposite. It is vital to put this bill into context and explain how we got to this point today. I refer to the joint media release of the Premier and the Deputy Premier on 30 May 2012, which stated:

That is what this Bill is about. It is not about reducing feral animals in our National Park estate, it is about securing the passage of Legislation to privatise the State's electricity generators.

So the context of this bill is around the privatisation of electricity generators. Hence, my concerns about this bill being the solution to feral animals in our national parks, State forests, reserves and World Heritage listed areas. The Coalition has accepted what was put before us in the absence of the ability to negotiate or debate because they were well and truly over a barrel. There are possible options, but what we have in front of us is not the best possible outcome. This bill was not brought to this House by a philosophically, widely touted or warmly embraced position of the Coalition. This is one to which they have been dragged kicking and screaming and the fodder has been sent in to proclaim its virtues.

Public trust in the Premier must be at an all time low. Let us think about some of the commitments he took to the people before the election in 2011 and from which he has now stepped away. He said they had no intention of doing deals with the minor parties; no decision would be made to turn our national parks into hunting reserves; he would not sell electricity generators, poles or wires; he had no plans to privatise Port Botany or Port Kembla; we needed more public sector workers, not fewer; and the north-west rail line would run into the central business district.

Mr Tim Owen: Clayton, get real.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: That is the list. As politicians we get to trade in one currency—the currency of trust. This bill again highlights that trust argument. In this bill we are being asked to trust a Premier who told all of New South Wales that hunting would not be permitted in national parks, yet we are now debating this bill. We are asked to trust the Minister for the Environment to implement the bill, and trust that it will happen in an environment that is so controlled that nothing can go wrong when in reality sometimes things do go wrong. Sometimes shooters die by their own hand. They die as a result of mistakes, errors and accidents but things do go wrong. I am very comfortable around guns. I am comfortable with my friends who have guns and I am comfortable when I go away shooting.

Those things are not a drama, but accidents do happen. We do not need to have more accidents in our national parks. National parks should be preserved from shooting—if we are not going to get it just right, and this bill does not get it just right. Anyone who is not convinced about the importance of trust should look at members on this side of the Chamber to see what happens when the public's trust is broken. This might come as a newsflash to some, but those who have been paying attention would be aware of the comments that have been made in this Chamber over the past few weeks to which we must pay attention when considering this bill. On 30 May the Premier said:

The shooting of feral animals will not be permitted in or near metropolitan areas, or in any wilderness areas or World Heritage areas such as the Blue Mountains National Park.

Thirty seconds later he said:

We need to engage in the management tool that has been used in this State for decades, and that has been used in metropolitan and other parks for decades, that involves the use of culling by shooting to control feral animals.

In one statement he says that shooting of feral animals will not be permitted in metropolitan areas and two sentences later he justifies the use of a management tool because of its success in metropolitan areas. I am not sure where the Premier stands on this issue. It seems as though he is doing a doe-c-doe with himself. In his response to the same question he said:

This is about expanding the important management tool of culling feral animals from our national parks because of the damage they do to habitat and native flora and fauna. It is also important because of the damage feral animals do beyond the borders of our national parks.

Imagine my confusion. The Premier said we have to protect the habitat and flora and fauna in our national parks, but only if those parks are not in metropolitan areas. The Premier said we have to do it just as it has always been done in metropolitan areas but that we would not do that now. The metropolitan areas either do not have flora, fauna and habitats worthy of protection or there are massive inconsistencies in this response from the Premier. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

On 30 May we heard also from the Minister for the Environment. In fact, the very next question was directed to her. During her response she supported the Premier when she said:

Feral pests and animals are a huge problem. There is no doubt that biodiversity is threatened by feral pests in our national park system.

I am increasingly confused by the concept that feral animals cause damage and do not cause damage. I am happy to accept that they cause damage because I believe that to be true. If they cause damage they must damage all national parks and not only those outside metropolitan areas. So both the Premier and the Minister for the Environment agree that feral pests and animals threaten the biodiversity of our national parks by damaging habitat and native flora and fauna. The next day, on 31 May, the Premier went further in his explanation of why this legislation was necessary when he noted:

That is particularly important this year given the great season we have had. All that rain and sunshine has thankfully caused an explosion in crops for farmers across the State, but it also has caused an unfortunate explosion in feral pest and animal populations within national parks.

I am confused also when I ponder on whether those weather conditions were experienced only in regional areas or whether they were experienced also in metropolitan areas. If there was an explosion of animals away from metropolitan areas does it not follow that there was an explosion of animals in and around the metropolitan areas? If that is the logic—and I believe that it is—in a parallel universe this legislation would apply equally and evenly to all areas. I say to Government members that if their logic is to protect biodiversity, natural habitat and flora and fauna, surely they would want to apply that first and foremost to our most precious and pristine

areas—world heritage parks. If that logic is to be applied it should be applied widely across the State. It should be applied first and foremost to the areas that we want to preserve the most. It should be applied to isolated and busy parks in the city and in the country. The Premier likened shooting in national parks, State forests and reserves to the act of back-burning. I have news for the Premier. Back-burning can be seen and it can be smelled. It moves slowly.

Normally men and women in bright orange are being loud and obvious and there are bright red trucks and wagons with flashing lights. On looking through this bill I cannot find a section that identifies the need for loud noise, flashing lights, bright clothing and large groups of people. If we are to make such a comparison let us put those provisions in the bill and ensure that they are applied to all shooters who enter our national parks. The back-burning analogy clearly is ridiculous and one that the general public will not swallow. It is another insult in a raft of insults from the Premier. Comparing back-burning to shooting in national parks is like comparing a crying child in a cot to a child drowning underwater. One is loud and obvious; the other is silent and deadly. It is clear in this bill that this activity will be administered under the supervision of the Minister for the Environment. The Minister for the Environment said on 30 May 2012, "The Government has made its position clear previously." She is right. On that day, in answer to a question from the member for Keira, the Minister said:

I say that very slowly for the slow learner on the Opposition backbench. Parks receive over 35 million visits per year and we provide among other things facilities for visitors to our State, and I advise the member opposite that shooting is not compatible with visitations to our national parks. The member has wasted yet another question. For the benefit of those opposite I repeat that the policy of the New South Wales Government is clear: Hunting in national parks is not and will not be permitted.

Again the Government asks us to trust it. It says that we must trust that Minister. During debate last night in the other place the Hon. Penny Sharpe read onto the record the response to this bill as noted by John Jeayes in the *Macleay Argus*, which is a nice summary of the issues. Mr Jeayes said:

Before the last election Barry O'Farrell told me at Port Macquarie that politicians in electoral mode will tell you what you want to hear; the trick is to get it in writing. Apparently that doesn't work either.

The Premier said his party had absolutely no plans to privatise the poles and wires, do deals with minor parties or allow hunting in national parks. The final words quoted by members of the Government on this matter should belong to the Premier. God forbid, it also happens successfully in New Zealand—a place where people get shot in national parks. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [6.48 p.m.]: My contribution to debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 will be brief. I observed with interest the contributions made by Opposition members, particularly the member for Macquarie Fields. He went through the legal dictionary and began quoting legal terms to explain the behaviour of Government members. That led me to confer with the learned member for Cronulla, Mr Mark Speakman, SC, in an attempt to come up with an explanation for the erratic policy behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition and some of the crazy and erratic policy positions he has adopted in recent times.

At first we thought it may be temporary insanity. We thought about the Leader of the Opposition being against privatisation of any type but then privatising the Parklea Correctional Centre. That was the first indication. Then he was against privatisation, yet he sat in Cabinet when the midnight power deal was struck. After a while the member for Cronulla and I realised that temporary insanity was not appropriate because the flip-flopping of policy positions had been going on for so long, so we settled on insanity per se. The funny thing is that it is not volunteer feral pest eradicators that the Leader of the Opposition has to worry about. It is not the volunteer feral pest eradicators who stalk the Leader of the Opposition. It is not people in national parks he has to worry about. He has to worry about something else that is stalking him.

Mr John Sidoti: The Penrith Panther?

Mr ANDREW GEE: It is not the Penrith Panther. It is the Toongabbie Tiger. That is what is stalking the Leader of the Opposition. He is out there in the long grass.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: Mr Acting-Speaker, earlier you went to great lengths to ensure that every member of this House referred to members by their correct title. I tried to acknowledge your ruling and do the right thing when I spoke. I ask that you direct the member for Orange to refer to members by their correct title.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Although the member for Orange is referring to the member by his correct title of "Toongabbie", he did not refer to him as "the member for Toongabbie". The member for Orange will refrain from using a member's incorrect title and refer to members by their correct title.

Mr ANDREW GEE: Mr Acting-Speaker, you make a salient point. From now on, any reference I make to Toongabbie Tiger will be to a generic Toongabbie Tiger. With each policy atrocity committed by the Leader of the Opposition, the generic tiger grows stronger. He is out there in the long grass, and he is waiting. I noted with interest the contribution to debate made by The Greens member of this House.

Mr John Sidoti: The Balmain Bandicoot.

Mr ANDREW GEE: A generic bandicoot has just been mentioned. It is relevant to mention him in the context of this debate because it was only in recent times that The Greens went on their healing tour of the Central West. We all remember very well the incense, the *Kumbaya* CDs, and the convoy of Priuses that travelled out west. They were out in the foothills of Mount Canobolas where volunteer pest eradication will occur. The Greens leader was out there, but the problem of the healing tour was that they visited orchards and began talking to the orchardists.

[Interruption]

We will deal with fruit bats. The Minister for Primary Industries makes a very valid point. Suddenly the orchardists chirped up and said, "What about the carbon tax on our cool stores? What is going to happen?" The leader of The Greens, Senator Milne, said, "We paid a lot of attention to food processors, but not enough to food producers, and that is something that I am prepared to look at as we review the carbon pricing scheme." It is almost July. Where are the breaks? Where is the assistance for orchardists? It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition has fallen into line with The Greens—Labor's mates, their controllers from Canberra. Now they all support the carbon tax. It took a while, but they all support the carbon tax.

Mr Clayton Barr: We are not friends with The Greens, all right?

Mr ANDREW GEE: The Leader of the Opposition and The Greens, hand in glove—that is what it is all about. At that rate it will not be long before we see the Leader of the Opposition in some Roman sandals in the House. The Toongabbie Tiger stalks him still. Even now the Toongabbie Tiger stalks. He is out there in the long grass and every day he grows stronger. With every new policy atrocity committed by the Leader of the Opposition, every policy backflip and every policy flim-flam, the Toongabbie Tiger grows stronger. Opposition members fail to appreciate the damage that feral pests do every year to primary production in this State. In Labor's rush to form an unholy alliance with The Greens, it has overlooked that the estimated annual economic loss to New South Wales agricultural industries is almost \$70 million. Opposition members know that, and that is what they have ignored during this debate.

For the purposes of the Act, a game animal does not include any animal that is, or is part of, a threatened species. The legislation will be very tightly controlled. It will not be a free-for-all and it will have beneficial effects. In 2011-12 licensed hunters recorded the removal of more than 720,000 animals from private land and more than 15,000 from public land. That included more than 16,000 deer, 116,000 pigs and 400,000 rabbits. This outcome contributes significantly to the management of game and feral animal populations in key target areas. I conclude my remarks by pointing out that if Labor members really want to help the farmers, they should not form an unholy alliance with The Greens and go on the *Kumbaya* tours. Labor members should have nothing to do with that. Instead, they should take practical measures that will help primary producers across this great State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [6.57 p.m.]: My contribution to debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 will be brief. Firstly, I acknowledge the rationale for this bill. It is not about the control of feral animals. That is part of the Premier's messaging. If there is one thing the Premier is very good at, it is politics—but not much else. He is good at controlling the message. The Government does a deal with the Shooters. It is about electricity. It is about a deal to get the electricity sale through. It is a deal about getting horrendous and unconscionable workers compensation bills passed by Parliament. The pay-off is that this bill delivers to the Shooters what they have been after for almost a decade. This bill is what the Shooters and Fishers Party asked Labor for many times. They were resisted at every turn. When they came to see me about it when I was the Minister for Police, I told them I would have none of it.

I do not blame the Shooters at all. This is what they do—they shoot things. I have to say that I do not get it, but I can see the entertainment value in a legitimate pursuit such as target shooting. I have no issue at all with the control of feral animals by professional shooters who efficiently and humanely remove feral animals from our countryside. It must be acknowledged that feral animals do enormous damage to the Australian native landscape and to native flora and fauna. But that is not what this bill is about. This bill is simply about allowing recreational shooters in national parks. The members of the Shooters and Fishers Party are trying to deliver something for their constituency. That is what they are all about. This bill now punctuates the second O'Farrell tragedy when it comes to the privatisation of electricity generators. The first tragedy was punctuated in 2008 when a couple of cognate bills went to the other place to provide for the sale of electricity generators when they were worth about \$15 billion, and for blatant political reasons the then Leader of the Opposition decided they would not be granted passage through the Parliament and that was the end of it.

That purely political decision probably cost this State about \$5 billion to \$10 billion net. A second tragedy relating to the sale of electricity generators will be punctuated this evening, in about four minutes time, when this bill, as unfortunate as it is in many respects, passes through this Parliament as a payoff for the sale of electricity generators. A little after that, one of the great and enduring tragedies that will wreak misery on a great many people for a long time will be wrought on the working people in this State when the amendments to the workers compensation legislation that is currently being debated in the other place come back to the Legislative Assembly and the curtain will fall on fairness to injured people. That will be a sorry day indeed. This bill is wrong in principle. National parks should be places of sanctuary for people and for animals. They will no longer be places of sanctuary, or at least not the ones where shooting will be allowed. They will no longer be able to be described as sanctuaries. That is not the most effective way to control feral animals—certainly not humanely.

A gut-shot deer walking around for a couple of days before it bleeds to death or dies from infection is not something anybody would condone. But that is what will happen to some of those larger animals that are shot by people who do not have the skills or who do not have the proper firearms. There is no way to legislate against that sort of activity. That very rarely happens when a professional shooter is involved. It is impossible for anybody to argue that allowing shooters into national parks is not attended by some danger. In schedule 3A to the bill there is a list of national parks and nature reserves that cannot be declared as public hunting land. The one thing all of them have in common is that they are the more heavily frequented national parks. Therefore there are more people wandering about in them and the danger increases. It is not just the number of people in national parks that leads to danger; it is the activities that some people carry on in national parks that put them at risk.

I like to visit national parks with my family and young kids as we go bushwalking and things like that. A few years ago I went bushwalking by myself for half a day in the national park near Dorriggo and Bellingen. It was terrific. It was quiet and nobody else was around. I could sit there and enjoy the peace and quiet. I would now be placed at risk in some national parks if I did that when they were being used at the same time for shooting. Some of the ammunition used for hunting is extremely powerful. Some of the larger calibre weapons have stopping distances that exceed 1,500 metres. Anyone shooting in a national park would not be able to guarantee that there was no-one beyond that 1,500 metres. There might be a birdwatcher in a hideout dressed in camouflage that blended in with the surrounding countryside. With an effective stopping distance in excess of 1,500 metres there is a risk of someone getting hurt. It might be a small risk, nevertheless it is a risk. Some of these national parks are vast.

I have not done so for some time but sometimes I go horse riding in Kosciuszko National Park at a ranch called Reynella. The beauty of that national park is astounding and it is vast. There are terrific plains for riding horses. If people are shooting in that park their bullets might travel for a vast distance, which poses a small but present danger and risk against which it is almost impossible to mitigate. Putting up a couple of signs would not mitigate any risk and the area is too large and impossible to fence. Rangers cannot wander around the park warning users because they would never know where they were or from which direction they were coming. Experience in New Zealand has shown that these sorts of risks are very real. I oppose this bill. I have one national park in my electorate—Kamay Botany Bay National Park—which thankfully is contained in schedule 3A. Soon I will have another national park. I conclude on a point that I would not have mentioned but for the fact that the member for Balmain made a few points with which I do not agree.

A no-hunting in our national parks website has been established to which 13 environmental groups have signed up. Those groups are: the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, the Humane Society, the National Parks Australia Council, the Total Environment Centre, Wild Walks, Step Inc, Central West Environmental Council, Bushwalkers NSW, Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc., the Colong Foundation

for Wilderness, the National Parks Association of New South Wales, the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales and the Wilderness Society. At the next election campaign it would be in the interests of these groups to band together and to run a third-party campaign against those who supported the bill tonight. Alas, the actions of people like Mr David Shoebridge and his ilk in the other place have ensured they will no longer be able to do that; it will be against the law. Is this not the case of providence coming back to visit them? I oppose this bill.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [7.07 p.m.], in reply: I thank those members who made excellent contributions to debate on the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill—the members representing the electorates of Dubbo, Tamworth, Maitland, Myall Lakes, Charlestown, Pittwater, Bega, Orange and Murray-Darling. I thank also the members representing the electorates of Marrickville, Sydney, Canterbury, Lakemba, Cabramatta, Toongabbie, Mount Druitt, Lake Macquarie, Keira, Bathurst, Blacktown, Heffron, Fairfield, Auburn, Balmain, Shellharbour, Macquarie Fields, Cessnock and Maroubra. It was a lengthy and considered debate.

The purpose of the bill is to protect and improve wildlife and habitat by providing further opportunities to manage pest animal species effectively and efficiently. It is well known that pests also affect regional communities and rural businesses by seriously impacting on farming practices. The Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 has as its object the effective management of introduced species of game animals. However, its scope does not extend to the national park estate where such animals are also serious pests. The New South Wales Government is now extending existing feral animal eradication programs into national parks to reduce the overall numbers of these pests. Culling of feral animals by shooting is already an option available to the National Parks and Wildlife Service in managing parks and reserves.

Last year more than 24,000 feral animals, including pigs, dogs, cats and goats were removed through pest management programs from the national park estate. The Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 amends the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 by changing the definition of "public land" to include national park estate land. However, the bill puts limits on national park estate lands that can be declared for feral animal control by shooting, and limits this shooting to non-native, non-indigenous animals. Land that cannot be declared as land for feral animal control by shooting includes wilderness areas, world heritage properties and national park estate lands that are generally in or adjacent to metropolitan areas.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members will keep their conversations to a minimum. Hansard is having difficulty hearing the Minister.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: The Government has announced 79 rural and regional parks and reserves out of 799 identified for assessment to permit volunteer feral pest control. This is subject to the development of appropriate management and access requirements to be approved by the Minister for the Environment. The assistance of volunteers will be permitted only with the appropriate compliance and controls in place. Importantly, this will include appropriate safety measures and only persons who are appropriately qualified and licensed will be permitted to help remove feral animals from our national parks. Section 5 of the Act, has been amended so that non-indigenous game animals are now specified in a schedule to the Act. This schedule can be amended by ministerial order. Species that were native to Australia prior to European settlement cannot be added to this list. The bill also makes amendments to strengthen offence provisions and to deal with a number of miscellaneous issues relating to administration of the Act, including membership and functioning of the Game Council, various matters relating to licensing of game hunters and matters relating to taxidermists.

The bill proposes to amend the Rural Lands Protection Act 1998 and make consequential amendments to the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2004. Several members raised matters of concern and other matters with which they agreed. I shall speak briefly to the broad range of issues raised. Several members spoke about safety on lands that may be declared as available for volunteer hunting. I remind members that hunting occurs regularly on declared New South Wales land, such as Forest estate. Similar checks and balances to promote the safety of all users will be implemented before any national parks estate land is declared open to volunteer hunting. The Rural Lands Protection Act 1998 will be amended so that it is clear the Game Council must be consulted before a pest control order declaring game animals to be pests is made. Feral animals do not recognise lines on maps. These amendments will improve our capacity to manage pest species, provide greater scope for native flora and fauna protection and improve species diversity, whilst broadening opportunities for stakeholder experiences within a sound regulatory framework. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.

The House divided.**Ayes, 58**

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

Noes, 21

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

Pairs

Mr Fraser	Ms Hornery
Ms Goward	Mr Lynch
Mr Roberts	Mr Park

Question resolved in the affirmative.**Motion agreed to.****Bill read a second time.****Third Reading**

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjack—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [7.10 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question put.**Division called for and Standing Order 185 applied.****The House divided.**

Ayes, 58

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

Noes, 21

Mr Barr	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Torbay
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Mr Daley	Mrs Perry	
Mr Furolo	Mr Piper	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Hay	Mr Rees	Mr Amery
Ms Keneally	Mr Robertson	Mr Lalich
Dr McDonald	Ms Tebbutt	

Pairs

Mr Fraser	Ms Hornery
Ms Goward	Mr Lynch
Mr O'Dea	Mr Park

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Council without amendment.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Routine of Business**

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [7.17 p.m.]: Earlier I said I would report to members when I was aware of the progress of the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and the Safety, Return to Work and Support Board Bill 2012 and indicate whether this House would continue to sit this evening or adjourn until tomorrow. I anticipated that the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 would conclude at about 5 o'clock but, obviously, it has taken longer. The upper House has approximately 100 amendments to consider, after dealing with 50 amendments in the first four hours in Committee. I have been advised that the Legislative Council believes that it will conclude the bill sometime between 9.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m.

We will wait this evening for the outcome of the upper House. Private members' statements will commence at the conclusion of Government business and take approximately an hour and a half. At the conclusion of private members' statements the Speaker will leave the chair. If, during the course of the next

2½ hours it appears that the expectations from upper House members are not accurate and consideration of the workers compensation bill will continue, for example, after midnight, an unusual arrangement will be put in place. I will notify members by informal arrangement with the ringing of three short bells that this House will not resume until tomorrow morning at 10.30 a.m. on the ringing of a long bell. If nothing is heard, members can expect to return to this House when the upper House returns the bills to the Legislative Assembly.

By leave, Private Members' Statements taken forthwith.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [7.30 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about the Government's decision to ignore my local area in the 2012-13 budget. The Government has not committed to any new infrastructure projects in the electorate of Bankstown. The last two budgets have demonstrated this Government's contempt for my community. The 2012-13 budget provided \$28.1 million for Bankstown. The 2011-12 budget provided just under \$23.4 million in funding for Bankstown. Over the past two years, when compared to funding under Labor, Bankstown has missed out on almost \$19 million in funding for local infrastructure and front-line services. These numbers stand in stark contrast to Labor's last budget, which delivered more than \$35 million for local infrastructure and front-line services for Bankstown; \$1.1 million for education infrastructure; \$5.7 million for local roads, including \$1.6 million for Henry Lawson Drive; \$1.8 million for rail maintenance, bridge maintenance and track maintenance; and \$7 million for public housing and a new mobile police command unit for Bankstown.

This year, the O'Farrell Government slashed \$500,000 in road safety and infrastructure projects in the Bankstown electorate. Jobs throughout the Bankstown central business district also are at risk. I have called on the Government to rule out job cuts at Bankstown TAFE, Bankstown courts, the Bankstown Trustee and Guardian Office, the Bankstown motor registry and the Bankstown Legal Aid Office. This budget contains more broken promises affecting the Bankstown community. The Government failed to provide new funding for Stacey Street. Yet the Liberal candidate for Bankstown committed to providing an upgrade of Stacey Street. The Government failed to provide funds to upgrade Henry Lawson Drive. This is despite the member for East Hills making a commitment during to his campaign to upgrade Henry Lawson Drive. The Government also has failed to provide much-needed rail infrastructure funds for local stations in Bankstown, such as a much-needed easy access upgrade at Yagoona.

The Government stands to reap hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue when it privatises electricity. It is only fair that Bankstown and south-western Sydney get their fair share. The New South Wales Opposition has called on the Government at the very least to increase funding to the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme by \$55 million, to help residents in Bankstown who are struggling to pay their bills. Let me remind the House about the key numbers in this budget: 15,000 public sector jobs are going to go, New South Wales net debt has blown out by more than \$7.6 billion since March 2011, and the Treasurer has turned a \$1.3 billion surplus in March 2011 into an \$824 million deficit in June 2012. As members of this House will be aware, my electorate is part of a single local government area that also comprises the electorate of East Hills. The member for East Hills boasts about delivering \$30 million for his electorate.

Mr David Elliott: A very hardworking member.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Not according to these figures he is not. Compare that to what other Government members secured for their electorates. The member for Parramatta secured \$42 million for his electorate, according to the *Parramatta Advertiser*; the member for Port Macquarie secured \$85.2 million for his electorate, according to the *Camden Courier*; the member for Burringuck secured \$106 million for her electorate—a lot of pork-barrelling there; and the member for Coffs Harbour believes he secured more than a quarter of a billion dollars for his electorate, according to the *Coffs Harbour Advocate*. Furthermore, the member for East Hills continued to mislead the people of his area by saying that the Community Building Partnerships program had been "retained". What he failed to mention was that \$200,000 will be slashed from our two electorates. The member for East Hills needs to come clean with the people of his electorate and throughout the Bankstown area and admit that the O'Farrell-Baird Government has completely failed both of our electorates.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.35 p.m.]: I will respond to the comments made by the member for Bankstown about funding in the budget for 2012-13. The member announced a number of initiatives in her electorate. The Bathurst electorate received just under \$200 million from the budget. There is \$60 million for much-needed roadworks—works ignored by Labor for a long time. We are receiving a daily rail service. We also are receiving funding for the Denison College of Secondary Education campus, worth millions of dollars, and we also have a group home for people with disabilities. I congratulate the member for East Hills, who often speaks about matters of importance to his electorate. I commend the member for all his hard work.

EPPING WOMAN OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [7.36 p.m.]: I will talk about three special women from the Epping area. The first is Patricia Long, whom I nominated for Woman of the Year. She must have gone close, but sadly missed out. Patricia, immediate past president of the Beecroft-Cheltenham Lions Club, started a fundraising event in the form of a trivia night, which in recent years has raised \$20,000 to support local people in need. This year she raised \$4,000 for a dialysis machine for Hornsby hospital. The Prismaflex machine provides continuous renal replacement therapy for patients in the intensive care unit; put simply, it performs a function of the human kidney external to the body. Patricia has done a wonderful job; she is a true inspiration to our community. For more than 40 years she has been working to help others, including by raising funds for children with cystic fibrosis—even securing funds for construction of a public toilet with disability access. I have my name on the foundation stone of that toilet. People make fun of it, but there is a real shortage of these sorts of facilities, particularly for the more elderly in my electorate, and probably in many other electorates.

I pay tribute also to a lady who was also nominated for Woman of the Year. In fact she was one of the six finalists. Jenny Armstrong, from Marsfield in my electorate, insists she is not exceptional when compared to thousands of other volunteers across New South Wales. We think otherwise. As I say, she was one of the six shortlisted from 200 nominees in the People's Choice community hero category for Woman of the Year. Pru Goward paid tribute to Jenny, who has volunteered for Riding for the Disabled NSW since registering her twin daughters for therapeutic riding programs 30 years ago. Since her very first visit to a Riding for the Disabled centre, she has spent countless hours volunteering with them, while balancing being a single mother and working full time. She does much other community work. Both her daughters have restricted sight but they are highly intelligent and practical and successfully carry out responsible jobs. I am pleased to say that recently my friends and I, who form that wonderful group The Tokens, entertained Riding for the Disabled for its fortieth anniversary dinner at the Macquarie University. I was amazed at the long and dedicated service given by so many parents, family members and friends, who make great efforts for the disabled.

The third lady I would like to mention is Bev Cole. Bev Cole lives in Castle Hill and was nominated by my very good friend and colleague the member for Castle Hill for Woman of the Year. She runs Neighbour Aid, which operates out of Pennant Hills. She has been confined to a wheelchair for 25 years. She was a primary school teacher but she has now spent almost 30 years volunteering with the Neighbour Aid organisation, which aims to keep aged and infirm elderly people in their homes by assisting with transportation to the shops, doctors and other events. I was very happy to be present two or three years ago on Australia Day at a Pennant Hills Rotary special meeting at which the Australian of the Year from Pennant Hills is honoured, and that year Bev Cole was honoured, together with her wonderful husband, Bob, who looks after her and drives her around. It is wonderful to pay tribute to the women of the Epping electorate and the women of New South Wales generally. As the saying goes, behind every successful man is a good woman. No less is that true than in Epping, particularly among the three women I have mentioned. I am very proud to support them tonight.

TRIBUTE TO DR LESLEY MUIR, OAM

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [7.41 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to a person from the Canterbury electorate who has contributed so much to the community. I inform the House with great sadness of the passing of a great lady—Dr Lesley Muir, OAM, MA, PhD, FRAHS, who passed away on her sixty-seventh birthday on 19 May 2012. She leaves behind her husband, Brian Madden, his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to whom she was step-mother, grandmother and great grandmother. The reason I pay tribute to Dr Leslie Muir is because of her contribution to the Canterbury District Historical Society. She was completely dedicated to the society, she was a tireless worker and, I believe, she was the anchor of the society. She held the position of Chief Historian of the society and was Vice President and Fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Dr Muir also sat on several committees of the Royal Australian Historical Society. She was well respected and an authority on local, State and Australian history. I also want to acknowledge the great work of her husband, Brian. They both received the Order of Australia from the Governor of New South Wales, Marie Bashir, in 2007 in recognition of the contribution they had made in documenting historical events. Lesley and Brian prepared historical notes for nearly 200 individual and group heritage items in the Canterbury district, and when Lesley fell ill she was working on a heritage project for Canterbury City Council. Apart from their work with the historical society, many of their works are contained in published books and papers for future generations to explore and learn from. We are all a part of history, and people like Dr Lesley Muir and her husband, Brian, who dedicate their lives to preserving history and making it, deserve proper recognition.

The Canterbury District Historical Society has been in existence for a very long time. Canterbury district's history is of great interest and is very important not only because of its Aboriginal history but also because of its connection with the early colonial development of Sydney. Dr Lesley Muir was completely committed to history and making sure that the truth was told. Dr Muir leaves behind a wonderful legacy, and my thoughts are with Brian, Lesley's family and the society, who will all no doubt feel Lesley's loss. Someone said to me after Lesley's death, "Why do so-and-so's live and the best are taken?" Dr Muir was one of the best.

I have been told that the meetings held by the Canterbury District Historical Society were enriched by Dr Muir's presence. In her absence the candle is not there—she was the one who lit up the room. Her attendance made meetings more interesting, as she was a very warm and sincere person who motivated everyone to do their best. The Canterbury District Historical Society is in deep grief, as are the many friends and family members of Dr Lesley Muir. I extend great sympathy to Brian and to her family. I know Brian is extremely sad, as he would be after losing the person he has spent most of his life with. On behalf of the people of Canterbury and this House I offer my condolences to Brian, to Lesley's family and to the society and I celebrate the life of Dr Lesley Muir.

MONARO EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [7.46 p.m.]: This evening I personally praise the O'Farrell-Stoner Government and, more importantly and especially, the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. He is a Minister who genuinely cares, who listens and who stands side by side with the most vulnerable in this State. I thank him for his help and commitment to early childhood intervention and education in the Monaro. The Monaro Early Intervention Service provides specialised services and support through family-centred practice to families with children from birth to school age who have a disability or a developmental delay. It services a large area across the Cooma, Monaro and Snowy River local government areas, delivering a service that is in high demand. Queanbeyan Children's Special Needs Group was formed to support families with children from birth to 18 years who have special needs and to seek to establish early intervention services for children from birth to six years with special needs. It continues to provide a service that is desperately needed and demand for its services continues to grow through the Queanbeyan and Bungendore region.

Both the Monaro Early Intervention Service and the Queanbeyan Children's Special Needs Group aim to provide a safe and healthy environment whilst supporting children with additional needs so they can get a fair start in life. Studies have proven that every dollar that is spent in early intervention will save 10 times that amount in the future. More importantly, we are giving our children the greatest start in life—a life of inclusion, involvement and contribution. During the last election I made commitments to support both of these groups with one-off top-up funding—\$50,000 for the Queanbeyan Children's Special Needs Group and \$65,000 for the Monaro Early Intervention Service. Both election commitments were honoured by the good Minister and were greatly received. But, more importantly, I made a commitment to the Monaro Early Intervention Service that I would also work towards having its funding reassessed after years of not being heard, and hopefully increasing it so as to meet the greater demands and provide sustainable funding for the longer term.

Two weeks ago I met with Rhonda from the Monaro Early Intervention Service, as well as a number of families who told me their stories. Their stories weighed on my heart and I gave them a commitment that I would work with them to find a way forward. I am proud to say that this week the Minister for Disability

Services delivered that desperately needed additional government funding, which has secured the future of the Monaro Early Intervention Service. I will read a letter I received from a client of the early intervention service explaining how important it is to have the service in the electorate. The client wrote:

Dear Mr Barilaro,

My daughter has been a client of this service for over the last four years. There is no other support service available to my family And the members of our community like MEIS.

Without MEIS my daughter Liliana, now 5 years of age would not be developmentally able to start mainstream schooling next year.

Liliana was born 8 weeks premature with extreme inter-uterine growth retardation. Doctors told us she would not be likely to survive birth. She has had a massive struggle her whole life with feeding and growth issues.

Liliana also has cortical dysplasia which means that cells in her brain are not in the correct location.

Early diagnosis of global developmental delay meant we were referred to MEIS when she was not meeting developmental milestones of being able to sit up, crawl, walk or talk. MEIS has supported Liliana and our family to achieve these milestones.

The dedicated staff at MEIS have worked tirelessly with my family, Liliana's daycare and preschool to help her develop in all physical and cognitive areas. As previously mentioned without MEIS Liliana would not be cognitively able to start school next year.

MEIS is the only local service we have access to living in Jindabyne.

I ask you to do everything in your power to ensure the continued funding of Monaro Early Intervention Service so that they can continue to support the neediest of our community with a worthwhile and proven successful service.

I acknowledge the fantastic work of Rhonda and her team at the Monaro Early Intervention Service. They are a godsend to Monaro. Their work is helping our most vulnerable to be the best they can. These beautiful children deserve to fulfil their dreams, to live life to the fullest and to enjoy all that is in this world. Governments have a responsibility to help the disadvantaged and most vulnerable in our community, especially our children. Our good Minister Constance has remained steadfast to that notion and I applaud him. We have made million dollar announcements on roads and hospitals but this announcement, significant in what it achieves and who it reaches, has given me the greatest enjoyment of all. I acknowledge the mums, dads, families and carers that live with this 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You are extraordinary, you are an inspiration and you have been heard.

SANTA MARIA DI PORTO SALVO CONSECRATION

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI (Strathfield) [7.51 p.m.]: I recently attended a function that was important not just to the Italian community in my electorate of Strathfield and other neighbouring electorates but also to keen fishermen everywhere, commercial fishermen and recreational anglers. The function was the Consecration of Santa Maria di Porto Salvo, which I attended last Saturday. It began during the day with a church service at St Martha's Church in Strathfield where a beautiful statue of Santa Maria was installed in the church. That was followed by a celebratory dinner at the Mediterranean House in Five Dock. The event was hosted by the Associazione Bagnara Calabra. A special mention must go to the president of the association, Salvatore Bagnato, for all of the hard work he put into making this event a reality.

Bagnara Calabra is a province of Reggio Calabria, Southern Italy. Coincidentally that is my mother's birthplace. This area of Italy is well known for its swordfish and many people from this area are fishermen. The Devotion of Maria, Our Lady of Porto Salvo, has been a valued tradition in Calabria for a long time. Fishermen adopted her as their protector and patron saint. This is who fishermen prayed to when a ferocious storm hit and before they went out for a fishing session in hope of a good catch. Many Italians immigrated from Bagnara Calabra to Australia and have brought their traditional values of hard work and strong family values with them. It is not unusual for fishermen to be at sea for long periods. The only thing treasured more than the hard work they did on the boat was the love and adoration they would receive from their family and community on their return.

My electorate office manager, Joseph Del Duca, has family from Pellegrina in Bagnara Calabra. Many of these family members still work as fishermen and have done so since they left school. To this day they still turn to Santa Maria di Porto Salvo when out at sea, which is testament to how valued this consecration is to both the Italian community in Strathfield and surrounding electorates, as well as to fishermen from all over New South Wales. I thank the following people who attended the event: St Martha's parish priest, Father Chris Flattery; Bishop Terry Brady; Father Antonio Fregolent; the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti; the member

for Reid, John Murphy; the managing director of the Sydney Fish Markets, Grahame Turk; and the Italian consul general, Dr Sergio Martes. To conclude I will quote from the speech of Associazione Bagnara Calabra president, Salvatore Bagnato. His comments are not only true of those from the Italian fishing community but to all who have come to Australia from other lands:

Most of us born in another land are proud of our cultural heritage and are equally proud to share it with our new neighbours, our new mates, the people who we know and enrich our new land with. We do this from our hearts and we ask that our Madonna, the most Sainted Maria of Porto Salvo protect us and our families and pray for all of us.

I could not have said it better myself.

WESTPAC LIFE SAVER RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [7.54 p.m.]: On Monday I had the pleasure of accompanying the Premier, along with Ministers Gallacher, Annesley and Constance, to make the announcement that this Government will allocate \$1.5 million in funding for Surf Life Saving New South Wales to assist the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service. The service began its humble origins in Sydney in 1973, offering a basic beach surveillance and rescue service for the southern region of Surf Life Saving Australia. The old Bell C47 helicopter has long gone, replaced by the twin gas-turbine powered Kawasaki BK117, incorporating significant technology to expand its operations to search functions as well as to rescue. In addition to the helicopters in New South Wales located at Botany Bay, Moruya, Newcastle, Lismore and Tamworth, services can be found in Western Australia and Victoria, as well as on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

The service has become the largest non-profit search and rescue aviation service in Australia. The southern region helicopter is on standby to respond to missions 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Whilst there will always be dangers in going into the open ocean, the people of my electorate of Coogee love their trips to the beach and surfing and snorkelling. We are a lucky electorate in that we are the home of Gordon's Bay, Bronte, Tamarama, Clovelly and Coogee beaches. We are particularly lucky to have the helicopter based at Cape Banks in Botany Bay, just a few minutes flight from Coogee. We see some outstanding rescue work undertaken by our various local surf life saving clubs, who do commendable work to protect beachgoers. In fact, at the recent Sydney Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence ceremony, individuals from clubs in Coogee won a range of awards and high commendations.

The Westpac helicopter plays an important role in the wider New South Wales community, with its involvement in major search and rescue operations such as the catastrophic 1998 Sydney to Hobart yacht race, the Waterfall train disaster and the 1997 Thredbo landslide. I will share some of the especially inspiring stories of the work of the Westpac rescue helicopter. Prior to our arrival at the helicopter base for our visit, the helicopter undertook a search for the teenagers who went missing over the weekend off the Central Coast. To try to locate them, rescue workers were using the most advanced thermal imaging technology, which was on loan to the service from the manufacturer, Thales.

Earlier this year in South Maroubra an elderly man, a single leg amputee, had been washed onto a rock platform after his boat was overturned. As he was unable to get to safety, the southern region helicopter responded to the call for help by winching him out of danger and flying him to shore. Also earlier this year off Tomakin Beach on the south coast a 70-year-old man and his 20-year-old son were out on their boat when it was capsized by large surf. The two were found clinging to rocks after having been in the water for a period and the 70-year-old had swallowed a fair amount of seawater. The older man was winched to safety by the helicopter's south coast crew, whilst his son was rescued by local surfers.

Along with being involved in rescues such as these, the helicopter spent three weeks in Wagga Wagga earlier this year assisting the State Emergency Service with flood relief work and rescues. In those three weeks the helicopter spent a total of 50 hours in operational flying and performed 15 missions, including winching a person from his car roof as floodwaters were rising around him. These are just some of the 22,000 rescues that the Westpac helicopter has attended to over its almost 40 years of service. The additional funding for the Westpac helicopter will serve to support the work of the Surf Life Saving Association. It is a collective effort to protect our people from the dangers that can present either on the coast or inland.

During the election campaign, the Premier and I visited the helicopter's Sydney base. So I was especially pleased to return with the Premier to make such an important announcement. It is a win for my electorate and for the wider community of New South Wales. During my visit on Monday, Surf Life Saving

New South Wales Chief Executive Officer Phil Vanny commented that the funding would ensure that they will be able to extend their Sydney operations to cover night-time operations, which comprise nearly half of all their missions. The funding cements the Westpac helicopter's place in the community as a necessary and important asset for use in responding to natural disasters and other major emergencies and also in rescues throughout all our local communities.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.59 p.m.]: I commend the member for Coogee for his strong advocacy of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service, which is operated by a subsidiary of Surf Life Saving New South Wales. His strong advocacy of the service has resulted in a grant of \$1.5 million towards the continued operation of this vital service. The member for Coogee is to be commended for his leadership and advocacy for this important lifesaving service upon which so many of us in coastal electorates rely. As the member for Pittwater, I know that the helicopter was deployed a couple of weeks ago at Mona Vale Beach. A swimmer was in trouble approximately a kilometre offshore and was located by the helicopter crew. That was a terrific result. I commend board members of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service, Gordon Lang, Ron Rankin and others, and also commend the rescue team who work so hard to provide this vital service.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): With the indulgence of the House, I add my congratulations. As a past director of the Northern Region Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service, I was pleased about the announcement of the financial support. I endorse the comments of support for the crews and management who operate the services throughout New South Wales. The community can feel very proud and very safe because of the service they provide.

RATTLE 'N' HUM CAR SHOW

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [8.01 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to a wonderful example of philanthropy in the Hills shire that will provide much-needed financial assistance for a very worthy cause in our community. As the Deputy-Speaker is probably well aware, the Hills shire does not have a courthouse, a public hospital or a train station, but we have a lot of taxpayers who make wonderful contributions to a variety of charitable organisations. One of those is the Tallowood School, which caters for special needs children. Like the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children in my electorate, Hear the Children and St Gabriel's School which also caters for deaf children, the Tallowood School for children in the Hills shire has a very special place in my home and in our community.

My community has made a religion out of raising money and supporting many charitable organisations. This weekend will be held the Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show, which is sponsored by the Castle Hill RSL Club. I am honoured to serve on the board of that club. The Hills community has hosted the Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show over a number of years. There will be 350 classic, muscle and hot rod cars in the Castle Hill RSL car park, which certainly will be a sight to behold and will add a very different flavour to the Castle Hill RSL's regular Sunday afternoon patronage. The Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show has become a much-loved and cherished event in the Hills shire. Many members will recall that my predecessor, Mr Wayne Merton, who is nothing less than a car buff, encouraged the holding of this event. It is so wonderful that it is being held to raise money for special needs children.

Thousands of visitors are expected to attend and check out those well-preserved examples of motoring's golden age. It must be said that the Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show is more than just an event for motoring aficionados. There will be something for everybody. My children, who have been through a bit of a rough trot lately, will be celebrating their birthday over the next couple of weeks. One of the adventures that my young sons like to undertake is attending this particular event. This Sunday, 24 June, I have promised them and other children of families in my electorate that the Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show will be the biggest and best yet. It will certainly be a very successful community gathering. This year we are hoping to raise even more money than in the past for special needs children. Better yet, each year this show grows significantly as more cars are exhibited for display. Last year we raised more than \$10,000 and we are hoping to be able to top that in 2012.

Over the years fundraising that is supported by the Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show has enabled eight high-tech whiteboards to be installed at Tallowood, which naturally is of great benefit to a school that caters for students with moderate to severe mental disabilities. However, due to the high cost of whiteboards and such technology, much fundraising still needs to be done. The Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show provides certainty to people in its fundraising role for the very special Tallowood School. As a director of the Castle Hill RSL, I am gratified that the RSL general manager, David O'Neil, and the president, Major General Warren Glenny, are

supporting and providing assistance for this community event. The Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show is an excellent example of how the clubs in my electorate and the people of my community not only produce a unique community function but also raise funds for such a valuable local institute.

Major General Warren Glenny and David O'Neil should be congratulated on their support for such a worthy cause. I also wish to thank an employee of the club, Tony Outal, who has been breathlessly tireless in his support and promotion of this event. The Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show complements the local fundraising program, which includes the annual Mayoral Ball in support of Tallowood School. This year the Mayoral Ball will be held on 28 July. I hope that my wife and I will be in a position to attend. I encourage all members of this House and all members of the Hills community to join me in wishing attendees and the community of the Hills district much enjoyment at the Rattle 'n' Hum Car Show. Let us celebrate the fact that we are in a position to support and raise funds for such a worthy cause.

TRIBUTE TO MR BAWA SINGH JAGDEV, OAM

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [8.06 p.m.]: I wish to honour a wonderful man who lives in my electorate, Bawa Singh Jagdev. On Australia Day this year Bawa became the first ever Sikh Australian to have bestowed a Medal of the Order of Australia, an OAM. Bawa is a terrific fellow. He arrived with his wife in Sydney in 1975 after leaving his home in Nairobi, Kenya. He has had a very interesting life. He is an academic. He was born in the Punjab and was educated in the United Kingdom. He worked in Africa and finally settled in Australia. He has taught in schools and colleges in various countries. Bawa Singh Jagdev was born in a small village called Lohara in the Jalandhar district of the Punjab. He earned his professional qualifications at the Punjab University and emigrated to Kenya in 1959. He was further educated at the University of Exeter and returned to Kenya, only to find an inclement political situation.

Bawa and his wife, Gurdial, and their two children, Pardeep and Malvinder, moved to Sydney and adopted Australia as their new home. In 1975 there were not many Sikh people in Australia and Australians were not as enlightened then as we are now. Unfortunately, some people in Australia's population did not make this family feel as welcome as they should, and certainly not as welcome in this country as they are now. Sikhs are terrific people. They are full of fun and have attributes that we all admire and respect, such as love of family, having a good time and respect for elders. Bawa set about making life better for Sikhs and he helped to establish an umbrella body for Sikhs in Australia. At one time Bawa was the secretary of the Sikh Council of Australia and he is now the President of the Sikh Association of Australia.

Last Saturday night I joined with a former Premier and member for Toongabbie, Nathan Rees, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, MLC, and the Hon. Peter Primrose, MLC, at a wonderful dinner attended by approximately 330 people in Lidcombe. The dinner was organised by Bawa's daughter, Malvinder, and his son, Pradeep, to honour Bawa. It was a terrific night. At the dinner I spoke about the night in 1995 that I knocked on his door to ask for his support. He shook my hand and gave me his support then, and he is still with me. He is a man for all seasons and for all times because he carries the best gifts his God has given him. He is a strong man who is very gentle—a soldier saint. He would have been a ferocious warrior in times gone by but now finds he is just as effective, thankfully for us all, using more peaceful means. He is the most loyal of friends, a dignified and supporting husband and a giving father. Most importantly, I think he is a staunch example for younger people in a world of mixed messages.

He has a keen sense of justice and decency. He defends the ordinary man until justice is done but can just as readily walk on the other side of the street with heads of state. He has been to my office many times in the 17 years that I have been in public life. Not once, not on one occasion, has he asked for anything for himself or for his family. It is always for others, always for the little person who is having difficulty, often for his Sikh community. It is not just the Sikh community for which he is renowned as an advocate; he is an advocate for a great many other ethnic communities. He is not driven by ethnicity or the need to look after ethnic people. On Saturday night, in a gracious reply to the many good speeches that were made and to the toast proposed to him by Senator Matthew Thistlethwaite from my area, he said:

I feel the award I received belongs not to me but to all the good people in our community who have helped me help others. I did not think I was doing anything particularly remarkable. We all have a duty as human beings to help people who are suffering from injustice.

That is one of the great and enduring things about Bawa: he is a humble guy. He is a good man, a colourful character, a true Sikh and a great Aussie. As the member for Maroubra I am proud that he is one of the residents of the seat I proudly represent, and I am proud to call him a friend.

COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [8.11 p.m.]: Today I speak on the subject of coal seam gas, a subject that is topical across much of New South Wales, including the Wollondilly region. I speak on this matter because the people of Wollondilly have raised their concerns about the future of this industry. It is important to note from the outset of this speech that the O'Farrell Government has not granted or renewed one single coal seam gas exploration or production licence since its election to this place in March 2011. I have expressed my personal views on coal seam gas in the past. We must be vigilant in our approach to this industry because the decisions we make are vital for communities across the State. They are important if we are to address any potential impact on the environment. They are important if we are to meet the needs of our society that require energy to fuel our lifestyle. They are important if we are to ensure the security of jobs and employment opportunities within the industry. These issues are important considerations and they must feature in any discussion on the matter.

Healthy discussion on this matter is needed and it must continue if we are to address any identified concerns while allowing the industry to remain a viable alternative to current energy options. Discussions should rise above conjecture, scaremongering, assumptions and misinterpretations, which can frequently hinder healthy debates. Discussion must look at opposing sides of the argument and must feature learned individuals within the industry as well as giving the general public an opportunity to have their say. I feel this approach is essential, and this is the current approach that the O'Farrell Government is taking to find a balanced policy that will provide the certainty that this debate requires.

In Wollondilly and surrounding areas a number of exploration licences were issued under the former Labor Government without consultation. This has caused a significant climate of concern in the region as residents have not been informed about the proposed work, timelines or potential impacts. These licences, issued by those opposite, often lay dormant for many years before arising after this Government took office. It is important to mention this, as coal seam gas exploration is a very complex process—a complexity that seems heightened when the necessary consultation and communication with communities is not carried out. As a result, some communities form action groups seeking answers and making their views known. It is important to respect these groups and to have an open dialogue with them, just as I have done in Wollondilly.

I was fortunate enough to sit down with representatives from an action group in Wollondilly in my office last week and to hear their concerns directly. I have submitted a document to the Minister's office to have a number of recent questions answered so as to be able to work with the community. But this Government has already begun to demonstrate its commitment to broadening the knowledge available in the industry and stopping identifiable hazards such as the use of BTEX chemicals. Already the New South Wales Government has placed a moratorium on hydraulic fracking pending the completion of a review by the New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer into standards and well design to ensure world's best practice. We have released a code of practice to apply to coal seam gas exploration to ensure strong standards are set for the industry during the exploration phase. We have developed new community guidelines to ensure communities are both aware of and consulted on new licence applications.

Licences should be granted only after sound assessment, community consultation and impact studies are conducted. As my good friend the member for Kiama stated, sound process and scientific reasoning should be the only path when dealing with matters of such supreme environmental and agricultural significance. This sentiment is of the utmost importance in Wollondilly. Much of the large tracts that make up the Wollondilly shire component of my electorate are classed as Sydney catchment land. While there are differing classifications of zoning, this area is home to significant catchment lands. We must ensure we have an adequate understanding of the processes being undertaken and the potential impacts of these processes on our environment if we are to allay the concerns of the community.

Unfounded concerns, misconceptions and scaremongering alone should not allow the dismissal of an energy resource that is expected to inject over \$3 billion into our economy and create approximately 18,000 new jobs. However, if the potential risks are proven and documented, a reassessment must be considered to find a balanced approach. Should these risks be assessed as having a negative impact, common sense must prevail and alternatives to mitigate or remove these risks must be pursued. We live in difficult times with opposing views and getting the balance right can be difficult. This is why, in my opinion, we should work hard to engage in discussions now and create a transparent industry. I am committed to working with the community, the Government and the industry to find an appropriate balance between environmental sensitivities, job protection and resources to meet our energy needs.

THE VOICE WINNER KARISE EDEN

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [8.16 p.m.]: This evening I congratulate Karise Eden, a young woman from Woy Woy in my electorate of Gosford. She has kept Central Coast residents—and I think residents throughout Australia—glued to their television sets since April. Karise is the first winner of Channel 9's *The Voice* in Australia. Karise was unknown only a few short months ago. She has had a tougher life than most. Karise was a State ward and grew up living in foster homes. She says she had more foster homes than birthdays. She went on to find her own place, as she puts it, where she could lose herself in her music. Having been fostered by a family who owned a music store she began to play guitar at 13 years of age, and over the next few years became a singer-songwriter, mainly in the genre of blues, soul and rock, being influenced by such greats as Janis Joplin, Guns and Roses, Deep Purple, Etta James and Bon Jovi, to name but a few. She performed locally prior to *The Voice* at places like Lizottes, the Peats Ridge Festival, Erina Hive, 5 Lands Walk, the Woy Woy Folk Club, Patonga Pub and the Ettalong Beef and Barramundi.

Karise has never had a single singing lesson in her life, yet she had all four judges wanting her on their team after hearing her sing for the first time at the blind auditions. She chose the internationally renowned singer Seal to help guide her through the competition. As he helped her build her confidence, her performances got better and better. Her rendition of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* was inspiring and it went straight to the top of the iTunes charts. Remarkably, at present she has six songs in the iTunes Australia top 10, including having the top four with *Stay With Me Baby* at number one, *Hallelujah* at number two, her own original track *I Was Your Girl* at number three, and her new single, *You Won't Let Me* at number four. She now has a recording contract with Universal Music and a new single. A new 13-track album entitled *My Journey* is being rush released next week and a tour is also being planned.

Karise recognised the help her coach Seal gave her when she said, "It means a lot to have someone who trusts you and brings out the best in you and is not negative." The positive flow-on effects of her participation in and winning *The Voice* go way beyond music and song. Karise's heartfelt song about her past, *I Was Your Girl*, prompted dozens of fans who would tell their own dark stories of foster experiences online. This can only be of great benefit to them as individuals. With so much negativity today, a story such as Karise's, which is so positive in its outcome, can only inspire other youth to find and retain hope in their lives. Gratitude also must be expressed to Karise's foster parents, Aunty Marilyn and Uncle Frank, who were there for her when she needed them most in her life. A loving and caring environment by foster parents is one of the great gifts fostering couples give to children who otherwise might not get a break in life.

One cannot but admire those who drag themselves up from the depths of despair and are assisted by caring foster parents. When they achieve something great such as winning *The Voice* we simply have to applaud them. But further to that applause I only wish Karise Eden all the best in her future career and hope that she enjoys good fortune and success, but most of all that she reaches a place where she is happy and content, and that she remains strong enough to deal with what will be many pressures and demands in a career in the music business. She will have a hectic time that will involve a gruelling promotional schedule. However, as all the other well-wishers on the Central Coast know, if she stays true to herself and keeps her feet on the ground all will be well. I conclude on a very positive note by quoting her coach, who said after her recent performance of *Hallelujah*:

Welcome to the new Queen of Australian soul.

As Miranda Devine said recently in her *Daily Telegraph* column:

It's life-affirming stories that celebrate ordinary people which the whole family can watch together and which give us common ground at work or school the next day. That is what audiences really want.

The Voice's 19 year old winner Karise Eden's majestic voice and inspirational life story of triumph over adversity warmed Australian hearts and made us feel good about her and about ourselves.

I could not have put it better myself. That is Karise Eden, and she is from the peninsula at Woy Woy on the Central Coast. On behalf of the residents of Woy Woy peninsula and the Central Coast I offer a big congratulation to Karise. Go girl.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): With the indulgence of the House, I am sure all members send their congratulations to Karise as hers is a moving story. Another part to that story is that the

director of music was Scott Aplin, son of Greg Aplin, the member for Albury. Scott received many bouquets throughout the whole program, which he rightly deserved. I also feel very proud of Scott because he is a graduate of Southern Cross University at Lismore.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [8.22 p.m.]: Sometimes being a State member gives one the opportunity to have interesting conversations with people within the electorate that sometimes remind us of things that have slipped off the radar. I was approached the other day by a gentleman who asked, "Can the Government please bring back a pedestrian safety campaign?" The perplexed look on my face must have told him that I did not quite follow. He explained that his concerns stemmed from observing that few people appear to know or comprehend a few basic safety rules of the road. What prompted him to call into my office was that on the preceding evening he was travelling on a local road and had to stop for a person walking on the side of the road in the same direction, dressed in black and walking a black dog. The dog walker made no effort to get off the road and was extremely difficult to see.

A couple of days before that event he was driving again on a local road, this time during the day, when he encountered three pedestrians walking three abreast along the road—again on the same side and heading in the same direction. Again he had to stop to avoid hitting them. These pedestrians made no effort to move over to the edge of the road, so he had to drive on the wrong side of the road to get past. He asked me, "How many people use common sense any more when walking on or crossing a road, be it at traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, or just on roads?" My office is situated in the main street of Cessnock, right near a pedestrian crossing. Every day we hear the screech of brakes from vehicles that have to stop suddenly because pedestrians seem to think they can just walk straight out onto those striped lines without looking. It amazes me that some of the semitrailers that use the main street of Cessnock stop in time.

How many times while driving have members had to slow down or stop for someone who walked out in front of them? What would have been the consequences if someone, as the car driver, had not taken all care and responsibility when, clearly, the pedestrian had not? Jaywalking appears to be common practice these days. I must admit to being guilty of it myself. Out the front of Parliament House pedestrians jaywalk with or without the pedestrian lights. Recently I observed a young jogger standing in the middle of Macquarie Street at night dressed completely in black with traffic going past in both directions. I shook my head in disbelief. Had she given any thought to the potential effect on her life, the driver's life or an observer's life had she been struck by any of the many vehicles that went past her?

Earlier the same day I observed a tourist in George Street jaywalking at traffic lights. The taxi driver forced to stop for him made his stupidity known to him with a verbal barrage. The pedestrian's reaction was simply to laugh and wave—again, with no thought of the consequences and no sense of responsibility. My constituent wants pedestrian safety brought back to the forefront of everyone's minds and to again be taught in schools. He also wants an advertising campaign reintroduced. For those of us old enough, we might remember the little advertising jingle, "Look to the left, look to the right, look to the left again; then if the road is clear of traffic, walk straight across the road, don't run. Walk straight across the road." He wants the advertising campaign reintroduced and refreshed for those of us who were taught "We are not six foot tall, we are not bullet proof and safety is not somebody else's responsibility."

After spending 10 to 15 minutes with this constituent I had to agree. I guess I had failed to think about this part of my life because this is a daily event. Since this conversation I constantly find I am slowing down for pedestrians, sometimes swerving to go around them when they will not take care on the road. It is almost as though the road has become a pedestrian experience for many. Experience and observations demonstrate that as a society we cannot rely on common sense. These days common sense is anything but common. Society needs to have campaigns like "Stop, Look and Listen" and "Look left, right and left again before you cross the road" brought back into vogue. When I was a kid pedestrian safety was a parenting skill; then it became an advertising campaign when I was a teenager. Now it seems to have disappeared completely. Pedestrian safety is more important now because of all the distractions for pedestrians such as iPods, mp3 players, mobile phones, talking to others, et cetera. I thank my constituent for bringing this to my attention and I happily bring it to the attention of the House. I call on all members to be mindful of pedestrian road safety.

WHEELING FOR HEALING CAMPAIGN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [8.27 p.m.]: Tonight I place on the record the great work a constituent of mine has been doing in raising much-needed funds for cancer research. On 8 June I participated in a Hornsby

Fitness First exercise bike class. The walls did not cave in when I got on the exercise bike. I am still recovering from this sporting achievement, and I think I hurt a hamstring or two. The event raised over \$500 for Wheeling for Healing, an awareness campaign that promotes cancer research. The event also sought to support 70-year-old Berowra resident Mr Warrick Try, co-founder of Wheeling for Healing who, after battling various cancers, will cycle approximately 3,000 kilometres across Europe, alongside his 70-year-old friend Mr Max Dodd, also co-founder of Wheeling for Healing.

These two 70-year-old gentlemen have suffered cancer. They met years ago at the Scots College and are reuniting for this great cause to ride across Europe raising much-needed funds for cancer. The event will take place in August 2012 and seeks to raise \$50,000 for Tour de Cure, a not-for-profit organisation that promotes cancer research. Recently, on Friday 15 June, Mr Try raised another \$3,000 for Wheeling for Healing at a fundraiser he organised at Berowra Tavern. The member for Kiama has spent many a night with me at the Berowra Tavern—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): As good friends.

Mr MATT KEAN: Indeed, as good friends, celebrating one of the finest establishments in my electorate. Mr Try, a member of Hornsby Fitness First, has battled several cancers over the years—lung, prostate, bladder, and eye. In 2009 he sought to transform his health in order to prevent the likelihood of another bout of cancer. He subsequently joined the gym, changed his diet, lost 35 per cent of his bodyweight and for the first time in 12 years was declared cancer free. Additionally, he was a finalist in Fitness First Australia's "new you" awards. I am sure the member for Parramatta is often at Fitness First competing in the "new you" awards.

Mr Try is now a volunteer counsellor for people who have recently been diagnosed with cancer and his journey through Europe will serve to demonstrate that those who suffer from cancer can overcome adversity through a strong mindset and determination. Although his illnesses impacted him both physically and emotionally they did not destroy his desire to succeed in life, nor did they deter him from helping others. That is the important thing about this initiative. Mr Try's quest to cycle approximately 3,000 kilometres across Europe with Mr Dodd is testament to his passion for helping others, as well as his dedication and commitment to overcoming personal hardships. Mr Try and Mr Dodd are doing what others pay lip service to; making a difference in the lives of others. Mr Try is a role model to men and women who suffer from illness. Despite facing countless hardships and challenges, he is determined to assist others who are suffering by raising vital funds for a worthwhile cause.

His fortitude and courage define not only his personal character and attitude; it is emblematic of the values and principles all citizens should enshrine. Mr Try's story should serve also as an inspiration to both this House and to society and not just the member for Parramatta with his weight loss program well under way. Although everyone faces difficulties from time to time, few of us can truly understand the struggles individuals such as Mr Try have endured over the years. Mr Try understands all too well the physical and emotional pain cancer sufferers and their families experience. It is this empathy and understanding that is motivating Mr Try to put his body through significant pain.

His actions and the funds he raises along the way will bring us one step closer to curing cancer. His actions demonstrate also that age is not a barrier to pursuing goals. Just ask the member for Parramatta about that. As long as an individual has the energy and willpower to make something happen it can happen. Mr Try's cycling challenge throughout Europe will bring hope and promise to the lives of many. Further information on Mr Try's cycling adventure throughout Europe can found on www.wheelingforhealing.com. This man is making a difference to the lives of many by raising funds for cancer research. I commend the actions of this individual to the House and ask the House support him in the wonderful work he is doing.

NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [8.32 p.m.]: I was pleased to nominate Martha Jabour, executive director of the Homicide Victims Support Group (Australia) for the 2012 New South Wales Women of the Year award. I congratulate her on being awarded 2012 Local Woman of the Year for Parramatta. I first met Martha when I attended the Ebony and Ivory Ball along with other esteemed guests including Mrs Grace Lynch, mother of Anita Cobby and founding member of the Homicide Victims Support Group; Mr Peter Simpson, father of Ebony Simpson and founding member of the Homicide Victims Support Group; the Hon. Linda Burney, MP, member for Canterbury and Deputy Leader of the Opposition; the Hon. Cherie Burton, MP, member for

Kogarah and a regular contributor to the Homicide Victims Support Group; Mr Chris Maxwell, QC, Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions; retired Assistant Commissioner John Laycock; and Chief Superintendent Peter Cotter of the NSW Police Force.

Around 400 people attended, including family members of homicide victims, friends, guests from Victims Support Services, the Attorney General's Department, the Restorative Justice Unit, Corrective Services, the NSW Police Force, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, which does the association's audit, and staff from Henry Davis York who provide pro bono legal services to the family members. The Homicide Victims Support Group (Aust) [HVSOG] caters for the needs of families who have lost a loved one to murder. A murder occurs once every three days in New South Wales. The office of the Homicide Victims Support Group is based at Parramatta. Its operations are overseen by a management committee whose members have all lost loved ones. Martha Jabour leads a dynamic organisation, seamlessly working with a variety of government organisations to provide a range of services for families who are thrust into the most traumatic of circumstances.

Martha is a tireless worker for the Homicide Victims Support Group with an inability to say no regardless of the workload pressures placed upon her on a daily basis. Some 23 years ago, having lost an infant son to sudden infant death syndrome, she recognised that services for people in her situation were almost non-existent. Despite her grief she decided to take up the challenge of educating police across New South Wales and preparing them in how to deal with people in her situation. Several years later, while working at the Glebe mortuary, she was requested to provide services to families of homicide victims with an introduction from the founding members Gary and Grace Lynch, the parents of Anita Cobby, as well as Christine and Peter Simpson, parents of Ebony, who was tragically murdered at Bargo. The Homicide Victims Support Group was formed in 1993 with Martha at the helm and she has worked tirelessly to facilitate, strengthen and implement positive change in the area of victim support.

She is highly respected within policing, government and non-government circles and is universally known for her dedication, energy and compassion. Her generosity knows no bounds. Her achievements are voluminous, including scores of changes to legislation in order to support victims thrust into the legal process. She has working partnerships with the Attorney General, Victims Support Services, the NSW Police Force and the Homicide Victims Support Group. There is an automatic referral by police to the Homicide Victims Support Group of all murders and manslaughters in New South Wales for the instant provision of counselling, compensation and other support services. An articulate speaker, Martha delivers lectures to police at all levels across New South Wales to maintain the level of education required to assist in the provision of services to her families.

There is no doubt that many families who have not had the benefit of the services of Martha's group would have suicided, abused alcohol or adopted other activities detrimental to their mental and physical health. The Homicide Victims Support Group provides services which include counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week, home visits, therapy weekends, statewide support meetings, retreat services at Ebony and Ivory House at Waterfall, court support, telephone support, regular newsletters, liaison with prosecutors and other service providers, restorative justice processes, and so on. Martha represents both the community and her group at the Victims of Crime Interagency Committee, Victims Advisory Board, Sentencing Council of New South Wales, Homicide Squad Advisory Committee and the State Parole Authority of New South Wales. She is a representative on the Judicial Commission and the Domestic Violence Review Committee. Martha is a very worthy recipient of the Women of the Year award and she should be applauded at the highest levels. I congratulate her on her service to New South Wales.

MONTESSORI EAST PRIMARY AND PRESCHOOL, BONDI

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [8.37 p.m.]: On 5 June I was delighted to visit Montessori East, in Wellington Street, Bondi, in my electorate of Vaucluse. There I met with principal Mr Bill Conway, staff, parents and students and became acquainted with the school. Montessori East offers a well established Montessori education for pre-primary, that is, for three- to six-year-olds, and primary aged children, six- to 12-year-olds. Among other things, this approach builds a child's self-confidence, instils discipline and encourages social behaviours on their part positive. The Montessori approach forms the basis for lifelong learning and follows the educational methods and principles developed by Dr Maria Montessori, who lived from 1870 to 1952. Montessori East is one of 150 Montessori schools in Australia—but it is the only Montessori primary school in the eastern suburbs. It is one of 22,000 Montessori schools in 110 countries worldwide. Indeed we are fortunate to have this wonderful school in the eastern suburbs.

It really is a reflection of the diversity of education available in the Vaucluse electorate. The school's purpose statement is: In a world of infinite possibility we create a thoughtfully prepared environment to nurture the child's natural love of learning. And I certainly witnessed this during my visit to the pre-primary school. The learning areas were creatively and thoughtfully constructed, and there was a really calm and serene atmosphere in the room. The classroom design encouraged a natural flow between the learning areas, each of which beckoned the eye and curiosity. I was rather keen myself to recommence my schooling, judging by what I saw and observed there: it was a very attractive learning environment. Montessori schools first came to Sydney in 1915 after two Australians travelled to Rome to take part in the first Montessori teacher training course, run by Dr Montessori herself.

In the 1960s interest in Montessori schools grew in Europe and North America, and this renewed interest eventually also reached Australia. Here in Sydney, Montessori East was started in 1978 by a group of parents who were keen to see a Montessori school in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It began as a small preschool group in Vaucluse and over the years it flourished—occupying various sites, including Randwick and Bronte, before moving to its current site at Wellington Street, just across the road from Bondi Public School; in October 2001 finally uniting the various local programs under one roof at that location. Montessori East has also created a unique primary school learning environment, with large, bright, interesting classrooms, lovely outdoor play spaces, which I explored, complete with vegetable gardens and kitchen facilities. Again, it was a treat for my eyes to rest on. It has a full kitchen that provides regular cooked meals for the children—an experience removed from my own in the old days of a tuckshop selling only Vegemite sandwiches, flavoured milk and finger buns—all good at the time, but probably not very good for our growing needs.

Recent upgrades to the building and work on the grounds have certainly improved the learning environment for students. The school continues to grow and expand to meet increased community demand and interest in Montessori education, including establishing its own foundation, the ME Foundation, for the benefit of the school. In fact, as the principal, Mr Conway, explained to me during my visit, Montessori East is now embarking on plans to find another suitable site to create a larger Montessori environment to meet the growing demands of my local community. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to this wonderfully unique school, and I thank the Montessori East community, including the students, staff and parents for making me very welcome. I look forward to a continued association with the school and wish them all the very best for the future. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

BURMA DEMOCRACY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [8.42 p.m.]: I address an issue of great importance to people in my electorate: the changing situation in Burma and the role we can play in supporting a transition to democracy, peace and reconciliation. In April I was in Burma. But this time, as opposed to my previous visits, the situation was very different. It took a long time to find the small wooden house on the outskirts of Rangoon where U Win Tin was staying with his sister. U Win Tin had been imprisoned for his pro-democracy activities for more than 19 years and had only recently been released. As a famous Burmese author and one of the founding members of the National League for Democracy, along with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, calls for his release were at the centre of years of international campaigning. For an 83-year-old, he was remarkably energetic and hungry for information on politics abroad.

His first comments were practical. "I lost my house when I was imprisoned 20 years ago," he said "Now I live in different places and have to rely on family. Make yourself comfortable." We talked about the environmental crisis facing the country with enormous dam projects, voracious mining activity and widespread deforestation. The scale of the challenges in his country was made clear with an example of student activists who were threatened and intimidated for their campaign to have a day to pick up rubbish around a famous hill monument. The military saw it as undermining confidence in the government as the State's clean-up efforts were being portrayed as ineffective. Despite all of this there is an incredible sense of optimism and determination. The 1 April by-election in Burma was the culmination of a range of actions, including the release of political prisoners, relaxing draconian media restrictions and legalising some political activities. The National League for Democracy won 43 of the 44 seats to enter the 664-seat Parliament, where 25 per cent of the seats are controlled by the military. The 2015 national election will be the real test of democracy for this quasi-military government.

It was clear that the role of targeted sanctions was critical for these first steps forwards. Australia had had arms sanction as well as individual financial and travel sanctions on more than 400 of the country's top business, political and military figures. The experience of Burma rules out any doubt that sanctions can play a decisive role in the battle for democratisation and freedom across the world. The National League for

Democracy and the wider pro-democracy movement in Burma face enormous challenges. We know that the building of democratic political parties and a vibrant civil society is a critical priority. In a country that has been dominated by a one-party military state for so long, new methods of organisation, like the grassroots democracy approach of The Greens, which we talked about, and these types of structures are unfamiliar and challenging, but welcome and due for discussion.

I note the strong support of Australians, community organisations, faith-based organisations, trade unions and a broad range of other activists supporting the campaign for democracy in Burma. I note the role of the upper House and the Australian Senate in supporting many of these matters in New South Wales and federally. I recognise also the work of the Australian Coalition for Democracy in Burma, of which I am a founding member, as well as the work of the Burma Campaign Australia and the support of Caritas. It will take some time to build a democratic infrastructure in Burma as labour unions and civil society are almost nonexistent. The rule of law is weak and institutions are dominated by the military and their supporters. Building capacity within Burma is being initiated from the border areas, where there is a long history of cross border activity and organisation, in particular on the Thai-Burma border.

The Burmese run non-government organisation, the Burma Labour Solidarity Organisation, is such an organisation that has a long and stable history of campaigning, providing human rights training, labour training, labour organising and educating the children of migrant workers in a school in the town of Mae Sot, on the Thai-Burma border. I first visited the Burma Labour Solidarity Organisation and the school more than 10 years ago. Their success is substantial and effective. I will be visiting them again in July and look forward to seeing how their excellent work is progressing under the new political circumstances in Burma. Your support for a democratic transition in Burma can be shown by making a tax deductible donation to the Burma Labour Solidarity Organisation via Union Aid Aboard—APHEDA, www.apheda.org.au.

The campaigns that they run around the world, with the support of AusAID, individual donors and trade unions, are very significant. I encourage members to have a look at that website and the work that that organisation does. Make sure you specify your donation is for the Burma Labour Solidarity Organisation. You can be sure that your support will make a real difference to the future of Burma. Supporting activists such as Ko Than Dokc, the Chairman of the Burma Labour Solidarity Organisation, will ensure the transition to democracy in Burma is just and takes in the whole of the country in a unified and dignified way to a better future.

Private members' statements concluded.

[Acting-Speaker (Gareth Ward) left the chair at 8.48 p.m. The House resumed at 2.27 a.m. on Friday 22 June.]

WORKERS COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

SAFETY, RETURN TO WORK AND SUPPORT BOARD BILL 2012

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

WORKERS COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments to the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 referred to in message of 22 June 2012

No. 1 Page 11, Schedule 1.1 [3], proposed section 43 (1). Insert after line 10:

- (e) a decision about whether a worker is, as a result of injury, unable without substantial risk of further injury to engage in employment of a certain kind because of the nature of that employment,

No. 2 Page 12, Schedule 1.1 [3], proposed section 44 (3) (h), lines 39 and 40. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (h) recommendations made by the Independent Review Officer are binding on the insurer and the Authority.

No. 3 Page 21, Schedule 1.1 [4], lines 1 and 2. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 4 Page 42, Schedule 5, lines 3 - 11. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

Section 10 Journey claims

Insert after section 10 (3):

- (3A) A journey referred to in subsection (3) to or from the worker's place of abode is a journey to which this section applies only if there is a real and substantial connection between the employment and the accident or incident out of which the personal injury arose.

No. 5 Page 47, Schedule 8 [3]. Insert after line 7:

- (2B) The regulations may require the provision of independent financial advice to a worker (at the expense of the insurer) before the worker enters into a commutation agreement and any such requirement applies despite any other provision of this section.

No. 6 Page 59, Schedule 11 [11], lines 21–27. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 7 Page 59, Schedule 11[11], line 21. Insert:

[11] Sections 341, 342, 343 and 345

Omit the sections. Insert instead:

341 Costs

- (1) Each party is to bear the party's own costs in or in relation to a claim for compensation.
- (2) The Commission has no power to order the payment of costs to which this Division applies, or to determine by whom, to whom or to what extent costs to which this Division applies are to be paid.

No. 8 Page 67, Schedule 12 [1], line 21. Insert ", **paramedics and firefighters**" after "**Police officers**".

No. 9 Page 67, Schedule 12 [1], line 22. Omit "benefits amendments". Insert instead "amendments made by the 2012 amending Act".

No. 10 Page 67, Schedule 12 [1], line 23. Insert ", paramedic or firefighter" after "police officer".

No. 11 Page 67, Schedule 12 [1], line 29. Omit "benefits amendments". Insert instead "amendments made by the 2012 amending Act".

No. 12 Page 68, Schedule 12 [1], lines 5 and 8. Omit "5 years" wherever occurring. Insert instead "2 years".

No. 13 Page 68, Schedule 12 [1]. Insert after line 8:

- (4) However, if the Minister determines on actuarial advice that the scheme under the Workers Compensation Acts is projected to return to surplus before the end of the period of 2 years:
- (a) the review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after that projected date, and
- (b) the report of the outcome of the review is to be tabled within 12 months after that projected date.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [2.27 a.m.], on behalf of Mr Mike Baird: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and the Safety, Return to Work and Support Board Bill 2012 have been returned with amendments to the principal bill. The Government is not happy with all the amendments. We believe that the bill transmitted to the Legislative Council was in the best interests of workers and of the State. Having said that, it is now 2.30 a.m. and it is important that this legislation moves through the House. We accept the amendments that have been moved in the other place, but not happily.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [2.28 a.m.]: I am wondering whether the Leader of the House fully understands the content and operation of the motion he has just moved. If the Leader of the House seeks to move the amendments in globo, he has not expressed it. We take it that he has not done so.

The SPEAKER: I think that is the clear understanding of what he has done.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: He has not moved that, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: He has moved that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to, and that is the question I put to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: He has not sought leave that they be moved in globo.

The SPEAKER: He does not need to seek leave that they be moved in globo. The amendments are contained in a message from the Legislative Council. He has moved that the amendments from the Legislative Council be agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: All of them?

The SPEAKER: All of them.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The Opposition members hear the mixed message that comes from the Leader of the House that he and the Government are not happy with the amendments agreed to in the other place. This bill has been the subject of some 8½ hours of debate and we come back to this place at 2.30 in the morning—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Are you opposing them?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I will discuss the amendments as I see fit. I will not be dictated to by you and your bullyboy—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will confine his comments to the motion that the amendments be agreed to. That is the motion he should be speaking to.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am, Madam Speaker. If you do not wish me to rise to the bait then you keep your troops under control.

The SPEAKER: Order! I advise the member not to tell me what to do. If he persists I will remove him from the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: If you want to remove me from the House while we are discussing this bill then do so, but do not threaten me with it, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will confine his comments to the motion before the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: If you wish to silence me from speaking on this bill, which goes to the heart of what we believe in, then remove me or you remain silent, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will remove himself from the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I will do that and you keep quiet. You will not silence us, just because your Leader of the House does not know what he is moving. You will not keep us quiet on this bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! Remove yourself from the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: You will not silence us on this.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Maroubra.

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

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [2.33 a.m.]: The Opposition will vote for these amendments but we will not do so with a great deal of pleasure. These amendments do nothing for the betterment of this bill. They do not improve one of the most appalling attacks on workers in the history of this State with respect to workers compensation payments. The amendments do not address in any way the

deficiencies that were laid bare throughout the whole debate on how workers will be treated. The most appropriate way to describe this bill is to say that it was a pig. Now it is a pig with lipstick, but it is still a pig. Even with the amendments, this bill does not in any way, shape or form alleviate or excuse the actions of those on the other side of this Chamber. The way in which the Leader of the House moved consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments to the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill was less than appropriate, but he chose to do it and so be it.

However, no member should leave this House with the view that we on this side believe that this bill is appropriate, that it deals adequately with injured workers or that it corrects all the points highlighted by the Opposition either in this place or in the other place. The Labor Party is disgusted by the behaviour of some members who sought to make out that these amendments somehow improve the bill. Throughout the second reading debate very few members on the other side had the gumption or the intestinal fortitude to participate in the debate. The most telling aspect about this bill is how few Government members spoke in support of this piece of legislation. More than anything else, that speaks volumes about what those opposite really think of it. Apart from those up and comers jockeying to get on the frontbench, only the Premier, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier and the member for Cronulla—

Mr John Williams: Keep going.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Sorry, and Crusty, the member for Murray-Darling spoke in support of the bill. That speaks volumes for the remaining Government members and demonstrates clearly that none of them wanted his or her name recorded as supporting this bill. If they wanted their names recorded they would have spoken in the debate. They do not support this bill. We do not support this bill.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: We will vote for these amendments, but will do so begrudgingly and in the full knowledge that all members on the other side will vote to gut the workers compensation scheme.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General will come to order.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Those opposite will vote to ensure that people in this State who are injured at work through no fault of their own will be worse off in workers compensation entitlements. No-one will forget this act. Every time an injured worker misses out because their injury occurred on the way to or from work, or an injured worker cannot have a prosthetic leg fitted after five years, or an injured worker cannot access physiotherapy in order to continue working and make a contribution a society, we will make sure that the people of this State know that each and every Government member was responsible for that outcome. We will make sure that is never forgotten.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer) [2.37 a.m.]: It is worth summarising the amendments. They relate to journey claims, deeming provisions, costs, commutations and also a scheme review, which will now happen every three years. One reason we strongly support that amendment is that the scheme cannot be allowed to reach the unsustainable position that it did previously. Other amendments relate to parliamentary oversight and paramedics and firefighters. The O'Farrell Government realised that to help this State move forward it had to make some difficult decisions. The decisions, which we have put in place tonight, are to have a workers compensation scheme that is financially sustainable and ensures that we can look after employees and employers. Without a sustainable scheme they cannot be supported. This workers compensation bill puts the scheme on a comparable basis with those of other jurisdictions around the country and ensures that the scheme is financially sustainable. The O'Farrell Government will put in place a scheme that can look after workers long term.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 2.39 a.m. until
Tuesday 14 August 2012 at 12 noon.**
