

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 21 August 2012

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

**The Speaker** read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

**General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.**

**The SPEAKER:** Many of the motions of which members gave notice today were excessively long. Such motions use up the 10 minutes available to members who wish to give notice of a motion they will move. I realise that the motions are important to both the members and their electorates. However, members should ensure that their motions are not lengthy out of respect for other members who may wish to give notice of a motion.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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### TUMUT PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE** (Wagga Wagga) [12.15 p.m.]: On Thursday 9 August I opened the Tumut Public School. This major building project was jointly funded by the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government at a cost of \$7.4 million, of which the New South Wales Government contributed \$3.7 million. The result is eight new classrooms with interactive whiteboards, a new communal hall, upgraded classrooms and library in block G, upgraded canteen and student toilets, upgraded administration facilities and dental clinic, demolition of five timber buildings, upgraded car parking, new covered walkways and landscaping.

The records show that the Tumut school commenced operation in January 1859 in Fitzroy Street as a national school with more than 20 pupils. After many years and alterations its status was raised to superior from 1881 to 1919. From January 1920 until December 1927 it was a district school and from 1928 to 1960 it operated as an intermediate high school. The site was also home to an infants school for students from kindergarten to year 2 for many years. Tumut High School was built and opened for students in the late 1950s and became Tumut Public School in 1961. Until 2010 the site was split into two, with kindergarten to year 2 students in classrooms at the Capper Street site and students in years 3 to 6 in classrooms at the Tumut Public School site.

Many people have worked hard over the past few decades to consolidate the Tumut Public School site. The site now includes shared space for kindergarten classes, connected classrooms and a computer room. The school has always enjoyed strong community support and that has been instrumental in ensuring that it continues to thrive. The parents, grandparents and even great grandparents of some of today's students also attended the school in its various guises and at its various locations. I am sure that everyone is pleased to see the building project completed, and it will serve the community for many years. Former students also would be amazed by the modern technology that is an integral part of our twenty-first century education system.

I acknowledge the partnership that is at the heart of teaching and learning at any quality school; that is, the partnership between professional and committed staff, parents and the broader community. That partnership ensures that teaching meets the individual needs of each student. I commend the staff on their outstanding work for the young people of Tumut Public School. I also acknowledge parents and caregivers for their commitment to and support of the school. Schools are not simply bricks and mortar; they are at the heart of everything that a community does. I acknowledge all who were involved in the project and the part they played in making the co-location of the two schools to one site the great success that it has been.

This is an exciting time for public schools in New South Wales, starting with this Government's announcement of a record \$14.2 billion budget for the Education and Communities portfolio. This Government has provided more money for early childhood education and care, more teachers to personalise lessons and whiteboards to provide access to interactive learning. The Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan is ensuring that students achieve above the Australian average in national tests. The Government is also providing more money to build new schools and to modernise and improve the upkeep of schools. In that regard we have more good news because the former primary school site in Capper Street is now being converted to provide accommodation for the Gadara Special School, which I will have the privilege of opening in December. That will be another great asset for the Tumut community.

This Government is also transferring decision-making power to schools and communities with the Local Schools, Local Decisions initiative. Our students continue to achieve results that match the best in the world thanks to excellent teachers and a rigorous curriculum. Tumut's new facilities are part of the great transformation that is taking place in New South Wales public schools. I congratulate everyone involved on such a wonderful day. I particularly thank the students for their warm welcome and for entertaining their families and friends. We had a great day.

### **TRIBUTE TO NEVILLE "MICK" LORD**

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [12.19 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to a widely respected member of the Illawarra swimming fraternity, Neville—known as Mick—Lord, who passed away on Friday 20 July 2012 at the age of 70 years. Mick was an outstanding, upstanding and highly regarded citizen in my electorate of Shellharbour who will be fondly remembered by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him. I had the great privilege of knowing Mick, who was a dedicated supporter of the Australian Labor Party and a local swimming legend. Known as the pied piper of the pool, Mick was well known for his successes in the pool. He was the Shellharbour-Warilla Amateur Swimming Club coach and pool manager from 1975 to 1990. His passion for swimming was so great and infectious that it was inevitable that it would rub off on his children, Karen and Gary, who shared his love for swimming, and both experienced individual successes in the pool.

Under Mick's guidance and coaching his daughter, Karen, was selected to represent Australia at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Two years later Karen went on to join her brother, Gary, in representing Australia at the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland. Mick's vast knowledge and success in the pool made him somewhat of a local icon who was well regarded within local swimming circles. He attracted admiration and respect from children and parents alike for his no bull approach around the pool. He did not tolerate bad behaviour in the pool and was known to kick out kids who broke the rules. His daughter has fond memories of these times, recalling how her father would hide behind the walls and bust kids doing bombs in the pool, saying that her "dad had more power around the pool than a police officer".

Mick's coaching services were always in high demand. Even after Mick retired in 1990 he was still endlessly swamped with requests from local parents who wanted him to coach their kids. This was a testament to his coaching abilities and experience. Fifteen years ago Mick was given a second chance at life after receiving a new kidney, a gift that he cherished on a daily basis as it afforded him the opportunity to live long enough to get to know his six grandchildren. Whilst swimming was one of Mick's greatest loves, those who knew him well will attest to the fact that Mick's greatest passion in life was his beloved grandchildren: Max, Jack, Jasmine, Jacob, Abby and Amelia. He adored them immensely and I am sure that they will cherish the memories they have of their pop forever.

As a staunch Labor supporter, Mick was a life member of the Australian Labor Party and he strongly believed in and upheld traditional Labor values and principles. His commitment to the party will always be appreciated and never forgotten. Mick embodied the spirit of community. He was an active community-minded individual who dedicated his time and efforts towards the enhancement of his local neighbourhood. He was also a member of the Shellharbour Traffic Committee for many years. I am sure I speak on behalf of those who knew Mick when I say that he was a truly outstanding individual who will be sadly missed by his family, friends and the local community. May he rest in peace.

### **WELBY VILLAGE**

**Ms PRU GOWARD** (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [12.22 p.m.]: The Goulburn electorate extends over 7,000 square kilometres. I have spoken in this place before about the diverse nature of the electorate, comprising the city of Goulburn and the towns and

villages that nestle within the electorate. The village of Welby is situated just south-west of Mittagong, a hamlet of 300-odd houses perched on the side of a hill backing on to Mount Alexandra Reserve. It has had a long history dating back to the mid-nineteenth century when it was called Fitzroy, after the nearby coalmine, which flourished for a short time. It became host to the shire's tip for many years and suffered constant traffic through the village as drivers of cars with trailers queued to offload their assortment of garden waste, broken swings and a never-ending assortment of other household rubbish.

The tip was relocated to the outskirts of Moss Vale and remediation was carried out at Welby. The construction of the new Hume Highway bypass followed and, as a result, Welby has seen a resurgence of a village life. The playing fields at the top of the hill host many local sporting activities and are the location of the only synthetic surface hockey pitch in the shire. The Roads and Maritime Services motor registry office is located there alongside the famous Welby Garden Centre, which is the largest retail-wholesale nursery in the Southern Highlands.

It was at the Welby Garden Centre that I held one of my village visits last weekend. I had sent a notice to all residents letting them know I would be setting up my shingle at the Welby Garden Centre. I found a sheltered spot out of the blustery and very cold wind and, along with Meghan Barrell from my electorate office, I met with a number of residents who came along to let me know their concerns. We spoke about transport issues and a local crime spree, with graffiti and property theft being a common theme. It was an opportunity to remind the community to report graffiti using the graffiti hotline on 1800 707 125.

The Government understands the effect that graffiti has on the community. These thoughtless acts are extremely costly, not only because of the expense of cleaning up after the vandals but also because of the feeling of violation people feel about their personal property—their front fence or gate, their pot plants—or the way graffiti leaves public spaces looking. This is why the O'Farrell Government wants a stronger law to require young people charged with graffiti offences to appear before a court, to require perpetrators to clean up their graffiti and, if necessary, to have certain sanctions applied to their driving licences. The bill is before the upper House and I urge my colleagues to help make these offenders responsible for their crimes. I look forward also to the announcement of Graffiti Removal Day later this year.

The Southern Highlands is famed for our beautiful gardens, many of which are open to the public in spring and autumn. It is at this time of year that garden owners across the electorate are busy pruning and weeding, getting ready for the burst of growth as the days lengthen and the weather warms up. Welby Garden Centre was buzzing with locals selecting cold climate plants propagated and grown on site. When the last of my constituents left I dashed about and bought a couple to fill a few empty spots in my Goulburn garden.

Welby Garden Centre is run by Challenge Southern Highlands, an organisation of which I am proud to be patron. Originally founded in 1951 by parents who had children with an intellectual and/or physical disability, it has metamorphosed into a charitable organisation that is a supported employment service and vocational training centre for 42 disabled adults. It also has staff training and nursery horticultural staff, taking the overall staffing levels to over 70, one of the larger employers in the shire. Welby Garden Centre has become a well-respected supplier of plants and is especially recognised as a quality supplier of roses, deciduous trees, fruit trees and shrubs. Not only do the staff propagate the vast majority of the plants they sell; they also offer backyard gardening including lawn maintenance, weeding, pruning, fertilising and mulching—a very useful service for those of us who do not have the time to do these things. It also plays an important role in employing people with disabilities.

However, Challenge realises that nursery work is not suitable for all its employees. Therefore, it provides other meaningful employment options and the light packaging division holds the contract of processing the delivery of over 15,000 newspapers for 50 weeks of the year. Advertising material is collated and inserted and the papers are machine wrapped in plastic for delivery. Challenge also offers light assembly work and a secure document destruction service. These opportunities allow a larger number of supported employees to learn skills to be productive and gain self-esteem. In addition, Challenge assists those individuals who are capable of living independently but are currently living with a primary carer or in substandard homes by providing assisted accommodation to those excluded from public housing.

I acknowledge the inspiring work of Tony McElhinney, who as general manager leads a tight ship under the oversight of the committee, including Elizabeth Kenney, Mark Pepping and Denise Layton. The training, work and support that Challenge offers provide the employees with a dignified and useful place in the community and it is to be commended. I am always learning from their advice and proud to be patron of

Challenge Southern Highlands. Welby is only one village in my electorate. It will not be long before flowers and plants across the wonderful Goulburn electorate come into bloom. It is a beautiful sight and one I highly recommend.

### **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CELEBRATE A NIGHT TO SHINE**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [12.27 p.m.]: Last Thursday 16 August 2012 I had the pleasure of being the master of ceremonies at the 2012 performance of Catholic Schools Celebrate *A Night to Shine* featuring the combined creative talents of staff and 350 students from the following schools: St Joseph's Primary School, Quirindi; St Edward's Primary School, Tamworth; St Joseph's Primary School, West Tamworth; St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth; and McCarthy Catholic College. Over the past six months the current Combined Catholic Schools Cultural Committee spent considerable time planning and preparing for the production. It was the ninth performance of Catholic Schools Celebrate since its inception in 2001 at the Tamworth Town Hall.

At that time those involved in the organisation hoped that the event would be an annual highlight on the Catholic schools calendar and one which would celebrate all that has been and continues to be achieved in Catholic schools. In 2006, due to the increased numbers of students wishing to participate, the decision was made to move the production to the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre to accommodate the larger audiences and participation. In 2001 the first production entertained a crowd of 600. Last Thursday the audience was 1,200: it was an extraordinary evening.

It was truly a community event and the evening would not have been possible without the support of: Joblink Plus; Armidale Diocesan Investment Group; the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale; the *Northern Daily Leader*; Prime Television; Radio 92.9; Catholic Church Insurance; Church Resources; Peel Valley Tiles and Ceramics; Tamworth Rotary Club; Ray White Real Estate; Mark Sleiman of PRD Nationwide Real Estate; Michael Dumble Livestock Transport; Workforce International Pty Ltd; Lane-IT Computer Services; the Good Guys; Lloydsign Co. Signwriters; Lyons, Barnett and Kennedy; Tamworth City Real Estate; Simply Shine; and Choices Carpet Tamworth. This support highlights the community approach to and the great support for this magnificent event.

Catholic schools have much to celebrate and, through the close collaboration of students, teachers, staff, parents and sponsors, they did just that. St Joseph's School, West Tamworth, performed its wonderful show, *The Quest*. McCarthy Catholic College's vocal and instrumental ensemble performed the theme song from the hit movie and musical *Grease* and its dance group performed *Creatures of the Night*. St Edward's School, Tamworth, performed an extraordinary tribute, *Music through the Decades*, featuring the music of Elvis, the Bee Gees, MC Hammer and Abba and the song *Eye of the Tiger*. St Joseph's School, Quirindi, also did a wonderful performance of *Cinderella—The Shoe Off*, incorporating outstanding costumes and choreography. St Joseph's School, West Tamworth, performed *Humpty Dumpty* and the *The Moon* as its finale with the choir, which was very enjoyable.

Warren G. Bennis said that great things had been accomplished by the *Catholic Schools Celebrate A Night to Shine* on Thursday 16 August. I congratulate the organisers, led by Lisa McSweeney and staff, parents, carers and supporters on the outstanding performance and their great deal of effort. The show is held every two years because it takes a year to get over each one. I was proud and honoured to be part of *Catholic Schools Celebrate A Night to Shine*, and I look forward to 2014.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.32 p.m.]: I cannot think of a better master of ceremonies than the member for Tamworth, who is a seriously talented guitarist. I am impressed that the attendance figure of 600 at the first performance of Catholic Schools Celebrate has doubled to more than 1,200 this year. I note the number of businesses that support the Catholic schools celebration, and I thank the member for Tamworth for drawing this matter to the attention of the House.

### **COST OF LIVING**

**Mr NATHAN REES** (Toongabbie) [12.33 p.m.]: Loathe as I am to interrupt the love-in between the member for Tamworth and the member for Tweed, I want to refer to the issue of cost of living as it relates to my electorate of Toongabbie. As many members are aware, my electorate is the most marginal State seat in the middle of the most marginal Federal seat in New South Wales. The last time I looked at the census data held in the Parliamentary Library, the seat of Toongabbie and its constituents are almost smack bang on average on all the key indicators, whether they are socioeconomic, age, health, income, tertiary education or ethnicity.

**Mr David Elliott:** The local member is above average.

**Mr NATHAN REES:** I welcome the interjection of the member for Baulkham Hills. Toongabbie is a very typical seat, and I am in the fortunate position of being on the ground in a bellwether seat, one that provides a very strong indication of the issues that concern the people that all members in this place represent. I refer to the cost of living, such as, toll increases and rises in the price of bread, milk or petrol. Only a few short years ago we were talking about the price of petrol rising above \$1 a litre; now it is around \$1.50. It is fair to say that members of Parliament are paid well relative to the average wage earner in New South Wales or Australia. It is all too easy for us to get out of touch with the day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month battles that people face in meeting their household budget and making ends meet.

On many occasions their battle is exacerbated by a combination of price rises—for example, the 1 July price rises, which hit at one time. It is very difficult for a family that is trying to stick to a budget when 1 July rolls over and they are faced with increases in a range of areas: for example, electricity bills—I will not go into that—council rates; water bills; and phone bills, which are compounded by the complexity of the contracts entered into by family members. These increases are all contributing factors to the rising cost of living. This was brought home to me in the strongest terms when I overheard an earnest conversation among a number of fellows who were arguing the cost of washing powder for front loader washing machines versus top loaders. That led to a discussion about one appliance being more energy efficient than the other but that that energy efficiency was offset by the wastage of more water.

That is the level of discussion people are having in relation to the cost of living. The people we represent get down to tints. They are simply trying to make ends meet. They are paid award wages from which they pay their rent or mortgage and rear their children. Week to week, month to month they have to meet a budget, sometimes in extremely difficult circumstances. There is no easy solution other than a strong, growing economy and a fair and decent redistribution of wealth across the country. We certainly will not solve this problem in this Chamber on our own. However, it is a reminder to all members that cost-of-living pressures are omnipresent for the average family in New South Wales and Australia. It is incumbent on each of us to recognise that it is not a media invention, nor is it the product of someone simply being out of sorts. These are real increases in economic terms that challenge the family budget, particularly when we consider the increasing movement over the past 10 to 20 years of casualisation of the labour force.

Whereas 20 years ago sparkies, chippies and plumbers were on the payroll, now they are subcontractors and have an Australian Business Number. That brings with it a whole range of complexities and additional loads on the individual. They have to arrange cover for workers compensation and public liability insurance; they have to write and chase up invoices to ensure they are paid appropriately. They deal with many challenges that those who built the country did not have to contend with only a few short decades ago. It is a reminder to me and to all members that the cost of living remains the number one issue. It certainly has been and will continue to be a live and hotly contested issue in the seat of Toongabbie. I give my undertaking to the people of Toongabbie that I will never let this issue stray from the front of my mind.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.38 p.m.]: I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Toongabbie, a former Premier of New South Wales. I note his non-party political comments about the impact of the cost of living on everyone. I appreciate the complete sincerity of the member for Toongabbie in his comments. On behalf of the Government, I agree that one solution is to have a strong economy. At the State level this Government is trying to grow our economy so that we have high employment levels to enable people to better meet cost-of-living increases. I take on board the member's comment that increases in taxes and charges often take place on 1 July. I will explore a remedy to that issue, but I note that that has occurred under previous governments as well as under the current Government. I respect the sincerity of the contribution of the member for Toongabbie.

#### VIETNAM VETERANS REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.39 a.m.]: I refer to Vietnam Veterans Day, which was held last weekend. Various events were held across the country and I know that many members of this House attended events held in their electorates in New South Wales. I congratulate the Bathurst and District Vietnam Veterans Association on the work it has done this year. I particularly congratulate the president Kevin McDairmid, the secretary-treasurer Tony Walker and the media liaison officer Bob Trimming. This year Vietnam Veterans Day commemorated 50 years since the first Australian troops arrived in Vietnam to fight in a war where 521 Australians were killed and more than 3,000 were wounded.

In Bathurst the public were invited to attend a wreath-laying service, which was held at the Carillon in Kings Parade. On the Saturday evening a fiftieth anniversary dinner was held at the RSL club. Dick Johnson came along and shared some stories of his time in Vietnam. After reading and listening to various stories over the weekend, it was interesting to note not only that the Vietnam War was a horrible war but that the service men and women received a horrible reception on their return to Australia. These men and women left their families and went off to war but when they returned they were abused and insulted in the streets and they had objects thrown at them. It took a long time before Australia recognised the significant contribution made by these service men and women. Vietnam veterans say that Vietnam Veterans Day means a hell of a lot to them.

On the Sunday, a Vietnam veterans march, parade and service were held in Bathurst. The Vietnam veterans fell in behind the association's new banner at 10.20 a.m. and the march commenced at 10.30 a.m. at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park, located on Boundary Road, Bathurst. The veterans are very proud of that park. Members and partners of the Bathurst and District Vietnam Veterans Association carry out a great deal of voluntary work to keep the park in pristine condition all year round—mowing, tidying up, maintenance, tree planting and other improvements that are needed throughout the year. The work is time consuming but the volunteers give up their time to make the park look as good as it does.

The main service was held in the memorial park. This was followed by a commemorative service, which was exceptionally well attended not only by the veterans but also by a large number of Bathurst and district residents. As I said, Vietnam Veterans Day was special this year because it is the fiftieth anniversary of the commencement of the Vietnam War. There was also a strong connection between the Vietnam veterans and the Australian service personnel currently serving in Afghanistan, as some relatives of those personnel had served in Vietnam.

Our thoughts are with all those currently serving not only in Australia and Afghanistan but also in East Timor, Egypt, Iraq, the Middle East, Solomon Islands, South Sudan and the Australian Border Protection. A salute from the marchers was accepted by the Hon. John Cobb, the member for Calare and shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food Security. The Hon. John Cobb also was the official guest speaker at the event. I was proud to be invited to attend and I was proud to be standing alongside the Vietnam veterans and their families. I congratulate the Guard Commander and the cadets of the 328 Squadron, 3 Wing and the Australian Air Force, who performed the duties of flag and banner bearers throughout the day.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms CLOVER MOORE** (Sydney) [12.43 p.m.]: Climate change is the biggest challenge faced by governments. My constituents want the State Government to establish a plan to significantly cut New South Wales greenhouse gas emissions and they want leaders to stop using the issue of climate change to score political points. This year researchers have all but closed the case on human activity and our changing climate: Climate change is happening and we have caused it. Politicians must listen to the experts and take action for our future. Climate change could diminish our environment, health, food supply and economy and create new refugee emergencies.

The joint CSIRO and Australian Bureau of Meteorology State of the Climate 2012 paper reports that the world's 13 warmest years on record occurred in the past 15 years, with every decade warmer than the previous since the 1950s. Sea levels are rising. The report states that concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> measured in the atmosphere in 2011 were the highest in 800,000 years. The report projects Australia's average temperatures to rise by one to five degrees Celsius by 2070, but it also tells us that "action within the next decade to lower greenhouse gas emissions will reduce the probability and severity of climate change impacts".

The carbon tax, which began on 1 July, will help strengthen the financial viability of low carbon energy and create green jobs as we shift from polluting practices. Households are receiving compensation to offset increased costs. The Climate Commission report released today shows the world is moving fast to introduce carbon pricing. By next year, schemes will include 850 million people in 33 countries. China is planning an emissions trading scheme and India limits emissions by its largest polluters and has a price on carbon. While we are not the only country taking action, this has not prevented party politicking from dominating debate. New South Wales should legislate for a strong greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020 with annual goals.

We should set a timetable to close the most polluting power plants and place a moratorium on new and expanded coal-fired power. Additional power to replace the heavily polluting Munmorah coal-fired power station, which closed on 4 July, should come from renewables such as solar thermal. I welcome Federal and

State government funding for solar plants at Broken Hill and Nyngan. New South Wales needs a strong renewable energy supply target. We should produce all energy to meet the 20 per cent 2020 renewable energy consumption target rather than purchase it from other States and miss out on a local renewable industry. I look forward to a strong Renewable Energy Action Plan.

We need a solar bonus scheme that promotes a sustainable solar industry and requires energy retailers to pay a fair price for renewable energy returned to the grid from solar panels. Energy efficiency targets should be strengthened and apply to electricity distributors. With around 66 per cent of energy lost through heat during transmission from distant power stations, coal-fired power could be made more efficient. The budgets of electricity companies should be subject to mandatory minimum demand management expenditure, given that most new infrastructure is for peak demand, not overall consumption. New appliances, buildings and industrial processes should be subject to higher efficiency performance standards. Fossil fuels subsidies need to be redirected to greener industries.

The City of Sydney's Sustainable Sydney plan aims to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 70 per cent by 2030. We are taking the city off the coal-fired grid by creating low carbon precincts with locally produced power from trigeneration. Trigenation captures waste heat from electricity generation to heat and cool buildings, reducing the need for grid power. Trigenation systems are nearly three times more efficient than coal-fired power stations and would save \$1.5 billion in avoided energy infrastructure. We are retrofitting the energy and water performance of the City of Sydney's 45 properties, which will soon have solar panels. This will be the country's largest building-mounted solar installation. We are installing LED lighting in our streets and parks—the first in Australia to do so—and our sustainability programs continue to help businesses and residents reduce energy consumption.

Our Better Buildings Partnership with 14 major property owners who own 60 per cent of the central business district's commercial properties will make Sydney one of the world's leading green cities through energy efficiency and green infrastructure hubs. This is vital because 80 per cent of emissions occur in cities. Our economy needs to change from one based on unlimited cheap fossil fuel to one based on efficiency and renewables. Change is not always easy, particularly for governments, but limiting global warming is essential for our economy, our way of life and our children's future. This is the critical decade and the sooner we cut emissions, the cheaper the reductions will be. New South Wales—the Premier State—should lead on a national and global level. I call on the State Government to get serious about climate change and establish short- and long-term plans to significantly cut emissions.

## CHINA TRADE AND INVESTMENT

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [12.48 p.m.]: With a relatively high percentage of people from a Chinese background in my electorate of Davidson, I was especially interested when the Premier recently launched new research into the nature and extent of Chinese investment in Australia. The KPMG and University of Sydney report shows that, despite a focus on minerals and energy, New South Wales has the most diversified investment from China across sectors, including mining, energy, agribusiness, real estate and architecture. We are witnessing increasing engagement between Australia and China in areas including business, trade, tourism, education and research. Chinese businesses continue to consider New South Wales as a destination for their investment. Such investment promotes New South Wales employment, innovation and economic development. As the Premier has said, international education is at the core of relationship building and engagement and forms the basis for future personal, business and research collaborations for mutual benefit.

Like the Premier, I visited China during the parliamentary winter recess. Whilst I paid for my international airfare, for inbound travel I was the guest of various organisations, including the Sichuan Provincial Government. The responsibility of Sichuan Provincial Government extends to the city of Chengdu where I spent most of my week in China. Representing the New South Wales Government, together with the member for Oatley, I spoke to a gathering of 300 to 400 people, including senior dignitaries, at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] conference. In conjunction with that event, and with assistance from the Australia International Trade Association [AITA], led by Michael Guo, we hosted an Australian pavilion in a huge exhibition hall. We also spoke in other forums and met with numerous business and government officials. The Australia China Economics, Trade and Culture Association [ACETCA] conference then followed.

The Australia China Economics, Trade and Culture Association was initiated by members of the Chinese community living in Australia. Sydney is the main location of the association, with branches in China, and it is led by Lam Fai Yuen, otherwise known as Gary Lam, who is one of a group of eight successful

entrepreneurs from China. The broader association executive includes a range of people such as Amen Lee and Dr Ven Tan, with further guidance from honorary advisers such as Frank Chou. Xue Shuihe was the local host of the forum in Chengdu. Coincidentally, he has a home in my electorate and his four children were educated at Killara High School. I am pleased to inform the House that next month one of his children, Steven, will be celebrating his engagement to Cindy in Sydney.

The Australian-Chinese community leaders in the Australia China Economics, Trade and Culture Association attach much importance to enhancing and fostering traditional Chinese virtues, while strengthening existing collaboration in economics and culture between Australia and China for our mutual benefit. The association has a broad vision to contribute to society. Its members strive to undertake self improvement and show selfless dedication, solidarity, enthusiasm and support for charity work. Consistent with this, the association recently donated approximately \$100,000 towards the reconstruction of a primary school in an area affected by the 2008 Sichuan earthquake and to the China Disabled Persons' Federation for the relief of children with cerebral palsy. I look forward to my continued engagement with Australian-Chinese people and with China in the representation of my electorate and the broader New South Wales public.

### YASS WATER SUPPLY

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [12.52 p.m.]: It has been my privilege to represent the community of Yass in this Parliament for the past 13½ years. In that time I have spoken of the need to upgrade the Yass town water supply on at least 10 occasions. I also have asked 13 questions on notice and one question without notice about this issue. During the height of the drought in 2005, because of the inadequate actions of the then State Labor Government, I sought emergency assistance from then Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson. Given this background, it is appropriate that I again raise the importance of continued investment in the Yass town water supply and update the House on the current situation. I will not revisit my earlier statements, except to say that Yass has limited water storage and the situation is only now being addressed after 16 years of government inaction.

After years of debating different ways of getting more water to the town, including construction of a pipeline from Yass to Canberra and bringing water back from Jugiong, Yass Valley Council, as the local water utility, eventually determined the best medium-term solution was to raise the wall of the Yass dam by two metres. This would significantly increase its storage capacity, and planning and funding requests proceeded on that basis. The council applied to the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program for subsidised funding. This program was introduced in 1994 by the last State Coalition Government as a commitment to subsidise the capital costs to bring country town water and sewage works up to a standard modern enough to meet the standards of 1996. Labor won government in 1995. During the life of the program Labor failed to provide sufficient annual funding to meet its committed target and it failed to adjust funding for indexation.

In 2004 the funding of the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program was capped at \$1.2 billion and the remaining projects were given a prioritised ranking of one to 10. Then the 2008 mini-budget reduced the budget four-year forward allocation by \$42 million, resulting in almost \$14 million being cut from the first budget year of the O'Farrell Government. Because of Labor's bungling, all Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program funds have now been fully committed and only those projects ranked one to four are guaranteed funding. The 123 projects across the State ranked five to 10 remain unfunded. Yass water supply is one of those projects, as it received a ranking of five. Some 20 Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage projects across the State—of the same importance as Yass—are also ranked five and unable to be funded. As the Minister with portfolio responsibility for water infrastructure in regional New South Wales, I have inherited an enormously difficult situation at a time of exceptionally tight budget constraints.

In late 2006, with a State election approaching and the drought looking as though it would never end, I obtained a commitment from the Liberal-Nationals Coalition that if it won office in March 2007 a subsidy for the raising of the Yass dam wall would be provided in its first year in government. Sadly, the Coalition did not win that election. The New South Wales economy then entered a further period of stagnation and low growth under Labor, culminating in the extremely difficult budgetary situation that the O'Farrell Government has now inherited. My constant lobbying of the former State Labor Government resulted in an interest-free loan to Yass Valley Council and work has commenced to raise the Yass dam wall. However, in the past 16 months Yass Shire Council has changed the scope of the project. The dam wall is now to be raised an additional three metres and the 2006 projected cost has blown out by an additional 50 per cent to \$22 million. The Yass Valley Council is now seeking a State Government subsidy based on this increased cost.



Unfortunately, there has been some uninformed and ignorant criticism of the O'Farrell Government for not doing in one year what the Labor Government failed to do in 16 years. As the Minister responsible for water in regional New South Wales I recognise the importance of upgrading water and sewerage infrastructure in regional New South Wales. The Government is working closely with Infrastructure NSW, headed by Mr Paul Broad, in an effort to undo the Labor Government's mismanagement of infrastructure across New South Wales, including regional water infrastructure. When the 20-year State Infrastructure Strategy is released later this year the Government will have a framework within which to develop specific plans to meet the future water infrastructure needs of regional New South Wales. I acknowledge that many regional towns need their town water supply and sewerage programs upgraded and I can reassure the people of regional New South Wales that I am working as hard as I can to ensure those needs are met into the future.

### **HAWKESBURY SERVICE CLUBS**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [12.57 p.m.]: Recently I had the pleasure of hosting a visit to Parliament House by President Jenny Fallon and 25 members of the Hawkesbury Combined Probus Club, who enjoyed a tour and light lunch in the Speaker's Garden. The club was formed by combining smaller clubs. It meets monthly at the Richmond Club and its meetings are well attended. In recent years club membership has grown rapidly. Membership is capped at 130 and there is a waiting list to join. Probus is a project of Rotary International. It is derived from two words: professional and business. Probus is an association of retired people who join together in a non-political and non-sectarian international club. It provides a regular opportunity for like-minded folk to meet, make new friends and expand their interests.

I first became aware of the Hawkesbury Combined Probus Club when I was the Mayor of Hawkesbury City Council. I have spoken at its meetings and now, as the member for Londonderry, I have had the pleasure of hosting a trip of club members to Parliament House. The club has many smaller social groups within it, including a dining group and a four-wheel-drive group, as well as history and tour groups that organise regular tours and outings to places of interest such as Parliament House. Probus was founded in 1965 and has over 325,000 members in 4,500 clubs worldwide. In Australia Probus clubs work very closely with local Rotary clubs. Recently, on behalf of the Premier, I presented my local Rotary club with a cheque. That money will be used for the purchase of a graffiti removal machine.

Rotary Clubs International, which is a well-renowned and respected organisation, has been providing humanitarian services since it was founded in 1906 by Chicago businessman Paul Harris. We have all seen local service clubs such as Rotary, Lions and Apex working on local projects such as Bunnings barbecues. They have also provided major support to help eradicate polio and funding to undertake vital research that has drastically reduced the number of infant deaths from horrible diseases such as leukaemia. Now there are other worthwhile community projects that local Rotary clubs in my electorate and others are actively involved in. They include graffiti removal and, importantly, mental illness.

Recently I attended an information evening hosted by two Rotary clubs in my electorate—Richmond and Kurrajong-North Richmond—that was sponsored by the local Bendigo Bank branch in North Richmond. The meeting was held to discuss two vital projects that Rotary is involved with. As I mentioned, I had the pleasure of presenting not one but two cheques on behalf of the Premier and the New South Wales Government that will be used to undertake vital community services. One of the cheques was for \$3,000 to purchase a compressor and spray-painting machine to help remove graffiti on large expanses of wall. The second cheque was in the amount of \$5,000 for the Western Sydney Suicide Prevention and Support Network, which is strongly supported by Rotary, and will be used to provide suicide support and prevention kits that could help save lives throughout western Sydney.

Rotary clubs do fantastic work. In their graffiti removal operations they work hard with councils and the community to remove graffiti in our regions. Again, I call on the Labor Party and The Greens to pass the Government's Graffiti Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, which will introduce tougher penalties for perpetrators of this crime. It is not only me calling on Labor and The Greens to support the legislation; the community is sick and tired of graffiti vandalism. It is everywhere across our State and it is time we clamped down and made perpetrators aware that we are serious about penalising them for vandalising our communities. I call on the Opposition to get on with it and pass the legislation. Volunteers from organisations such as Rotary and Probus are doing wonderful humanitarian work both locally and globally. I will always be there to add my strong support and practical assistance wherever I can to help advance the aims and objectives of the great service-based organisations that work hard to make our communities much better places to live.

## ASSYRIAN MARTYRS AND GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr ANDREW ROHAN** (Smithfield) [1.02 p.m.]: The date 7 August is of special significance to Assyrians throughout the world as it marks the national day of remembrance for all the massacres that the Assyrian nation has endured throughout the millennia. The Assyrians are one of the most ancient civilisations in the world. They are the original inhabitants of Mesopotamia, which translates to "the land between the two rivers" and is also known as the cradle of civilisation. Assyrians were amongst the first to accept Christianity in the first century. They spread the gospel from Mesopotamia eastwards, all the way to China and Japan through the Church of the East, which peaked during the seventh century. However, this has cost them greatly, particularly over the past 1,400 years since the Islamic invasion of Mesopotamia, followed by the Mongols and the Ottomans. Since then Assyrians have been the victims of many massacres. History shows that about 37 major massacres were committed in that period—which is an average of one every 45 years.

During the First World War more than 750,000 Assyrians together with 1.5 million Armenians and 500,000 Greeks were murdered by the Ottoman Empire forces in an attempt to cleanse the land of all the Christian minorities from Turkey. This was to be known later as the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek genocide, the first genocide of the twentieth century. My parents were survivors of this genocide, as I mentioned in my inaugural speech in this Parliament on 1 June 2011. On 7 August 1933—only one year after Iraq joined the League of Nations—Iraq's newly established army marched on and massacred nearly 6,000 innocent Assyrians at Simele, a peaceful village in northern Iraq. That day became known as Assyrian Martyrs Day.

In New South Wales two-thirds of the Assyrian population reside within the boundaries of Fairfield city and they are among the major community groups in the electorates of Smithfield and Fairfield. On 8 March this year I was honoured to be elected chairman of the Assyrian Parliamentary Friendship Group, alongside deputy chairmen the Hon. David Clarke and Guy Zangari, the member for Fairfield. This year's commemoration included a number of events. On the morning of 7 August 2012 a prayer was said at the location of the Assyrian genocide monument in Bonnyrigg. Later on the same day I had the honour of hosting a commemorative seminar, which was organised by the Assyrian Universal Alliance in association with the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the Theatre Room of this Parliament.

A number of speeches were presented at the seminar. In particular, the presentations by distinguished researchers Dr Racho Donef and Stavros Stavridis shed some light on the plight of Assyrians in the early to mid twentieth century. Dr Donef talked about the Assyrian genocide during his talk entitled "Denialism and One Century of Struggle for Recognition", while Mr Stavridis covered the period 1914 to 1935 using documentation and press accounts from Australian archives. Finally, a powerful and moving documentary entitled *Defying Deletion* was presented by filmmaker Andre Anton. The documentary, which has been screened in the Federal and State Parliaments, aims at raising awareness of the plight of Assyrians in the aftermath of the 2003 war in Iraq. The executive producer of the documentary, Dr Elmer Abbo, discussed a project called "The Fight for Nineveh Plains" and the need to establish a home for Assyrians in their ancestral homeland.

The seminar was also attended by Federal and State members of Parliament alongside a large presence from the Assyrian community in Sydney and representatives from the Armenian and Greek communities. All speakers at the seminar called upon the State and Federal governments to recognise the Assyrian, Armenian and Greek genocide. I commend the efforts of Mr Hermiz Shahen, Deputy Secretary General of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, and Mr David David, President of the Assyrian Australian National Federation, for their tireless work in raising the Assyrian issue within Australia and abroad.

## GIANT STEPS SYDNEY

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [1.06 p.m.]: The Giant Steps Sydney organisation within my electorate of Lane Cove is undertaking fantastic work. Every parent prays that their children will be healthy and will grow up to be happy and well. When families have a child afflicted with autism it can place them under tremendous strain. That is why it is so crucial to teach autistic children at a young age the skills they will need throughout their lives. This is an important first step in helping not only the child to live a happy and fulfilling life but also in assisting those families to cope with the pressures that are placed upon them.

Giant Steps Sydney is located in Gladesville within the Old Gladesville Hospital site. The school was founded in July 1995 by a group of dedicated parents, who took their lead from a pioneering Canadian educational program. Their goal was to bring to Australia the world's best practice in the treatment and

education of children with autism. Some 17 years later Giant Steps Sydney has evolved into a leading educational centre for children with autism and their families. This institution is a truly grassroots success story that I am incredibly proud of and one that the community is fortunate to have.

Giant Steps offers a remarkable range of services, from early intervention to a school for children aged five to 18 years of age. It provides a wide-ranging combination of strategies to help children with autism cope with their condition. In the long run parents and siblings benefit from having the right foundations laid for their family members at an early stage. For instance, one of its programs includes developing an understanding of the value of money, transacting money within the community and, additionally, saving and banking with financial institutions. Another program uses a large number of visual aids to help emotional regulation. Occupational and speech therapy are provided across all programs, as well as extracurricular activities such as music. Together, these initiatives are of great benefit to the students of Giant Steps. What is more, Giant Steps recognises that not only autistic children need a helping hand; it also operates an adult service, GS Community College.

However, none of these attainments comes cheaply: \$77,000 per student per year is required to run the school. While the Government provides half the cost of care, many people involved with the school do a fantastic job of making up the difference. In particular, I take this opportunity to mention the work of Ms Aileen Liu, a working mother from Lane Cove with two children. One of Aileen's children is enrolled at Giant Steps. Ms Liu's fundraising efforts for the school have been exemplary. In the 2011 City2Surf she raised \$42,000 to assist with running Giant Steps. This year she has raised more than \$34,000 and, thanks to her, donations are still pouring in.

Ms Liu's achievements, and the wonderful achievements of so many other people associated with Giant Steps, are proof of the determination and desire of members of our society to better the lives of others, and it is this contribution that has made Giant Steps such a success. I again reiterate my pride in the fact that Giant Steps Sydney is part of the Lane Cove electorate. I heartily commend the staff and parents at Giant Steps Sydney not only for their contribution to my electorate but also for improving the lives of so many families across New South Wales, with their goal to bring to Australia the treatment and education of children with autism. These children are full of love: they are beautiful. They are part of families. Again, we are indeed truly blessed to have an organisation such as Giant Steps, with great people running and supporting it, with the help of government.

### **GOSFORD RECONCILIATION ART COMPETITION AND EXHIBITION**

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN** (Gosford) [1.11 p.m.]: Today I draw to the attention of members that at the 2012 Reconciliation Week celebrations in Gosford we held our annual flagship art exhibition. The reconciliation art competition is held at our regional art gallery. This was the twelfth year of the art exhibition and competition that is run by NSW Fair Trading, together with the Gosford Regional Art Gallery, to coincide with Reconciliation Week. This reconciliation art competition provides a platform for local Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to showcase their work while promoting reconciliation in a positive and practical way. This year more than 130 works of art were featured in the exhibition and 22 awards were judged. My colleague the Minister for Fair Trading attended to present the awards, and I was delighted to join him for the presentations. I was also delighted that he took time from his busy schedule to make the presentations on a weekend.

For the 22 awards the prizes ranged from book packs and certificates to monetary rewards. The award winners were as follows and they deserve mention in this place. The winner in the open section was Madeline Anderson, with Kylie Cassidy in second place. In the non-Indigenous section Noeline Millar won, with Michelle Pullen in second place. Winners of the Indigenous Youth awards were Taylor Reid and Reigan Bugeia. Many of our schools enter the competition as well. Ettalong Public School won the Indigenous School Project award in the kindergarten to year 6 section, Brisbane Water Secondary College won the Indigenous School Project award in the years 7 to 12 section, Mannering Park Primary School won the Collaborative School Project award in the kindergarten to year 6 section, St Philip's and DALE Christian school won the Encouragement Award in the year 6 collaborative section, and Umina Public School won the Encouragement Award in the kindergarten to year 6 collaborative section.

Other schools to win awards included The Entrance Public School, which won the encouragement award. Wyoming Public School won an encouragement award, Gorokan High School was the winner of the collaborative section for years 7 to 12, Wyong Christian Community School won an encouragement award, and The Haven Education Centre won a collaborative encouragement award. The winners in the open collaborative section were Wendy Pawley and Ruth Gale, with Peter Baku and Madeline Anderson in second place. The

Girrakool Education and Training Unit not only picked up a highly commended in the Frank Baxter award but also won that section. Wendy Pawley, who placed second, won the prestigious Tony Donovan Reconciliation Award, and Brett Parker won the major award in that section. In congratulating all the award winners the Minister said that he continued to be impressed with the wealth of artistic talent in the Central Coast region.

The event was originally conceived in 1999 as an art exhibition and then expanded in 2000 to include a competition to foster links with the local Aboriginal community and to demonstrate Fair Trading's commitment to the Aboriginal community through the NSW Fair Trading Aboriginal Action Plan. Since then a number of other government departments have sponsored a range of prizes. In addition, a number of non-government organisations also sponsor the event, which is truly embraced across the community, in both the government and non-government sectors. As a Gosford city councillor I have been involved with this event since its inception, and Gosford City Council is also a sponsor. I have regularly attended the event over the years: it continues to get bigger and better. It has a great feel-good factor but it is also another way to build on reconciliation. The exhibition is well attended every year, and it is a great credit to the Department of Fair Trading on the Central Coast, Gosford City Council and all the individuals involved in the event.

### CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Mr ANDREW CORNWELL** (Charlestown) [1.15 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about some of the fantastic capital works projects taking place in public schools in my electorate. Under the O'Farrell Government's Public Schools Upgrade Program I have been fortunate to secure three major upgrade projects, the first of which involves Belair Public School, which has received \$146,716 to upgrade its roofs, gutters and stormwater infrastructure. This school is located on a slope. With the condition of the roofing and the guttering, every time we get heavy rain the students must walk through ankle-deep water. This was particularly the case during some of the severe storm events we have had in recent years.

When I attended the school presentation at Christmas time last year there was quite a deluge and parents, students and visitors, including me, had to wade through ankle-deep water to get to the new school hall. This project will certainly make an enormous difference for the students at Belair Public School. I note that at present we are working closely with the school to rectify some of the parking problems around the school that create a danger to students when they are dropped off and picked up. I hope we will be able to resolve some of those issues shortly through the traffic committee. The second project is at Kahibah Public School, which was lucky enough to secure \$95,000 for a toilet upgrade. I note that Kahibah Public School is the former school of the member for Coffs Harbour.

The toilet issue at Kahibah Public School has been longstanding. When the toilet block was built the doorway faced the street rather than the school, which created an enormous problem for teachers to supervise students going in and out of the toilet block. It also posed a potential risk for students if there was any potential predatory behaviour around the school. Parents and the principal have raised this longstanding issue with me, and I am absolutely delighted that we have been fortunate to secure these funds, which will be used not only to renovate the toilet block but also to reposition the doorway. That will make it easier for the staff to supervise the students adequately and to provide a better amenity for the students.

The third major project is a security fence around Mount Hutton Public School. This school has been on the receiving end of malicious damage, break-ins and vandalism over recent years. The school has a large footprint: it is fortunate to have a good playground area. Unfortunately, that has meant fencing the school is an expensive project. I am absolutely delighted that we have secured \$150,000 for this project, which will fully fence the school. I am sure that not only the staff and students but also the parents will be delighted. The lack of fencing a problem in terms of the financial cost to the school when property is either damaged or broken into and it is extremely upsetting for the students. I am sure that many parents have spent time consoling their children after someone has broken into a school classroom and damaged their work. There is the feeling of invasion of their privacy. This is a worthwhile project.

In addition, the 2012-13 capital works budget has also been kind to my electorate. One project is at Warners Bay Public School. This is an older school and the buildings are in a degree of disrepair, predominantly due to their age but also due to the fact that it is a leafy campus. As a result, leaves tend to sit in gutters, which creates additional wear and tear on the school. The Department of Education and Communities will upgrade the four school toilet blocks, J, G, L and M. This will result in a vastly improved amenity for students. Together with the school parents and citizens association and the principal, we are also considering using some existing school funds to improve the school fencing. Parents have raised the issue of security at the school, and we are

seeking to address it. These projects will make an enormous difference to students in my electorate. A multitude of other schools have received money for minor maintenance but I will not go into that in detail. Education is dear to my heart—my five-year-old is starting school next year—and I am delighted that schools in my electorate have received this additional funding. I thank the Government and I thank the House for allowing me to raise these issues.

### MULTICULTURAL FILM FESTIVALS

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI** (Strathfield) [1.20 p.m.]: It is the season for film festivals, not only in New South Wales but throughout Australia. As the co-chair of three ministerial consultative committees representing the Chinese, Korean and Russian communities, I have pleasure in advising that they all recognise the importance of films as a means of bridging cultures by promoting understanding between them. There is life in film land outside Hollywood and Bollywood. Recently we have seen masterpieces of film coming from Russia and from many Asian countries. I am advised, in fact, that some Hollywood productions are based on Asian films. For example, *The Departed* was based on a Chinese film. It stars two of my favourite actors, Leonardo DiCaprio—I am sure he is Italian—and Matt Damon, who wishes he was Italian.

I like to compare western and eastern perspectives on major historical events that have occurred during my lifetime and in the past and to reflect on the differences between those perspectives. Those different perspectives can assist us greatly in understanding the similarities and the differences between our respective cultures. One by-product of watching non-English films is that I am learning to read faster because the subtitles appear on the screen and disappear very quickly. It can sometimes be annoying when my wife turns to me at different times during the film to say, "I didn't get that. Can you please tell me what we are up to?"

The International Chinese Film Festival was launched at Parliament House on Friday 17 August. It is one of the larger film festivals, held at the Event Cinemas in George Street, Sydney, from 15 to 22 September. I thank Lanwei Gong, President of the International Chinese Film Festival; Mick Robbins, Director of China Lion Film Entertainment; Will McDonald, Regional Head of Accord Pacific Holdings; and Stephen Jennifer, Senior Public Relations Consultant to the screen media industry throughout the Asia-Pacific region. I am looking forward to seeing my favourite film, *Jia Wu Da Hai Zhan*. I am Italian and many Chinese are probably scratching their heads and saying, "What the hell did he say?" The film is an epic story based on historical events about a group of patriotic youth who returned to China after overseas study and fought in the Sino-Japanese War.

Tomorrow the Korean Film Festival will be launched at the Dendy Cinemas, Circular Quay, at 6.30 p.m. It will last for one week and will show a variety of films that showcase Korean culture and entertainment. I am looking forward to seeing *War of the Arrows*, a South Korean historical action film set after the second Manchu invasion of Korea. This year's Korean Film Festival will showcase 20 of the best and latest Korean feature films as well as some past classics in a diverse program that will allow audiences to discover their connection to Korean cinema and culture. The Korean film festival has been organised by the Korean Cultural Office. Special mention must go to the chief officer, Dr Lee Dong-ok, who has done wonderful work not just with this film festival, but in promoting Korean culture throughout New South Wales. I also thank Inji Jung, the festival coordinator, and Kieran Tully, the artistic director. The mission of the Korean Cultural Office sums up beautifully the value that this organisation brings to understanding between our cultures:

To enlighten and entertain through quality contemporary and traditional cultural content in order to strengthen the emotional bond between Australia and Korea.

On 30 August the Russian Film Festival will be launched at the Chauvel Cinema on Oxford Street, Paddington. In Sydney it will be held between 30 August and 12 September. In 2012 we celebrate 70 years of diplomatic relations between Australia and Russia and this will be the ninth time the Australia-wide film festival has been held. The Russian Film Festival is the largest celebration of Russian cinema outside that country. I congratulate Nicholas Maksymow, the festival director, and I look forward to watching at least one of the 24 amazing Russian films that will be on offer to Australian audiences. I commend everyone involved in these film festivals. I have no doubt that they will assist in promoting understanding between our cultures.

### HOLROYD CITY 140TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr TONY ISSA** (Granville) [1.25 p.m.]: On Saturday I had the privilege of being part of Holroyd city's 140th anniversary celebrations. The City of Holroyd was incorporated on 5 July 1872 and was originally known as the Municipality of Prospect and Sherwood. The name was changed to Holroyd on 11 January 1927.

Arthur Todd Holroyd was the first mayor of the municipality. The municipality was proclaimed as a city on New Year's Day 1991. The first council meeting was held on Tuesday 3 September 1872 at the residence of Richard Harper, JP, in Church Street, Parramatta, for the purpose of electing a mayor. Council meetings were then held at Mr Whitworth's cottage in Western Road, Mays Hill—which is now part of the Great Western Highway. Later the house was demolished and the first purpose-built chambers were erected on the corner of Burnett Street and Western Road, Mays Hill.

Property owners paid or petitioned for railway platforms to be built on their estate. The opening of railway stations in the district provided the opportunity for property owners to subdivide their land for housing and small farms. This contributed to the naming and formation of many of Holroyd's current suburbs. Four years later, in 1876, the Guildford railway station was built and Merrylands railway station followed in 1878. Toongabbie railway station opened in 1880, with Wentworthville—originally known as T. R. Smith's platform—and Westmead railway stations both opening in 1883.

In 1886 the population of the Holroyd municipality was 1,000. The second council chamber was completed in 1914 and was located in Arcadia Street, Merrylands. In the 1921 census the population of the area had reached 8,737. By 1933 the population had nearly doubled, to 15,914. By 1946 the municipality boasted 225 shops, eight post offices, three banks, nine schools, four real estate agents, one solicitor and three picture theatres and the municipality had 227 kilometres of road. In the 1947 census the population of the municipality had reached 24,129. In 1962 the present council chambers were constructed in Memorial Avenue, Merrylands—about 100 metres from my office. In 1966 the population was 65,823.

Holroyd is located approximately 25 kilometres from the central business district of Sydney. It covers an area of 39.25 square kilometres. In 2006 a population of 89,765 was recorded as the usual number of residents within the city. I was pleased to attend Holroyd city's 140th year celebrations, which took place on Saturday 18 August 2012 at Holroyd Gardens. I am pleased to say that thousands of people were in attendance. I was honoured that the Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney, attended, showing his commitment to the people of western Sydney. Councillor Yvette Whitfield, mayor of the city and the first female mayor in the history of Holroyd, said she was honoured to be the mayor during this significant moment in the council's history. She also said the event provided an opportunity for our community to unify and reflect on the history of the local area and on the future.

Holroyd city's 140th year celebrations marked the 140th birthday of Holroyd and brought together the local community in celebrating the building of an active, growing, balanced, connected and dynamic city. The day boasted very an entertaining program, including the Holroyd Hay Alliance Rodeo, which was welcomed as a feature of the entertainment to give people outside of the country rodeo community the opportunity to enjoy an event that they may not otherwise experience. Other features of the show included a custom car and ute show, market and food stalls, exhibitions, amusement rides, live stage performances, prizes and spectacular fireworks. There were outstanding performances by community groups and great excitement on the day for children and parents alike. Proceeds from a gold coin entry were shared by local primary and high schools. It was hoped that up to \$15,000 in total would be raised for the schools. Finally, I wish Holroyd City Council a happy 140th birthday.

#### **Private members' statements concluded.**

*[The Assistant-Speaker (Mr Andrew Fraser) left the chair at 1.30 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of a study tour of Whips under the auspices of the South African National Council of Provinces. The delegation of 27 comprises Whips from both the National Council of Provinces and the various Provincial Assemblies and is led by the Honourable Ms N. D. Ntwanambi, the Chief Whip of the National Council of Provinces.

I also draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of a study tour of staff of the Bureau of Legal Affairs from the Secretariat of the House of Representatives, Kingdom of Thailand, led by the Director of the Secretariat, Mr Somchart Tammasiri.

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Notices of Motions**

#### **Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.**

**QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.18 p.m.]*

**EDUCATION FUNDING**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier. The Federal Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, said yesterday that it is an injustice that 66 per cent of students who attend public schools get 79 per cent of the funding. Is that why the Premier has cut special needs funding for 272 schools, cancelled the demountable replacement program and axed 2,400 staff in public schools and TAFE colleges?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** This year we will spend something like \$11 billion on public education. But we do so because we are proud of the tradition that started here in New South Wales of delivering public education to the people of Australia—public education that guaranteed Australian citizens, from the century before last to today, a minimum standard of education: a guaranteed minimum standard of education, the relevant age for which the member for Toongabbie, when he was Premier, raised to 17 years. It is one of the strengths upon which this State's success has been based: it is one of the strengths upon which this State's future success will be based.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The claims put forward by those opposite about so-called cuts to funding in this area are incorrect. The Minister for Education has informed the House that the Government is determined to improve outcomes not just for high-performing students but also for students with special needs and learning difficulties. The question by the member is based on the lie put forward by the Prime Minister during question time in the Federal Parliament yesterday. I assume I can say that the Prime Minister was lying in question time yesterday without being ejected from the House?

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: I have two points of order. The word "lying" is unparliamentary and the Premier should withdraw it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Precedent establishes the term "lying" as unparliamentary in this Chamber if it is directed towards a member of this Chamber. In this case it was not directed to any member. There is no point of order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The suggestion by those opposite that the Federal Coalition would reduce funding to government schools was ruled out yesterday. The Gillard Government would provide certainty for all public and private schools across the country if it indicated its official position to each of the Gonski recommendations. The Prime Minister and the Federal Minister for Schools, Early Childhood and Youth, Peter Garrett, are simply pretending to tick a box in relation to the Gonski report without committing a single dollar. Mr Gonski and his committee recommended that the Federal Government commit \$5 billion to the delivery of the central tenet of the Gonski committee's report: that no school would be worse off under that funding proposal. The New South Wales Government has made its intentions clear. They were made clear by the Minister for Education a fortnight ago when the resource allocation model for public schools in New South Wales was produced.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** No new money.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** What was that?

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** No new money.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Those opposite should look at the budget: funding for schools has increased above the rate of inflation.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: The Premier is misleading the House. Guise Public School has had its funding significantly reduced.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The funding for schools across New South Wales was increased by 3 per cent in the budget.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was clearly about why the Government has cut special needs funding.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Government will continue to direct resources to where they are needed in education. That includes improving support for students in classrooms, for special needs students and for schools in which special needs education is carried out. There is more to be said about that. Those opposite are shedding crocodile tears after 16 years of too little resourcing and capital expenditure in our schools. This Government is getting on with the job.

### FORCED ADOPTIONS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** My question is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the planned apology in relation to forced adoptions?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. I advise the House that the Government does intend to formally apologise for past forced adoption practices which occurred in New South Wales. New South Wales will be the third State to issue such an apology following apologies from the Parliament of Western Australia in 2010 and the Parliament of South Australia last month. It is difficult to imagine the grief and trauma endured by young unmarried mothers during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s when they were forced to give up their babies for adoption. Thankfully some of these women have had the courage to speak out. Babies were snatched away from their mothers in the minutes following their birth—never to be seen by their mothers again. The community has started to hear about the pain and suffering endured by these women. The forced adoptions took place in public hospitals, maternity homes and in hospitals run by faith-based organisations.

Unfortunately we do not know how many women and babies were affected by the practice of forced adoptions. The Senate inquiry report on forced adoption practices found that between 1951 and 1975 an estimated 140,000 to 150,000 adoptions occurred nationwide. No-one is suggesting that all those adoptions were forced—but some were. They were the cause of long-term anguish and suffering for those affected. A number of inquiries have been conducted by committees of this Parliament into the State's adoption practices. In 1989 a report from one such committee described as "patently absurd" the presumption in the Adoption of Children Act 1965 that it "would or should be possible for birth mothers to forget about their children" who had been given up or removed and "continue their lives as though nothing had happened". It reported further:

It was clear to the Committee that perhaps in the majority of cases women who had given up children for adoption remained emotionally and psychologically scarred, and even traumatised, by the events and had a deep-seated need to know that their child was well, happy and being raised in an atmosphere of love and security.

If that could be concluded in relation to mothers who had given up their children at birth voluntarily, how much worse would it have been for those subject to the practice of forced adoptions? Twelve years ago another committee recommended that an apology should be issued by New South Wales departments, agencies and public hospitals involved in past forced adoption practices—practices that it described as "on occasions unethical and unlawful". No such apology was ever forthcoming. An apology for the women, the children, the fathers and the families in New South Wales who were adversely affected by the practice of forced adoptions has been a long time coming. It is this Government's intention to do so next month.

In preparing the apology motion to be presented to this House the Minister for Family and Community Services will consult with representatives of those women who were affected. None of this is being done to demonise the practice of adoption generally or to infer in any way that the adoptive parents were other than caring individuals committed to the wellbeing of the children involved. It is focused on the practice of forced adoption and the trauma, anguish and suffering caused to the mothers, their children and their families, who were affected by these past practices. It is time to acknowledge this impact. It is time to face the past and reflect on those unlawful and unethical actions that took place. It is time to try to ease the pain of those affected. We cannot change what happened but we can recognise it did occur.



**EDUCATION FUNDING**

**Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT:** My question is directed to the Premier. In light of the stated opposition of the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, to the Gonski review does the Government support the implementation of the Gonski review recommendations to increase education funding?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I do not know what the member for Marrickville does between parliamentary sittings but she certainly does not pay attention to the public affairs of New South Wales.

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

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Is the member for Macquarie Fields seeking to take a point of order just 10 seconds into the Premier's answer?

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Yes, I am because the Premier just made a personal reflection on a member.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** To the point of order: It is only a personal reflection if the member for Macquarie Fields is suggesting that the member for Marrickville is doing something untoward between parliamentary sittings.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Given the robust nature of debate in this Chamber, that comment, in comparison to others that have been made from time to time in this House, is pretty mild. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

**Ms Linda Burney:** You should stop picking on women.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The aside that I just had with the Deputy Leader of The Nationals was, "Is the member for Marrickville the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?" The Minister for Education reminded me that, of course, the member for Canterbury is the Leader of the Opposition—

**Ms Linda Burney:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition—although I think the member has claimed to be Leader of the Opposition on occasion, certainly on her website. Once every three months, in order to be noticed, she makes the accusation, "You are picking on women." At some stage the member for Canterbury is going to do some hard work; at some stage she is going to do some of that boring, hard grind that belongs to oppositions; at some stage she is going to actually make a dent in one of the Ministers on this side of the Chamber. But I caution people against holding their breath waiting for that to happen. Before I was so rudely interrupted I was saying that I do not know what the member for Marrickville does between parliamentary sittings because barely a week went by in the last recess without the media asking me about the Gonski report and me responding time and again that of course I support the Gonski report.

Nothing could be clearer about our support for the Gonski report than the resource allocation formula put forward by the Minister for Education on behalf of the Government a fortnight ago that is based on the approach of the Gonski report, and that is that all schools should be guaranteed a minimum level of funding, but on top of that, additional funding should go to those schools that have particular needs. It is one of the reasons that, for instance, we are talking about connected communities, trying to clean up 16 years of neglect by those opposite in relation to some of the most disadvantaged communities in our State—the Aboriginal communities, which were ignored by those opposite. Whether a school has a particularly higher load in relation to students with disabilities, whether they have a particularly higher load in relation to those who speak languages other than English—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I think she is feeling a bit sensitive about the neglect of Aboriginal communities and the neglect of Aboriginal education by members opposite.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** Point of order: The Premier is now straying from the original question, which was about the Gonski review. I ask that you draw him back to the leave of the question, rather than allow him to make personal attacks on other members of this House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Whilst the Premier has, from time to time, strayed from the question, he has clearly answered the question. The Premier has the call.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** We will continue, by both our actions and our words, to support the direction of the Gonski report, but until the Federal Government starts to outline its proposals, the Gonski report will not be recommended. We hear nothing from Julia Gillard and Peter Garrett—silence. And that silence reflects poorly on a government that claims to be committed to education; it reflects poorly on a government that appointed an expert committee, led by David Gonski, to inquire into this matter. That same government devoted about two minutes at the last Council of Australian Governments meeting to the issue of the Gonski report—and that was simply to push it aside and ensure that the report was not discussed in detail. I support the direction of the Gonski report. I support its recommendations about increased Federal funding for schools across the board, which reflect the resource allocation process that we put on the table. The sooner the Federal Government pulls its finger out and gets on with it, the better.

#### MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

**Mr GREG APLIN:** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government protecting the interests of New South Wales farming communities as well as consumers in its response to the Commonwealth proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan and related matters?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** After what many regional communities have described as an extended period of Chinese water torture, the Commonwealth Murray-Darling Basin Authority is now in the final stages of developing its plan. Later this month the New South Wales Government will make further comments to the Commonwealth Minister for Water, Tony Burke, on yet another revision. This is the last opportunity for New South Wales to make formal comment on the draft plan in its development. Minister Burke optimistically says that he wants to have the plan tabled in the Federal Parliament in September and have it come into force by the end of this year.

Whilst the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has made some progress in addressing concerns raised by New South Wales and the other States, a number of outstanding concerns and new issues remain. The headline number of 2,750 gigalitres taken out of production remains. However, importantly, some work has been done on an adjustment mechanism. Hopefully, this will mean that New South Wales can reduce this number substantially through offsets—for example, works and other measures—but this measure seems to have been complicated as the Commonwealth now wants to take more than 2,750 gigalitres through new infrastructure works that the Commonwealth funds. As we have said before, we simply cannot and will not agree to any mechanism that requires additional buybacks from our farmers.

Other issues of concern to New South Wales include the lack of a mechanism to equitably apportion reductions between States and no formal indication from the Commonwealth that it will fund new or increased State costs under the basin plan. We also hold that groundwater sustainable diversion limits should be based on the best available science and finalised with New South Wales hydrogeologists. The authority also has not adopted New South Wales's recommended precautionary groundwater sustainable diversion limits for some aquifers.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I will get to the Leader of the Opposition in a second. While the Commonwealth finalises its basin plan, the Minister for Primary Industries is investigating the options available—

[Interruption]

I know the Leader of the Opposition is not interested in the Murray-Darling Basin or farm communities, but I will get to him later.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** We are investigating the options available should the plan not meet triple bottom line outcomes for New South Wales.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** We again encourage the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to develop a plan that ensures the Murray-Darling Basin—

[*Interruption*]

If those opposite do not know where food is grown in this State that is fine, but it is grown mostly in the Murray-Darling Basin. We will look after it, unlike that lot opposite. We encourage the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to develop a plan that ensures the Murray-Darling Basin continues to produce food and fibre for all Australians. While I am highlighting the good work of Ministers in my cluster, I congratulate the Minister for Major Events on today's announcement of the cast for the Australian Premier of the Broadway musical smash hit *The Addams Family*, which will open at Sydney's Capitol Theatre in March 2013.

[*Interruption*]

I do not know why the Opposition is so excited. Unfortunately, this announcement puts to bed the rumour that the producers had cast the few remaining members of the Labor caucus. After all, they are creepy and they are kooky.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will remain silent so that I can hear the point of order. Government members will stop calling out such comments to the member for Canterbury.

**Ms Linda Burney:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier has left the leave of the question. We know what his joke is going to be. He should get back to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question was fairly broad ranging when it added at the end "and related matters". I do not quite see how this is relevant; however, the Deputy Premier can show us how it is relevant.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** It is a related matter; it is the good work in the ministerial cluster. Who would we cast as Uncle Fester? That is correct, the member for Blacktown.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Orders 103 and 104 concerning ministerial statements. If the Deputy Premier wants to make a ministerial statement about shows that may or may not be running that is fine; he has another opportunity to do that in the Order of Business—it is called a ministerial statement. He should read the standing orders and give a ministerial statement.

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

**Mr Greg Aplin:** I ask that the Deputy Premier be given an extra two minutes to conclude his answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the Deputy Premier want another two minutes?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the Deputy Premier mentions the Addams Family I will sit him down.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** The member for Keira would be Pugsley, the member for Canterbury would be Morticia and the member for Cabramatta would be Lurch.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will resume his seat; an extension is not granted.

### COUNTRY AREAS PROGRAM

**Mr RYAN PARK:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Will the Minister commit to continuing dedicated funding for the Country Areas Program that currently provides supplementary resources to schools in rural and regional areas?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** A few weeks ago we announced, as the Premier just indicated, a new way of resourcing government schools in New South Wales. We took the basic principles of the Gonski review with regard to base funding for schools—class sizes are funded based on the funding per student. Every school will have a base loading and, on top of that, there will be additional layers of funding for students, depending on their circumstances. There will be different levels of additional funding—almost the same as proposed by the Gonski review—so that equity issues such as schools with students from refugee backgrounds and non-English speaking backgrounds, and schools with a high intake of Aboriginal students will be catered for in what is a very sophisticated and very transparent way of funding. We have made it clear right from the beginning that instead of schools having about 200, 300 or 400 different funding sources, including the Country Areas Program, and having to apply for additional funding, getting it, spending it and then having to account for it—taking up principals' time and creating increased bureaucracy and paperwork—then having to send it to somebody in the department who has to do something else with it—

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** So you are going to abolish the program.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** We are abolishing the paperwork. We are going to amalgamate all those separate buckets of money and schools will, eventually, get two buckets of money. One bucket of money will be for staffing and schools will have discretion to spend the other bucket of money on additional staffing if they wish; for example, a school may want to employ a nurse. When I was in Coonamble last week I heard from one school that it would like a police liaison officer to go to the school. Using that discretionary amount of money the school may be able to pay for a police liaison officer to come to the school. That may be how a school wants to use its resources. At Coonamble Public School I was told that the school wanted a home school liaison officer—a person who can go to the parents of the students, knock on the door and ask why their kids are not turning up for school.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** What Coonamble Public School wants is completely different from what Coonamble High School wants. Another school might like to have a speech therapist, as the member for Tamworth rightly points out. Another school might want to have a nurse at the school a couple of days a week to deal with some of the health issues at the school.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** It is completely and utterly up to the school. What I will not do is what the former Government did, which is have the Minister for Education dictate what is good for every school—one size fits all, the school has to have it whether it wants it or not, or the school cannot have it because it is against the rules. Every school is different. We are giving schools flexibility. The funding will now be put into two buckets. The Country Areas Program was one distinct bucket of money that schools applied for, which they had to account for when they spent it and they had to fill out dozens of pages of forms. That funding will be rolled into those two buckets. The kinds of things that a school might have funded under the Country Areas Program can still be funded, but the school might want to spend more money on one thing and less money on something else—it is entirely at the discretion of the school.

We still have accountability measures. School education directors will still have that line of management. Principals are accountable to school education directors and regional directors, and schools will still be audited, as has always occurred, but how the money is spent will be up to the school. I presume that schools in the Keira electorate will want to do different things to schools in the Murrumbidgee electorate. This initiative will give them the flexibility they need to respond to the individual needs of their students. The answer to the question is that the same amount of money will go to schools—

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** —but schools will have much greater discretion about how they spend it, and, just as importantly, we are removing much of the bureaucracy that ties up the valuable time of school

principals. Principal groups across New South Wales have endorsed these reforms overwhelmingly. Even the Teachers Federation has supported the additional flexibility. Of course, it does not support everything, but it supports this initiative.

### STATE ECONOMY

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE:** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. What progress is the Government making in rebuilding the New South Wales economy?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I note that of the great Whips around the world, New South Wales has the greatest Whip this House has ever had in the member for Wagga Wagga. I am very happy to talk about the New South Wales economy which, despite the challenges we see happening around the world, has been performing pretty well. I would like members to understand what is happening in New South Wales.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Globally we acknowledge that there are still big risks. It is clear that the Euro zone recession has worsened; the Chinese economy—an important trading partner—has slowed; there are new concerns about the recovery of the United States; clearly, the high Aussie dollar is impacting manufacturing, tourism and education; and the global financial markets remain volatile, which is having an impact across the broader economy. In spite of this there are some positive signs for New South Wales. I know those opposite do not like to look for positive signs in New South Wales and the economy, but they are there. A recent quarterly report by Deloitte stated:

Life's been tough in NSW for a long time—this State has spent a decade on the wrong side of some major national trends... Really good news is still a way off, but the outlook remains modestly positive.

We must look at the facts even though those opposite do not like the facts. New South Wales has the second lowest unemployment rate in the nation. Members opposite tend to forget that. The Jobs Action Plan is clearly providing incentive to businesses to help them invest during this difficult time, and we are seeing the action. Under this Government the New South Wales unemployment rate has been below the national level for the past four months. During the last five years of the Labor Government the New South Wales unemployment rate was on average 0.4 per cent higher than the national rate. That was Labor's record. A total 28,400 jobs have been created in New South Wales since the O'Farrell Government came to power.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Members opposite talk about numbers. The member for Maroubra is very good with numbers—they just do not have anything to do with maths. He needs a new suit because we all know what he is trying to do. He is trying to look sharp, sound good and give his leader some dodgy figures.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Toongabbie to order. I call the member for Keira to order. The member for Bankstown will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I think it is important to understand that business confidence is growing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members who continue to interject will find themselves removed from the Chamber.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** A recent National Australia Bank survey showed that businesses in New South Wales had the second-highest confidence level in the nation. Under Labor we know that business confidence was the lowest of all States. There are also some positives in agriculture. Whilst there are lower yields they will be offset by surging grain prices. That is good news for our farmers and our regional economy. Retail spending has picked up, rising 2.6 in the June quarter compared to 1.4 per cent nationally. That was due to increased spending in department stores and on clothing and footwear. Indeed, the Retail Association has said, "NSW is the best non-mining State this round, which is great news". It is particularly pertinent that it also said, "It's come from a long way behind." It certainly has. The O'Farrell Government is doing all it can. During the last five years of the Labor Government, New South Wales had the lowest growth of new dwellings per capita in the nation.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** That is why I am proud to tell members again why this Government took action in the budget by introducing the Building the State package. This Government is delighted to offer the most generous first home buyers scheme in the nation. The Government also is proud to announce half a billion dollars for additional infrastructure to accelerate delivery of up to 76,000 new homes across this State. Those who know understand what the O'Farrell Government is doing. Deloitte Access Economics said recently:

We cheered when [the Government] announced its aim as being to 'boost supply, boost supply, boost supply'. That tonic will take time to work its magic, but it should be of notable assistance.

That sums up the O'Farrell Government. It is doing the hard work, looking after constituents, driving the economy and looking after those who need it most.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members are displaying some really juvenile behaviour this afternoon. If they continue to argue they will find themselves outside the Chamber. I have already sat the Deputy Premier down for that reason.

### CHILD PROTECTION CASEWORKERS

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. In August last year the Department of Family and Community Services was instructed by the Ombudsman to report regularly on caseworker vacancy rates, including regional breakdowns. In light of this, what are the current caseworker vacancy rates in western Sydney?

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I thank the member for her question. Members opposite just do not learn. We are dealing with a legacy of 16 years of appalling management that left the most vulnerable children and young people in this State under the auspices of a department that was seeing fewer children despite additional resources. To their undying shame, that is the political record of members opposite.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: The Minister should be reminded that when we assumed Government we had to—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Members opposite have nothing to say in defence of 16 years of appalling mismanagement; instead they play games with the standing orders. As the member who has just raised a spurious point of order knows, there is no common vacancy rate across the State or even in regions. There was not under Labor and, because of the appalling systems that it left, there is not today. Again I would have hoped that the member opposite would have recalled that the vacancy rate—

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: My point of order is under 129, relevance. The question specifically said the department was instructed by the Ombudsman in August to regularly update, and we want to know whether the Minister has done that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The vacancy rate varies from day to day and from week to week for the reasons that I have outlined previously to the House. Particularly in a service delivery agency the rate will depend on people taking maternity leave, sick leave and so forth. Last week members opposite made an accusation that the Wollongong office was understaffed. In fact, the vacancy rate in the Wollongong office is less than it was two years ago. Today we have a union taking industrial action in an area of Sydney in which we have in fact increased the number of caseworkers in that office. Members opposite never get the story straight.

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** This Government has a plan to address the legacy left by those opposite. We have discussed with the Ombudsman the importance of having an action plan that will enable us to provide data

about vacancy rates in the annual statistical report from January 2013. The Ombudsman has accepted that because the Ombudsman knows—as does apparently everybody apart from the Opposition—that the Government was left with appalling systems and appalling management of offices that require significant reform. Those opposite do not understand that real reform takes time. Obviously this is not of great interest to those opposite.

We need to change systems and people and enable our caseworkers to do the best they can, see as many children as they can and improve the quality of services that they provide to children. I remind members that the Ombudsman found that even though the Opposition when in government invested an additional three quarters of a billion dollars in child protection the department was actually seeing fewer children. The Ombudsman therefore understands the size of the challenge. Those opposite might not understand this, but reform is a challenge that takes time. We cannot undo overnight a legacy of mismanagement and restricted work practices in a department that was run by union heavies instead of the Minister.

### HOSPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr BART BASSETT:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. What is the Government doing to rebuild hospital infrastructure across the State?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I thank the member for Londonderry for his question and for his strong interest in the rebuilding of hospitals across the State, particularly in his electorate. I am pleased to advise the House that since the election NSW Health has awarded more than 100 tenders to construct and upgrade hospitals that were sadly neglected for 16 years by the former Labor Government. In fact we have \$4.7 billion in capital investment over the four-year period; \$1.2 billion in a record spend in this year's health budget.

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Macquarie Fields that he is skating on thin ice.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I advise the House that today I am able to provide an update on progress on the \$300 million rebuild of Blacktown-Mount Druitt Hospital, a major redevelopment that was talked about by Labor but that was never delivered. I am very pleased to announce that today an early works tender has been awarded at Mount Druitt to Kane Constructions, which will begin site establishment this week. The main building works will be released for tender in September this year. A contractor is currently carrying on building relocation for the diabetes education centre to make way for some initial parking. The project involves construction of a new inpatient building adjacent to the existing Blacktown Hospital.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** It is Blacktown-Mount Druitt.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** It is Blacktown-Mount Druitt, as the member for Macquarie Fields knows. He would know that both of them are being upgraded.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Which one is this on?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Both of them are being upgraded by a record \$300 million—a western Sydney upgrade, which was ignored by the former Labor Government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will cease asking further questions during the Minister's answer.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The Blacktown upgrade will include a linked fully enclosed hospital street, reconfiguration of the existing hospital building, and reconfiguration and extension of services at the Mount Druitt campus. The Blacktown multistorey car park will also be included, and a tender for the design and construction was closed on 9 August, with construction beginning early next year and the car park opening in early 2014. The project includes additional car parking at both campuses. I also mention Campbelltown, which has been allocated \$139 million, and I know that members from that part of the world are very thrilled about this. Early works of tender were awarded in June, and works have commenced. I was just talking about this to the member for Campbelltown this morning. The early works mean relocation of the wires, cables and so forth, and the commencement of the car park. There is real rejoicing in the local area about the car park because parking has been such a major issue for local people. I know the member for Wagga Wagga has been very keen to rejoice with his local community about the money that has been allocated and the works that have been started in his area.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will contain themselves until the end of question time.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The work in Wagga Wagga included a 137-car space car park that opened in May this year. Construction then started on phase one of the project, which is a 50-bed mental health unit, following the sod turning in June that both I and the member for Wagga Wagga were very happy to be involved with. I think the photographs of that occasion are still on the Whip's door.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kogarah and the member for Wollongong will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Phase 2, which involves part of the new hospital emergency department and operating theatres, will follow. In Dubbo we have the \$79.8 million hospital redevelopment. Early works tender for that project close on 31 August. The contract will be awarded in September, with work scheduled to start early the following year, in the first quarter of 2013.

**Ms Cherie Burton:** You sound a bit nervous.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am not nervous; I am excited, my friends. I am excited because those opposite neglected every one of these hospitals. I was very pleased recently to speak with the member for Armidale about the new ambulatory care and chemotherapy building—the \$6.3 million upgrade—and to announce jointly that the contract was awarded to Ware Building Construction to start work on that facility, which is much needed in that area.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Toongabbie will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Recently tenders have been awarded to health facilities at Nowra, Hornsby, Ryde, Woy Woy, St George, Prince of Wales and Nepean. This week I was very pleased to visit the new Sister Alison Bush Memorial Simulation Mobile Centre, which was an initiative of this Government. I have a photograph of it for members to see. I know they will be interested in looking at it. The mobile centre will arrive in Dubbo on Monday. It is a semitrailer fitted out with an emergency department, a ward, lecture rooms and all of the very sophisticated mannequins to take training to people in small country hospitals. Well done, O'Farrell Government.

## BUSINESS INVESTMENT

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is to the Treasurer. Given the previous comments of the Minister for Health that she would find it hard to defend a Government owning shares in a tobacco company, why will he not commit to banning any government investment in unethical businesses, including Big Tobacco?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the House will come to order. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for his question. I thought for a moment we were going to get a budget question, but no, it is not a budget question. We have had two budgets in a year, but we are not going to get a budget question. I thought those opposite might even start talking about expenses, but then I would have to talk about something like this. We cannot talk about their expense record, so I am not going to talk about that. I understand the question that the member asked, and it is worth talking about. Certainly, it is very clear that the New South Wales Government does not and will not invest directly in tobacco companies. That has been our policy and nothing has changed. I am not sure what those opposite are charging on about. We do not take those direct investments and we will not.

We have fund managers that are incorporated as part of the overall investment policy, which is consistent with other State governments. We have an investment policy that is very sensible and is something that we support. I know why the member for Maroubra has a spring in his step. I think we all know why, do we not? We are watching the action of the current leader. I also think the member for Toongabbie has started to get a bit of a spring in his step. But why are they doing that? It is because on this side we have a Government that is taking action, being definitive and getting on with the job under the Premier. But I was very concerned in the lead-up to the Labor conference, which members might have seen coming—it came and went very quickly.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: The predictable and obvious comment: This is clearly well away from the question that he was asked. He should come back to the lead of the question.



**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I ask the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** In relation to any policy you need to have a definitive leader and you need to be very clear in the decisions you are taking, and that is why this is very relevant. What did the Leader of the Opposition say when he was interviewed by David Spears?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was clearly about tobacco.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will come to order. The Treasurer will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Ryan Park:** It is Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was clearly about tobacco funding and donations.

**The SPEAKER:** That member is absolutely correct. The member for Liverpool just raised that point of order and I upheld it. I asked the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr Ryan Park:** But he did not.

**The SPEAKER:** I am sure he will return to the leave of the question right now, and if he does not I will sit him down. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is very important you have leadership that can make the right decisions and make definitive decisions in this State. That was not clear from the Leader of the Opposition. He said to David Spears, "We will be looking at whether the Greens should be preferenced last."

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I expect that the Treasurer will return to the leave of the question, which was about tobacco.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** You also indicated that if he did not return to the question that you would sit him down.

**The SPEAKER:** I will make a judgement on whether to sit the Treasurer down. The member for Macquarie Fields will resume his seat. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I will be very quick. He said, "I think we should have that debate; that is what I think we should do. But what do you think? I think we ought to be saying these people are not our friends and to put their preferences last." That is not a bad thing to be talking about at the conference and I think that is why it was raised.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The simple point is this: On the other side are members that when in government will make decisions and take actions that suit them. On this side we make decisions that look after the people of New South Wales—whether they are decisions on investment policies or to rein in the budget. On any single policy that we are undertaking on this side of Government, we make decisions to look after the people we are elected to serve, not ourselves—which is what those opposite did when they were in power.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Mr CHRIS SPENCE:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. What progress has the Government made in making public transport more attractive for customers?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I appreciate the member's strong support for important transport initiatives. When we came to government we made very clear that we would put customer service first. One of the things we did when we established our integrated transport authority, Transport for NSW, was for the first time to establish a customer experience team, which had never existed before in this State. They may laugh at their definition of—

**Ms Sonia Horner:** Point of order: My point of order is about the use of names. Standing Order 75 states that members' titles should be used appropriately, not "they." The Minister should use members' titles.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wallsend is drawing a long bow. If it were a "he" or "she" I might accept the point of order. However, it is quite acceptable to use the collective word "they".

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Before they interrupted me with that weird point of order I was about to say their definition of customer service was making sure their Sussex Street mates were taken care of and that union members were being looked after. But we care about customer service; we care about making sure that customers who are doing it tough on public transport have an easier ride.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They are very touchy about this issue. Our priority is improving the lot of those who catch public transport but also attracting more people onto public transport. I am proud to advise the House that this Government has made a number of improvements in relation to public transport and the customer experience. First of all, for the first time mobile phone coverage is now available inside train tunnels in Sydney.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They are very sensitive about mobile phone coverage because they know when the mobile phone carriers first contacted them to do this—1996.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We know that Optus, as the lead carrier, first approached them in 1996, and for 15 years they did nothing about it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mount Druitt will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They do not care about the long-suffering customers. That is an important issue, and many commuters have written to us thanking us for that. We intend to extend the provision of mobile phone coverage. We have made plenty of other improvements. For example, like Optus, Google also had approached the previous Government about making sure public transport information was available through Google. Of course, they ignored that as well and our initiative now means that Sydney joins global cities around the world, including London, New York and Hong Kong—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —with Google and New South Wales receiving almost a million location searches every day. This is great news for people who use public transport and also for the many we want to attract to public transport. We have also introduced the First Impressions Count campaign at RailCorp, which is emphasising the importance of customer service and the way our staff appear to our customers. We know that the Labor Party and the union bosses do not like it but we will continue our initiative because it is important for the customers. We have also introduced quiet carriages for Newcastle and the Central Coast, and also for the Illawarra.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** Window-dressing.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Marrickville says that it is window-dressing. I wonder whether she has caught a quiet carriage. The people of New South Wales who use our trains love the initiative and have asked us to extend it. Members who represent electorates on the Central Coast, in the Hunter and the Illawarra and from the Blue Mountains are supportive of this initiative. I want to let them know that, notwithstanding the complaints from the whingers on the other side, we will keep improving things for our customers. Again, this is just the tip of the iceberg. We also have reintroduced something as simple as bins on CityRail stations. They have not been there since the year 2000. [*Extension of time granted.*]

The extra time gives me the opportunity to speak about a few other initiatives we have introduced to improve the lives of customers. We have reintroduced bins at 250 CityRail stations across the network, which is

a welcome relief to our customers, who had not had them since 2000. That is something else Labor failed to do for more than 10 years but something we on this side of the House appreciate makes a difference to customers. We also have announced a new transport access program, and so far 35 stations have been upgraded. Other upgrades will continue. Interjections are coming from that side of the House about easy access and upgrades.

But when those opposite were in government they managed only two a year, which means all our stations would not have had easy access for another 90 years. If they were in office most stations would still be waiting. We have managed to announce ease access for 35 stations, and there will be more to come. These are just some of the initiatives we are announcing in relation to customer experience. Every decision we take on public transport is about putting customers first, unlike those opposite. They put their Labor mates first and the union bosses first. We are about the customer. So long as we continue to advocate for the customer we will be able to make these improvements. I am proud of the work that has been done to date and I thank all members who represented their communities so well on this issue.

**Question time concluded at 3.16 p.m.**

## **HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA APPOINTMENT**

### **Ministerial Statement**

**Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [3.16 p.m.]: This afternoon the Federal Attorney General, Nicola Roxon, announced that the Governor-General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, AC, CVO, has appointed Mr Stephen Gageler, SC, as Australia's new Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. I support this appointment as Mr Gageler has the necessary depth of knowledge and intelligence to make an excellent contribution to the High Court.

Mr Gageler was born and raised in the upper Hunter region of New South Wales, where he and his family lived on a property and his father and grandfather also operated a sawmill business. Mr Gageler is a graduate of the Australian National University and Harvard University. He was associate to the Hon. Sir Anthony Mason, KBE—who was on the High Court of Australia and Chief Justice at one stage—from 1983 to 1985. He is an outstanding barrister and has served as the Commonwealth Solicitor-General since September 2008. Mr Gageler will replace the Hon. Justice William Gummow, AC, who is retiring in October this year after serving on the High Court for 17 years. I thank Justice Gummow for his outstanding contribution to the High Court.

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr Stephen Bromhead**, as Chair, tabled the report entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 22/55", dated 21 August 2012, together with the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 21/55, dated 14 August 2012.

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

## **PETITIONS**

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

### **Container Deposit Levy**

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

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

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

### **Central Coast Palliative Care Services**

Petition requesting the implementation of specific steps in the 2012-13 State budget and forward estimates to substantially increase funding, staffing and infrastructure for palliative care services on the Central Coast, received from **Mr Richard Amery**.

**Pets on Public Transport**

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

**Cooks River Sewage Flows**

Petition requesting the limitation of sewage flows into Cooks River such that levels of E. coli and other human pathogens are reduced below safe levels for swimming and boating activities, received from **Ms Linda Burney**.

**Pig-dog Hunting Ban**

Petition requesting the ban of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

**Social Housing Tenants Commonwealth Clean Energy Supplement**

Petition requesting that social housing tenants receive the full benefit of the Commonwealth Clean Energy Supplement provided to offset increased living expenses, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

**Inner City Social Housing**

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner city public housing stock, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Motions Accorded Priority**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.19 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the consideration forthwith of both notices of motions accorded priority at this sitting with the following speaking times:

- (1) For the notice of motion given by the member for Parramatta:
  - (a) mover—5 minutes; and
  - (b) member next speaking—5 minutes.
- (2) For the notice of motion given by the member for Blacktown:
  - (a) mover—5 minutes; and
  - (b) member next speaking—5 minutes.

A Government member and an Opposition member have indicated that they will seek priority for consideration of their notice of motions today. The first relates to support for development of a master plan for Parramatta Heritage Precinct; the second notes the Government's intention to make a full apology to mothers and children forcibly separated as a result of State government adoption policies of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Normally the Government would support priority being given to the motion of the Government member. In this instance both motions clearly have merit. The formal apology to mothers and children forcibly separated is the subject of work being done by the Government and the relevant Minister. Over the next month we will be working sensitively and carefully with mothers and children who were so separated in finalising the words necessary to ensure that the apology is meaningful and delivered in a way that those mothers and children, and their families, find acceptable. We expect that the apology from the Government—which I am sure all members of the House will support—will be made towards the end of September.

It is a little unusual for the Opposition to move a motion on such a matter but we understand that this is a sensitive matter for all members of this place. I think we all feel the same sense of care and concern about mothers and children who suffered from the policies of past governments. Therefore, the Government will allow both motions to be debated today. The Government's motion in regard to Parramatta Heritage Precinct will proceed first, with the mover being allowed to speak for five minutes, and a member responding—presumably a

member of the Opposition, but if not the member next speaking—being allowed five minutes. Then the House will deal also with the motion of the member for Blacktown, with the mover being allowed to speak for five minutes, and the member next speaking—presumably, a Government member—being allowed five minutes.

**Question put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

## **PARRAMATTA HERITAGE PRECINCT**

### **Motion Accorded Priority**

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [3.24 p.m.]: I move:

That this House supports the development of a master plan for Parramatta's Heritage Precinct.

The Parramatta Heritage Precinct master plan is important because Parramatta boasts the largest and most notable collection of early colonial and European settlement. It is a collection of iconic buildings and sites along the Parramatta River. The preservation, refurbishment and adaptive reuse of those assets is important, not just for the city of Parramatta and western Sydney but for the whole of Australia. This motion is important because a master plan not only would preserve the buildings, it would open up the building to tourists, schoolchildren and the general public. Obviously, this is important for State, interstate and international tourism.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members who wish to have private discussions should leave the Chamber.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** Tourism is an economic driver in a sustainable business model, especially as Parramatta has such a reputation as a tourist Mecca throughout Sydney. The Parramatta Heritage Precinct is important because the project is estimated to be worth around \$1 billion in investment of private and public moneys. This is a much-needed boost for the New South Wales economy, and the revitalisation of this unique and historic precinct will provide much-needed revitalisation of this area of Parramatta. The Parramatta Heritage Precinct comprises assets such as the Old Kings School, Kamballa, the Female Factory, Cumberland Hospital and Parramatta Jail.

It is no secret that I was in favour of a master plan before the election last year. In the past there have been many plans for individual aspects of the precinct. This is the first time, to my knowledge anyway, that all of those areas will be combined in one master plan. I guess the difficulty in evolving such a master plan was that so many government agencies were involved in the formulation of the plan. I must give credit to all ministries that have taken the time to discuss the plan with me. I refer to agencies under Ministers such as the Minister for Health, the Minister for Heritage, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Mental Health. All have been very supportive and have made time to come out and discuss this matter. Now is the time when it seems we have all the ducks in a line, when the stars have aligned, to put together a master plan as the way forward.

Special thanks go to the Deputy Premier, Mr Andrew Stoner, and his office, led by Alex Bruce, who have been very supportive in moving this plan along. The public announcement was made last Friday by the Premier, at the State of the Region address for western Sydney. He clearly enunciated the need for refurbishment and reuse of this precinct, and opening up public areas such as boardwalks, cafes, restaurants, social areas, cultural areas and open spaces. It is important to unlock that economic value to preserve those historic buildings. The Premier emphasised the need for consulting widely with the community, because this already has become a major initiative for western Sydney, and this Government is delivering positive outcomes for western Sydney.

My vision is a plan that prioritises reuse of these historic assets and the opening up of the assets to the community and tourism. That will mark Parramatta as the capital of western Sydney, as an asset for the whole of western Sydney, and certainly as an asset for the whole of Australia. Just as the Freedom Trail in Boston has four million visitors a year, we could develop a historic trail. I would be happy with one million visitors a year along that tour. This precinct may provide much-needed housing and business opportunities and be unique in terms of its historical significance to our whole nation. Through the Parramatta Heritage Precinct master plan we need to unlock the value of approximately 90 hectares of land and provide a cost-neutral solution to the

restoration, refurbishment and reuse of those iconic buildings, with particular emphasis on community consultation. I am sure the Opposition will support this initiative, not just for the good of Parramatta but for New South Wales and the whole of Australia.

**Mr NATHAN REES** (Toongabbie) [3.29 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the motion by the member for Parramatta. The time has come for this master plan. Parramatta is an iconic location in Australia. It is the location where 200 years ago Governor Macquarie established a currency for New South Wales, emancipated convicts, thereby avoiding civil unrest, and launched the greatest infrastructure program this country has seen. The precinct includes the Female Factory, Old Government House, the Dairy cottage, which is arguably the oldest building in Australia and resides in Parramatta Park, and Parramatta jail. The precinct has extraordinary potential. A master plan was attempted by Public Works some years ago. When the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW was appointed I said to the Minister, "This plan has to be seen through." The Government has an opportunity to do extraordinary things in an area that is important to Parramatta, New South Wales and Australia.

The precinct includes Department of Health grounds where a forensic facility is located. There are also expanses of open space that are not used at present and that have potential for public-private partnerships. It is a hidden gem. It is similar to The Rocks in Sydney except it is on the upper reaches of the Parramatta River in western Sydney. One opportunity for funding is to extend coverage of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority [SHFA] further up the Parramatta River. The location includes Parramatta Park. The footprint of Parramatta Park originally included Parramatta golf course, Parramatta High School, the RSL, Parramatta Stadium, Parramatta Leagues Club grounds and Cumberland Hospital. This precinct has historical value to all Australians.

The planning exercise will be lengthy, but with the right plan, attention to detail and community consultation this is a project that will bring that end of the city to life and cement Parramatta's place as the home of the fair go. When Governor Macquarie came to the role of Governor some 200 years ago the social situation included convicts who had served their time but were not allowed to serve in Parliament or own property. Governor Macquarie knew there were more convicts than commissioned officers, a situation with the potential for social disaster and civil war had it continued. Governor Macquarie has blots on his record with regard to the treatment of the Aboriginal people, in contrast to the rights he gave to convicts who had served their time to vote and own property. Emancipation of the convicts under his governorship meant that former convicts could get on with their lives, have jobs, own property and hold public office. It meant that potential civil unrest fomented by a convict majority was avoided. The emancipation of convicts that had served their time occurred in Parramatta at Government House, making it the place where the fair go was invented and enacted. The motion has the full support of the Opposition and we look forward to working with the Government to implement it.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## **FORCED ADOPTIONS**

### **Motion Accorded Priority**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.33 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the Government's intention to make a formal apology to the mothers and children forcibly separated as a result of State Government adoption policies in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; and
- (2) supports the Government acknowledging, as part of the apology, that these policies have caused lasting suffering for so many.

This is a sensitive issue that has impacted thousands of lives. It is an issue that has reached a point where it is considered appropriate that an apology be made. The Government is moving in the right direction. It is working with the families, mothers and children who have been directly affected by this policy. That is appropriate. I place on record that the Opposition is prepared to work with and give its unwavering support to the Government's proposed apology. It is important this matter rise above politics. With any issue as sensitive as this, there is a danger and a temptation for people to play politics. In circumstances such as this it is inappropriate and offensive for anybody at any stage to seek to politicise the matter.

During the fifties, sixties and seventies the policy was implemented by a series of governments removing thousands of children from their mothers. When the apology is given it will be a unique and emotional moment. It will be a watershed in the history of this State. It will be a time of healing for victims of forced adoptions and their families. It will be a significant moment for those who attend the Parliament and for people across New South Wales. The separation of mothers from their children during this period was common practice. As the Premier has said, it occurred not just in State hospitals but in faith-based hospitals and, in some cases, in the most appalling of circumstances: mothers being drugged, tied down or tricked into signing adoption papers for their newly born babies.

The overwhelming majority of mothers had no idea where those children went and had no idea of the circumstances in which those babies found themselves. Mothers would have instinctively wanted to know that their children were in safe, secure and loving environments. For many years that was an unknown for those mothers. For some of those mothers it is still an unknown. For all of those mothers and children it is a tragedy. Although they were different times, that does not excuse or condone the circumstances of those forced adoptions.

Looking back from 2012 we know that what was going on then was wrong and misguided, which makes an apology very important. Whilst the practice was underpinned by social morals that were considered appropriate at the time, looking back now society would say it was cruel, and the implementation of the policy was inhumane to say the least. At a vulnerable time in their lives these mothers deserved better. Many of them were disowned by their families and they deserved support from the Government—not to be treated as they were. Other than by listening to the stories told by the mothers and children, I do not think anyone in the Chamber can begin to imagine the emotional heartache carried to this day by the affected mothers. The policies that were implemented destroyed the sacred bond between a mother and child. That is an emotional circumstance that no-one would ever like to find themselves in.

As a father of three children I cannot imagine what it would be like to have my children forcibly taken from me moments after their birth. My kids are important to me, and I am sure this is the case for any parent. The words that probably capture it best were the words I heard this morning from Christine Cole when she said that this will go a long way to helping in the healing process. I want everybody in New South Wales to know that the Government will have the unswerving support of the Opposition when it apologises for those forced adoptions.

**Ms PRU GOWARD** (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [3.38 p.m.]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the support of the Opposition on this important matter. I would make one comment about the Opposition leader's observation that these were different times with different social values, and that is that nothing excuses illegal action. The Government at the time might have thought it was doing the right thing but there is no excuse for people forcibly extracting consents, forging signatures or not getting consent.

We must bear that in mind and it is why this apology is so significant. This is not just a reflection on a period of history that was not in keeping with contemporary social practice; it was an episode in history that was unlawful and demonstrated a flagrant disregard by the State for the rights of its citizens and for its own laws. As has already been observed in the Chamber, the need for an apology has arisen from a number of inquiries—an earlier inquiry of this Parliament and the Senate community affairs committee report on the inquiry into the Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices. As has often been observed, the report highlights the devastating impact of past adoption practices on many young women, their families and the children who were adopted. It highlights also the terrible things that were done in the name of supposedly "doing the right thing".

The New South Wales Government will offer an apology to the victims of this barbaric and unlawful practice and it is my sincere hope that it will go some way towards recognising and easing their pain. It is not intended to take, and will not take, anything from those adoptive parents who have loved and cared for these children, from the children who grew up in loving families and from the birth parents who willingly gave up their children for adoption. We need to be very clear that this apology is about addressing a shocking period of unlawful and overbearing immorality.

There have been a range of improvements in New South Wales for people affected by past adoption practices as a result of our Parliament's extensive inquiry conducted from 1998 to 2000. These improvements include enhanced funding for the Post Adoption Resource Centre to provide counselling, information and support services. People who have been adopted can apply to access background information about their birth families from adoption records held by the agency that organised the adoption, the hospital where they were

born, the New South Wales Supreme Court, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and/or the Department of Community Services. In light of the recommendations of the recent Senate inquiry, the work of the Adoption Information Unit of the Department of Community Services will be reviewed, including the fees that it charges.

The Government—and I am pleased to have the support of both sides of Parliament—is committed to helping people affected by past adoption practices. This apology does not and will not affect the right of those so affected to seek legal reparation. That has never been the intention of the apology, and indeed that right was always available. I shall say a few words about the apology itself. As the Leader of the House observed, the apology is planned for September. There will be extensive consultation with both the Opposition and the groups and mothers affected on the wording of the apology. We need to ensure that people have time to make arrangements to be present in Sydney, if they wish, for the apology. Most importantly, we want this to be a time of great dignity and decorum in the Chamber and on the part of every speaker. We want every speaker to be adequately prepared to speak about what is a very sorry chapter in the history of good government in New South Wales, and indeed Australia.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! It being before 4.00 p.m. the House will now proceed with Government business.

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

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 16 August 2012.**

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [3.44 p.m.]: Members will recall that when I was last speaking on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012 I described the erroneous inclusion of Tumbarumba Shire Council's gravel pit in the Bogandyera Nature Reserve. Representations were made to the previous Government to rectify this mistake, which was adding cost and difficulty to the shire's roadworks maintenance operations. The council was keen to regain access to the site to avoid having to cart gravel for road repairs from one side of the shire to the other. Of course, nothing happened under the previous Government's term of management.

Last year I arranged a meeting for Tumbarumba Shire Council with the Minister to discuss restoring access to the quarry. I am pleased that this bill will restore access, reduce costs and assist the council in going about its business for the benefit of ratepayers. As the Minister noted, the council plans to provide a boundary fence to assist in managing the interface between the quarry and the nature reserve. One could be forgiven for thinking that one mistake of this kind—effectively applying an 11-year brake on the local economy of this region—would be the end of it. Unfortunately, in declaring the nature reserve the previous Government found the unique opportunity to make a second mistake. Within the park as it now stands lies a pine plantation. This was established to provide raw materials on a renewable basis. In creating the reserve the previous Government effectively landlocked the pine forest within the boundaries of the reserve. The result is that timber cannot be transported out of the park.

Today's bill will restore the necessary access to this resource. The road used when the forest was planted some 16 years ago is no longer suitable for carting timber as it has been surrounded by residential and other development. It is not feasible to restore this passage as it would require substantial upgrading and would be a nuisance to residents. Fortunately there is an existing fire trail, which can be realigned to provide access to and from the plantation. This alternative solution is both less costly and less disruptive. After 11 years of inaction these two mistakes—the closing of the road-gravel pit and the locking up of the pine plantation—will at last be remedied. One could, indeed should, ask why these problems were not fixed during the 11 years of management by the previous Government. Everyone knew they were errors; fixing them would not have been controversial. Indeed, the particular sections of land are regarded as being of no conservation value. I am pleased also that compensation will be made for land removed from the park. As the Minister noted:

... 300 hectares from the Tumut State Forest and 350 hectares of land near the Everlasting Swamp State Conservation Area are being exchanged for excision of 17 hectares of roadway from the nature reserve.



To some observers, perhaps living in city or suburban contexts, fixing problems in a nature reserve far away may appear to be of small consequence—hence the 11 years of unbelievable delay and inaction. However, in regional New South Wales the consequences of having had a careless Government are all too real. These resources were necessary to provide jobs and ratepayers lost out on costs savings when the council was shut out of the southern gravel pit. Heavy gravel trucks have had to travel further on roads throughout the shire, with impacts on road infrastructure and, arguably, on road safety. These things are not just somebody else's problem. With the passing of the previous Government they have become our problem and, rather than burying it, we are fixing it. This bill is just another example of government removing red tape and breaking down the barriers of casual negligence and ineptitude so that ordinary working tasks are made more straightforward. I am very pleased to support the bill.

**Mr GLENN BROOKES** (East Hills) [3.48 p.m.]: The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012 was introduced to this Parliament to create, among other things, the Berowra Valley National Park out of 3,876 hectares of land in the Berowra Valley Regional Park. As many people know already, the Berowra Valley Regional Park is a bushwalkers' paradise and an ideal place to spend a quiet afternoon picnicking or visiting the spectacular lookouts. With several historically significant sites in the area, including the single-lane bridge spanning Tunks Creek at Galston Gorge, the bill is a clear demonstration that this Government is a worthy custodian of the State's national parks and nature reserves. The bill also demonstrates that this Government continues to act in the best interests of the people of New South Wales, making decisions that are both economically and environmentally sound.

While the national parks and nature reserves covered by this bill are not within the electorate of East Hills, I am nonetheless participating in this debate because of the work that I am undertaking with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Bankstown City Council. Before my election, I and many of my now constituents found it particularly distressing to see large areas of national parks and nature reserves along the banks of the Georges River ignored by the previous Labor Government. It was also distressing to see facilities removed from Fitzpatrick Park and to hear the cries of locals ignored by the former member for East Hills. During the election campaign I made a commitment to the people of my electorate that I would do all I can to ensure that areas such as Fitzpatrick Park are given the attention they deserve. I am making good on that commitment and I am happy to say considerable strides have been made over the past few months.

To get the ball rolling, I recently conducted a site tour of the national parks within my electorate with senior managers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was an eye-opener for those managers and it has resulted in fruitful plans being laid to correct the mistakes of my predecessor. I have also been having discussions with the Minister and her staff. As a consequence, it is pleasing to see Fitzpatrick Park being rejuvenated. Bankstown City Council has sealed the road leading to the park and, significantly, the shoreline was recently cleared of dangerous concrete blocks from the remains of the old wharf. I am exploring the restoration of the shark nets not only to give parents and bathers peace of mind but once again to allow children to be taught to swim by volunteer groups such as the Georges River Bull Sharks.

Fitzpatrick Park and Cattle Duffers have been cleared of debris, the grass has been cut, the trees pruned and weeds removed. Work has recommenced on the sandstone retaining wall along Henry Lawson Drive and the banks of the Georges River and, importantly, the water of Yeramba Lagoon is being analysed to determine the best means to remove permanently the weeds and the stench from the area. Over the coming months I will continue to do this work not because it is popular but because it is the right thing to do. I will continue to do this work because it is in the best interests of our natural heritage—a natural heritage that is part of the inheritance of our children and grandchildren. As I have already stated, the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012 is a demonstration that this Government is acting in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. This Government is making decisions that are both economically and environmentally sound. I am happy to support the passage of this bill through the House and I commend the Minister for her efforts to secure our natural heritage.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [3.54 p.m.]: I speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012. May I say from the outset what a great Minister for the Environment we have? She is doing many good things for the environment in New South Wales. I could speak about 16 years under another government but I will not go into that yet. The Minister supports many land conservation and community groups in my electorate. I know that a few applications have just been made to the ministerial office and I am sure they will be approved in due course.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** That's ICAC-able.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Supporting local communities? One would expect that from Labor. Those opposite have no idea. There is a revolving door for Labor members at the Independent Commission Against Corruption—round and round they go constantly. Labor members will go there for at least another 18 months because they do not know the difference between what is good and right for the community and what is wrong. A community group getting money from the Minister is a good thing; taking quids from developers and others is a bad thing. Community groups in my electorate are applying to the Minister through the proper channels for assistance in the good work that they do. But we had 16 years of Labor government. The moral turpitude of Labor has no bounds, and nothing has changed. Labor members still have not worked out the difference between right and wrong.

The Minister has brought forward this wonderful legislation and it is a great day for New South Wales. The object of the bill is to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to change the reservation of part of the Berowra Valley Regional Park to a national park to be known as Berowra Valley National Park; to revoke the reservation of parts of Broadwater National Park, Kooraban National Park, Yaegl Nature Reserve, Cooperabung Creek Nature Reserve and Bogandyera Nature Reserve and to vest that land in the Minister for the purposes of part 11 of the Act; and to provide that the Minister must not transfer that land, other than certain land in Bogandyera Nature Reserve, under part 11 of the Act unless satisfied that appropriate compensation has been provided.

Regional parks are land reserved for the purposes of protecting and conserving natural or modified landscapes that are also available for public recreation. Regional parks are distinguishable from national parks in the types of recreational activities that are permitted—for example, dog walking. Dog walking is a very important pastime, particularly in my electorate where 35 per cent of the population are over the age of 55 and 27.5 per cent are over the age of 65. Walking their dogs in parks in the electorate is very important for their health and to maintain their fitness, which helps to prevent ongoing medical problems. When I talk about dog walking the great member for Charlestown will be thinking about the dogs. Walking dogs instead of leaving them cooped up in the backyard keeps them fit and well.

Bogandyera Nature Reserve, which is dissected by Mannus Creek, conserves a regionally rare example of relatively intact riparian vegetation. The member for Toongabbie is looking at me mystified; he is wondering what I am talking about. In 2001 the then State Government included a quarry as part of the reserve. During its 16 years in government the Labor Party included a quarry as part of a nature reserve, which precluded the Tumbarumba Shire Council from accessing the site to source materials for road repairs. I inform the member for Toongabbie that Tumbarumba was in a song that Johnny Devlin sang many years ago—*Stomp the Tumbarumba*. I am sure the member for Toongabbie would not have a clue where Tumbarumba is. With the ever-increasing cost of maintaining and redeveloping roads, access to materials on that site is a very important win for the Tumbarumba Shire Council. I am sure the mayor will be doing the stomp with the member for Toongabbie.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Myall Lakes will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, I am sorry. Of course you are an old rock'n'roller and you would know Johnny Devlin's great number one hit *Stomp the Tumbarumba*.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** It should have Ward "Pally" Austin in it.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Ward "Pally" Austin was thrown off the radio for saying ghastly words about a red Honda step-through, which I shall not repeat in this place. The member for Toongabbie knows that, which is why he raised the issue today. The Government is currently upgrading the Pacific Highway. The Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker, stated during her second reading speech that this bill will enable urgent highway upgrades by revoking around 38 hectares of land from reservation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. This will make it possible for essential safety upgrades to occur on the Pacific Highway and the Princes Highway. Nothing could be more important than the Pacific Highway upgrade. Of course, Labor has denied the 80:20 funding split. The Federal Labor Government—that shameful organisation running Australia at the moment—displays the same moral turpitude as Labor members in New South Wales. It denies the 80:20 split and calls on New South Wales to make it a 50:50 split. That is after spending four years funding that road at 87 per cent to 13 per cent to the State, and two years at 86 per cent to 14 per cent to the State. On coming to office the O'Farrell-Stoner Government allocated an extra \$468 million to bring it up to a 20 per cent—

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Mr Deputy-Speaker—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Does the member for Toongabbie wish to take a point of order?

**Mr Nathan Rees:** I do, Mr Deputy-Speaker. If the member could make just a passing reference to the bill we would all love it.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I am sure the member for Myall Lakes will direct his comments to the bill.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, the member for Toongabbie drifts off into his own—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Is the member speaking to the point of order?

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** I was speaking to the bill. To the point of order: The member for Toongabbie has drifted off and is not listening. The bill will open up 38 hectares for the Pacific Highway upgrade. This is an extremely important part of the upgrade. I am speaking about the problems we are having upgrading the Pacific Highway because Federal Labor has not honoured its commitment. For 16 years a Labor State Government sat on its hands and did absolutely nothing about this matter. This bill will help to progress the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. Members who represent electorates in the western suburbs do not realise how many people were injured and killed on that road during the 16 years that Labor was in government and did absolutely nothing. The Federal Government says it should be a 50:50 split and has dishonoured the agreement it has with the State Government and the memorandum of understanding that it entered into and signed.

What does that mean? To raise the extra \$2.3 billion we would have to take money out of hospitals, education and other areas that we have spoken about in this House today that are so important to metropolitan and regional New South Wales. That is all because Labor members will not honour their word, their contract and the agreement they entered into. This little section of the bill might mean absolutely nothing to some people but it is important to many other people in regional New South Wales, particularly those on the North Coast. I know how important the Pacific Highway is to people in the electorate of Mr Deputy-Speaker, the member for Lismore. I know he supports this legislation, which will help us to finish the Pacific Highway. As part of amending the National Parks and Wildlife Act the bill revokes the reservation of about 3,876 hectares of land in the Berowra Valley Regional Park and reserves that land as a national park. That is obviously a great thing for the people in that area. This is a great piece of legislation. After 16 years of scandals, incompetence, mismanagement and Labor members turning their backs on regional New South Wales, I support this legislation and the Minister.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [4.04 p.m.]:** There are times when we have an opportunity to do something extraordinary and decide what kind of world our children will grow up in. This is one of those opportunities. If we want to build a better world, leave this nation a better place than we found it and see our children live in a safe, clean environment it is the decisions of today that will determine tomorrow. Today I speak in favour of one of those decisions: the decision to protect a special part of Sydney and a special part of our environment in perpetuity. The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012 is close to my heart as it seeks to give the outstanding conservation values of the Berowra Valley the protection they deserve by creating the Berowra Valley National Park.

Berowra Valley Regional Park is a special place within the Sydney Basin landscape. It is an area of great natural and cultural heritage importance and, being around 20 kilometres north-west of the Sydney central business district, it is right on this great city's doorstep. The park covers approximately 3,884 hectares. It was managed by Hornsby council before being reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act in 1998. Since then, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the council have worked collaboratively to manage the park and provide high-quality facilities for the community. This occurred first through joint representation on the Berowra Valley Regional Park Trust, and more recently through shared management arrangements. Berowra Valley not only is rich in biodiversity but also contributes to the quality of living in Hornsby shire—known to many as the "Bushland Shire".

In my inaugural speech I spoke about the remarkable characteristics of our bushland. Many people from all over the world have chosen to call our shire home because of its wonderful character and amenity that

we have fought hard to preserve. I am delighted that this Government will achieve the protection of Berowra Valley in a new national park. There are many people within the Hornsby community who will welcome and applaud this move. I have had representations from and conversations with locals about the need to give this area the protection it rightly deserves as a national park. In this regard, I acknowledge and thank the Hornsby Conservation Society, whose commitment and love of this special area knows no bounds. The leadership of Dr Richard Mason, Pat Pike, Daphne Gordon and Gordon Limburg has made this possible. I also thank the Friends of Berowra Valley Regional Park for the work they have done to protect our park.

Although there are so many people who have fought to make this dream a reality, it is appropriate that I signal out a few special champions. Gordon Edgecombe was one of the bushwalkers and conservationists who first recognised the unique values of the Berowra Valley. As some of the original trustees of the Elouera Bushland National Park, Gordon and his wife, Jean, devoted much of their lives to protecting, improving and enlarging it. Dr Joyce Vickery was a dedicated conservationist and botanist who had a deep love for the Elouera Bushland Reserve. She described the area as a sanctuary that is unique and of great interest to scientists all over the world. In 1967 the late Dr Vickery donated more than 100 acres of privately owned land in the Hornsby Valley for inclusion in the Elouera Bushland National Park—a gift for which posterity will be extremely grateful.

Jamie Slaven started the Friends of Berowra Valley. The organisation has fought to protect this unique part of Sydney and we are indebted to the efforts of all involved. I acknowledge the efforts of fellow members Jean and Lyn Bolton, who have been indefatigable in their efforts. Known to many of us in this House, the Hon. Max Ruddock was the inaugural president of the Elouera Bushland National Park Trust in 1964 and he had a great affection for the park. His son and my great friend Philip Ruddock has been a keen advocate for this amendment. I thank him for his continued support and interest. Max was followed in his position by Jim Mitchell, who devoted much time and effort to the cause and pulled many people together from different political backgrounds and areas of Sydney for the common cause. Of course, today's event reflects the efforts of countless people who have fought to protect and enrich this special part of Sydney.

I acknowledge on the public record the significant efforts of Geoff Dowsett, Dr Pat Selkirk, Ken Blade, Malcolm Bruce, George Elliott, Nancy and Robert Pallin, Jacqui Gibbs, Jenifer Lewis, Norma Searle, Dr Don Adamson, Robin Buchanan, Anne and Ray Williams, Ross Doig, Carole and Robin Ford, Val Williams, George Foster, Alison Downing and John Read. This event would not have occurred without the contributions of each of these people over many years. But there is one person who must be singled out for special mention. His effort to preserve this very special part of Sydney stands alone. Sixty years ago Bob Salt found this beautiful part of the world and set about fighting to protect it for future generations to enjoy. Bob has lobbied, fought, harassed and made this possible. He has been a wonderful advocate for this remarkable and special part of Sydney. Future generations will owe Bob a great debt. I know our community certainly does.

I acknowledge all the traditional owners of the Berowra Valley. Berowra Creek, which runs through the park, is thought to have been the natural boundary between the lands of the Guringai people in the east and the Darug people in the west. The park contains 24 known sites of Aboriginal heritage. The majority of these sites are located to the southern and northern boundaries of the park in valleys, caves and open rock platforms. They include axe grinding grooves, art such as hand stencils and middens. In recognition of the rich Aboriginal history of the park, I am pleased to announce that the Government has commenced a process of consultation to identify a suitable local Aboriginal name for the purpose of renaming the park with a new dual name. I note in the presence of the Minister for the Environment that we have had many submissions on this matter.

The park has rich biodiversity values, which is remarkable considering its location within the highly developed Sydney Basin. I live in a unit block, and five minutes' walk away you would not know where you are: You are literally in the middle of a remarkable piece of bushland—it is just extraordinary. The park has national, regional and local conservation significance. Extensive areas of woodland, open forest, rainforest, mangroves, heath, saltmarsh and sandstone swamps are present within the park. The rich diversity of high-quality habitats in the park support many native animal species, including 12 threatened species such as the spotted quoll, giant burrowing frog and powerful owl. This morning when I went on my morning run there was an echidna coming across the road on the bushwalking track in the middle of what will be the Berowra Valley National Park. It is a very special part of Sydney. This Government recognises both the close connection of the people of Hornsby shire to the natural environment of the Berowra Valley and its incredible conservation values through its efforts to increase the protection of this area by creating the Berowra Valley National Park.

One might ask why it is not sufficient to retain these lands as Berowra Valley Regional Park. The answer is that a regional park does give some protection, usually to lands that are more modified, and are

suitable for public recreation and enjoyment. This area, however, is largely not modified and has considerable conservation values that warrant its protection as a national park. But let us not forget about the social and recreational importance of the park. Public access in the regional park has been promoted and well managed for many years, with investment in camping facilities, bike paths and picnic areas, which make it such a popular place to visit.

The regional park, which is surrounded by urban development, is used by the public on a daily basis for pursuits such as exercise, nature appreciation and dog walking, or simply to relax in the beautiful bushland setting. The park is extremely popular on weekends for picnics, bushwalks and camping. The Great North Walk, which I am sure many members will be aware of, extends from Lane Cove in the south all the way to Newcastle in the north—it runs right through the middle of the park. The Government also recognises the need to maintain and provide for existing recreational activities that were occurring when the regional park was created back in 1998 and which have continued. One of those activities is dog walking. I am pleased to advise that dog walking will continue in areas in which dog walking currently occurs, with specified trails maintained in the regional park. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

There is also community interest in the use of a modified area within the park, known as Stringybark Ridge. It is an area of approximately three hectares, which was used previously by the Hornsby Pony Club. This area will be included within the new national park. Options for the use of this site, including active use of the area, will be investigated. Council and the broader community will be part of the standard management and planning for a national park. This Government is striking a balance between the conservation and recreational needs of the Berowra Valley area with the creation of the new Berowra Valley National Park, and the retention of the small Berowra Valley Regional Park. A new plan of management will be required for Berowra Valley National Park and Berowra Valley Regional Park.

The development of plans of management is a process that is undertaken with full community engagement. The community will be able to have their say on plans for the future management of these lands, and the best way for them to enjoy them. The establishment of Berowra Valley National Park will achieve a win-win for the environment and the local community. There will be better recognition and protection of our natural and cultural heritage, and continued provision of recreational activities in the areas that will remain regional park. I take this opportunity to place on the record my deep sense of appreciation to those elected representatives that have fought to make this vision a reality. This battle has not just come about today; it has been going on for 60 years.

I particularly acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Judy Hopwood, who was passionate in fighting for this parcel of land to become a national park. I was absolutely honoured to take up the baton following my election in March 2011 and turn Judy's vision, Max Ruddock's vision and the community's vision into reality. But that did not happen by accident. It happened because we have a Minister for the Environment who listened to my concerns and listened to the community's concerns, and who is passionate about the environment and preserving something remarkable for future generations to enjoy. Those generations will thank the Minister and I appreciate all her efforts to date. I am absolutely thrilled to support this bill. Just over one year ago I stood in this place and made my inaugural speech. In that speech I spoke of my hope and a vision for a better State and committed myself to turning that into a reality. Today, I hope this bill goes some way to achieving that goal.

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN** (Gosford) [4.17 p.m.]: I support the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012. The purpose of this bill is to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to change the reservation status of lands, specifically part of the Berowra Valley Regional Park to a national park to be known as the Berowra Valley National Park. The bill will revoke the reservation of parts of Broadwater National Park, Kooraban National Park, Yaegl Nature Reserve, the Cooperabung Creek Nature Reserve and Bogandyera Nature Reserve. It also provides that the Minister must not transfer the lands, other than certain lands in the Bogandyera Nature Reserve under part 11 of the Act, unless satisfied that appropriate compensation has been provided. These changes provide a balance between protection of our environment and the need to support essential public infrastructure development, support economic growth and improve public safety.

The bill will enhance the protection of about 3.9 hectares of land that is currently included in the Berowra Valley Regional Park, thereby creating this Government's second national park, which will be named Berowra Valley National Park. This will ensure the highest level of protection for the valuable biodiversity and conservation of species. A plan of management will also take into account Aboriginal cultural heritage. The park contains 24 known sites of Aboriginal heritage with most located in caves, valleys or open rock platforms

where there are examples of hand stencils, grinding grooves and middens. It contains over 500 flora species, including two endangered ecological communities and at least 10 threatened flora species, some of which are found only in this particular location.

The rich diversity of these high-quality habitats in the park also supports many native animal species, including 12 threatened species such as the giant burrowing frog, the powerful owl and the spotted quoll. I can relate to the spotted quoll because a breeding program takes place at the Australian Walkabout Wildlife Park at Peats Ridge on the Central Coast. I was there several months ago for a media shoot to highlight the good actions by our Minister for the Environment in funding this program. I felt for the ranger at the time, who lost a substantial amount of blood trying to get one simple photo of the spotted quoll—they have sharp claws. I am sure it is a necessary species to protect, but it seems to have very good defence. Hornsby Shire Council has been very supportive through its joint management of this park and it is to be commended.

The second proposal in the bill will enable urgent highway upgrades by revoking approximately 38 hectares of land from reservation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. This will make possible essential safety upgrades to the Pacific Highway and the Princes Highway. I cannot fail to mention the scandalous way the Federal Labor Government is treating this State when it lies about the 80:20 split for the Pacific Highway upgrade. I can only think that the Minister responsible, Mr Albanese, does not intend standing at the next Federal election because he seems to take great delight in trashing and duding his home State. In contrast, we are getting on with the business of building the infrastructure the State needs after the neglect we have had to endure over the tenure in office of those opposite. About half of the land that will be revoked is necessary to improve road safety, remove congestion and enhance freight efficiency on the Pacific Highway.

The third proposal in the bill will correct an error made by the former Labor Government when it mistakenly included a quarry in the Bogandyera Nature Reserve in 2001. The bill will excise about seven hectares from the park so that Tumbarumba Shire Council can again access that quarry to source materials to repair local roads. Bogandyera Nature Reserve is situated about 10 kilometres south of Tumbarumba and, for clarification, the quarry existed and was used by Tumbarumba Shire Council prior to the former Labor Government's error, so there is no need for scare tactics and lies implying that this excising of land will turn national park into a quarry. As this was a mistake by the former Labor Government, I am sure we can rely on the support of those opposite in correcting the error. Including the quarry within the southern boundary of the 8,700 hectares of reserve back in 2001 was a mistake. Let us fix it and let commonsense prevail.

Some 17 hectares of the Pacific Highway will be excised from Broadwater National Park, 1.5 hectares from Yaegl Nature Reserve and 1.2 hectares from the Cooperabung Creek Nature Reserve. All this land adjoins the existing alignment of the Pacific Highway. It is a commonsense and standard approach to enable the Government to deliver the necessary upgrade to the Pacific Highway because upgrading the Pacific Highway is and will remain one of the Government's top priorities. The death and injury toll indicates that that be so, and it is a shame that Federal Labor plays its grubby politics over funding this upgrade. On the other hand, last year we committed \$468 million to the project, which more than made up for the \$300 million cut by the former State Labor Government. The Princes Highway is another road that requires safety upgrades. The bill will excise approximately 18 hectares of land from Kooraban National Park, which adjoins the Princes Highway at Dignam's Creek 20 kilometres south of Narooma.

These works are necessary to address public safety risks along that stretch of road, which is steep and winding and has a history of fatal collisions. Whenever the Government excises land from a national park for highway upgrades, compensation will be in the form of protection of other lands of at least equivalent conservation value—that will be done in this case. In another part of the Bogandyera Nature Reserve the bill provides for the excise of about 17 hectares of land associated with an existing fire trail. This realignment enables Forests NSW to access and harvest an adjoining pine plantation planted 16 years ago, before the nature reserve was established. The original access road for the pine forest has since been surrounded by development, including residential, and to access this original way would require substantial road and bridge works, which would have a substantial impact on the noise and amenity to local residents that they do not want.

It would be deemed inappropriate and unsafe for logging trucks to access using the original route. Commonsense would dictate that the upgrade of the existing fire trail would cause both less disturbance to the local community and lower costs to the State. Agreement has already been reached regarding compensation. Some 350 hectares at Imerson's Swamp will be reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and a further 300 hectares from the Tumut State Forest will be transferred for future reservation. These significant gains more than compensate for the excise of only 17 hectares for the access road upgrade. All of the proposals outlined in

this bill will have little impact on our national park system and will deliver a great result for the people of New South Wales. They are critical improvements to road safety that will save lives. They support the sourcing of local materials for road repairs and the delivery of timber from sustainable sources. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TONY ISSA** (Granville) [4.26 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber—she is a great Minister. The provisions of the bill allow for the resumption of land for the completion of important infrastructure projects such as much-needed upgrades to the Pacific Highway. Another section of the bill creates the O'Farrell Government's second national park. Under the bill, more than 3,800 hectares of Berowra Valley Regional Park will be given national park status and will thereby be protected for generations to come by the New South Wales Government. This pristine valley is home to 11 threatened species. They are currently under threat from a number of sources, which include land developers and sand miners. The park has dozens of significant areas, including Aboriginal artwork and camp fire sites.

The park is an area of enormous natural and cultural heritage. It also contributes to the quality of living in Hornsby shire—also known as the bushland shire. It is home to at least 18 vegetation communities, and it is all within 30 kilometres of the Sydney central business district. The park offers more than 70 kilometres of walking tracks and fire trails, and includes several areas where people can take their dog for a walk. When the Minister made this announcement earlier this month, Bob Salt of the Friends of Berowra Valley Regional Park observed that the move to national park would make nature conservation, rather than recreational activities, the focus of the management of the park. For more than 60 years, Bob and his colleagues have campaigned to make this happen. By giving the park national park status, it will receive the highest protection and a plan of management will outline how the New South Wales Government will manage the park.

The bill will change the category of reserve from regional park to the new national park by revoking 3,876 hectares from the Berowra Valley Regional Park to create the new national park. By changing its status, the park will be offered greater protection. This means that although greater protection will be offered, this will not necessarily mean that the park will be locked up. The Government is about providing for the recreational activities that already exist in the park. When this Government—unlike the former Labor Government—creates a new national park, it is done in collaboration with the community and with an understanding of their recreational needs. A portion of the land will remain a regional park for that very reason, to provide dog walking and picnic areas. This legislation will provide for an eight-hectare leashed dog walking area, fulfilling the wishes of the community.

The second part of the amendments to the Act involves the taking of 38 hectares of land from land currently under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to enable highway upgrades to take place. The State's major highways are in serious need of a rescue package at this time. Since it came to office last year, this Government has made a commitment to the people of the State to embark on a program to remove traffic congestion and to make travel on our highways safer. The Pacific Highway is generally acknowledged as one of the most dangerous roads in the State. Only recently the NRMA announced the results of its annual road survey. For the second year running, the Pacific Highway was voted the worst road in New South Wales. This Government is committed to improving conditions on the Pacific Highway.

This problem has become even more acute with the Federal Government reneging on a commitment of 80 per cent funding to major highways like the Pacific Highway. That means the New South Wales Government will have to work on the improvements. The same also applies to the Princes Highway. It is land adjacent to both the Pacific and the Princes highways that this bill is aiming to resume to enable roadworks to proceed. Upgrading the Pacific Highway is one of this Government's top priorities. The number of deaths and injuries that have occurred on that road over many years is unacceptable. About 20 hectares of national park and reserve adjoins the alignment of the Pacific Highway. This proposal will have virtually no impact on the park and the nature reserves themselves. It will, however, reduce congestion on the highway, improve safety on the highway and enhance freight efficiency. The bill will also provide for resumption of land adjacent to the Princes Highway to allow for necessary upgrades.

The third part of the bill deals with seven hectares of land that was mistakenly included in the Bogandjera Nature Reserve, which is about 10 kilometres south of Tumbarumba. Amazingly enough, this land was included by the former Labor Government; it is in fact a quarry. The former Labor Government put a quarry into a national park—can you believe it. This land obviously has no conservation value and is still being used as a quarry. It makes sense that this legislation provides for the land to be returned to the Tumbarumba

Shire Council. That council has agreed to provide a boundary fence to assist in managing the quarry and the nature reserve at the same time. In another section of the Bogandyera Nature Reserve this legislation provides for the resumption of about 17 hectares of land associated with an existing fire trail. It is important that the land is resumed because Forests NSW needs to access and harvest an adjoining pine plantation. That plantation was established 16 years ago, prior to the establishment of the nature reserve.

However, it is important that the land be resumed to avoid costly road and bridge works so that logging trucks can access the plantation. Local residents are opposed to this because of the noise those trucks would create. It therefore makes sense to upgrade and widen the existing fire trail. This is a much cheaper option and will cause far less disruption to the local community. It must be noted in this debate that this Government is determined to preserve and protect the State's beautiful national parks and reserves, and I am confident that the provisions in this legislation will in no way impact adversely on those State treasures. In fact, the creation of the Berowra Valley National Park will add to its preservation for generations to come and will ensure that it continues to be enjoyed by all people of the State. This legislation also provides for the upgrade of some of the most dangerous stretches of road in New South Wales. I support the provisions in this legislation and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [4.33 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012. Other members have referred extensively to the previous problems posed by the land-locked quarry and the fact that this bill will resolve that issue. It is most appropriate that the Minister for the Environment is present in the House; we are fortunate to have a Minister who cares about national parks. My fellow Macarthur members, the members for Wollondilly and Camden, and I deeply appreciate the efforts of not only the Minister but also the Premier in establishing the Dharawal National Park, which has existed from time immemorial, with the Dharawal Aboriginal people caring for that land. A national park was promised some 16 years ago by those opposite, but it was never delivered.

In the lead-up to the last election our Premier, Barry O'Farrell, identified the importance of the Dharawal National Park and committed to creating this national park. Those on the other side said it could not happen; that it would not happen. Right up to the day the establishment of this national park was declared they were still saying it could not happen. There is no doubt its establishment was not easy. If it had been easy, the former Labor Government might have done this many years ago. I know the Minister worked extremely hard to get the process through to create the Dharawal National Park. I know, too, that this fulfilled the dreams of many people in Campbelltown. I know my friend Jeff McGill, Editor of the *Macarthur Advertiser*, had hoped and waited. Like many, he was at the point of despair that this national park would ever become more than a dream.

I was fortunate enough to be taken on a guided tour of the Dharawal National Park by Sharyn Cullis, a long-term friend of the Dharawal National Park. This is probably the most accessible national park in Sydney, by distance. It has a natural beauty; its cavernous gorges and native flora and fauna have been largely untouched since time began. It is now a national park. It took just 12 months for this Government to remove the barriers and obstacles that those opposite found insurmountable for more than 16 years. I was very pleased to join the Premier and the Minister for the Environment at the announcement of the Dharawal National Park on Sunday 29 March 2012. It was a huge win for the area. A great many happy people who turned up that day heard the young students singing the national anthem in both the Dharawal and English languages, and saw the tears in Uncle Ivan Wellington's eyes as he witnessed the creation of the national park.

Dharawal National Park is a place where Campbelltown families will be able to come to picnic, party and explore. It is an amazing place, with views over the rugged escarpments and gorges—6½ thousand hectares of national park, with no depth restrictions, meaning that for the first time it is protected to the core of the earth. The area also has significant Aboriginal cultural values, with large numbers of important sites and priceless Aboriginal artworks. The Government has committed \$1 million to improve visitor facilities and opportunities to enjoy the national park. Those will include a new lookout, with access for the disabled, overlooking O'Hares Creek at Wedderburn, improved walking access to the gorgeous pools on Stokes Creek and nearby swimming facilities. The establishment of the Dharawal National Park has been well received by the National Parks Association, which has said the Dharawal is an important network of pristine creeks and upland swamps, significant in protecting the headwaters of the Georges River and the biodiversity of the southern Sydney region.

The National Parks Association said the dedication of this national park will ensure this beautiful area will be given the strongest possible protection, a goal for which the National Parks Association has campaigned for more than three decades. The National Parks Association congratulated the O'Farrell Government on ensuring that its pre-election commitment was completed within the very first year of its term of office. The



National Parks Association viewed this as a very positive outcome, achieved after complex negotiations by a whole range of people from the Office of Environment and Heritage, including the Reserve and Wildlife Policy team. Together, they resolved the many challenging problems—which those on the other side found insurmountable—and achieved this outstanding result.

The national park extends from Wedderburn, deep in the heart of the electorate of Campbelltown, through Wollondilly, along the Bulli-Appin Road and all the way to the southern freeway at Madden Falls. It is one of the most significant additions to national parks in our lifetime and it happened under a reformist Liberal-Nationals Government. It shows the Government's commitment to the environment and to getting things done. I am pleased that the environment Minister is here. Often being a Minister is a thankless task and rarely do they ever get to see the fruits of their labours. Here we have a Minister who, within the first year of government, has delivered the greatest national park that this State will ever see. It is no surprise that she has managed in another piece of legislation to rectify a long-term failure of the Opposition with the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustments of Areas) Bill 2012. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [4.40 p.m.]: I support the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2012. I am a passionate advocate for the creation of national parks in our State, as is the member for Campbelltown, the great opal of the south-west. This bill extends the good work already done by this Government in the area of nature conservation and national park creation. This bill will see the creation of the Berowra Valley National Park. Over the last few years my colleague Matt Kean, the member for Hornsby, has been tirelessly fighting for this. It is great news not only for the constituents of Hornsby and the surrounding areas but for all residents of this State.

I have no doubt that the residents of Hornsby and surrounding suburbs will benefit from the park and are comforted by the knowledge that such a beautiful piece of land will now be protected forever. This bill will also realign a current boundary marking to allow vital infrastructure and safety upgrades to the Pacific Highway and Princes Highway. Approximately 38 hectares of reserve will be reclassified to allow these safety upgrades to be completed. The third proposal in the bill will be to correct a boundary error by the previous Government when it mistakenly included in a reserve a quarry used as a source of local road repair materials by Tumbarumba Council. To remedy the error there will be a revocation of approximately seven hectares of land, which will allow the local council to continue to utilise local natural resources.

The final amendment of this bill is the replacement of a parcel of land currently zoned as nature reserve. To offset that rezoning two parcels of land approximately 60 times greater in size will be classed as reserve. An existing fire trail will be used as an access route for NSW Forestry to ensure safe passage around the Bogandyera Nature Reserve to a pine forest planted 16 years ago prior to the classification of Bogandyera as a nature reserve. The amendments demonstrate that the Government is working hard to get the balance right between sustainable industries and preserving our natural environment for future generations. As I mentioned earlier, this is the second national park declaration since the Government came to office. The first declaration was the Dharawal National Park in Wollondilly and Campbelltown. Dharawal National Park holds a special place in my heart as I have visited it many times in the past, and often as a boy.

I have walked the tracks by myself and with Aboriginal elders, community groups, the members for Campbelltown, Camden, Heathcote and Oatley, the Minister for the Environment, who is in the Chamber tonight, the Federal member for Macarthur, nature activists and the Premier. Few have offered such steadfast support for the park's creation as Jeff McGill, editor of local paper the *Macarthur Advertiser*. Jeff has remained an avid and vocal supporter of the park's creation and has documented the history of the park's trials and tribulations over the last decade. He was a strong driver behind the Government's election commitment to establish the park and I take this opportunity to thank him for his support once again. I take this opportunity to extend my thanks, along with those of the member for Campbelltown, to the National Parks Association of New South Wales.

The creation of Dharawal National Park enables mums and dads to take their families to visit the park, to hike through the native vegetation down towards the freshwater lakes, to have a picnic lunch and to share some quality time together away from the hustle and bustle of city life. The community is able to protect, learn about and promote the sacred Aboriginal sites that bring such important cultural value to our community. The Dharawal National Park preserves the 2,000 upland swamps that feed into O'Hare's Creek. This important step in the conservation of our land will benefit us now and into the future. It is essential to allow the natural beauty of the land of Dharawal National Park to remain untouched so that it can grow and thrive as it was meant to do.

The "no depth" restriction means that the park will remain completely preserved. That means no coal seam gas, no fracking, no mining, or anything that will destroy the environment. I look forward to taking my wife and two boys to the park again soon. I also look forward to the day when my grandchildren visit the same park. These amendments demonstrate that the Government is committed to getting the balance right. The Government is committed to preserving the natural surroundings and fostering good relations between conservation agencies, industry and local communities. The creation of a new national park in the Hornsby electorate will be an everlasting testament to this Government and I commend my colleague from Hornsby and the Minister for this decision.

I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage, who is in the Chamber this evening. The Minister's dedication has ensured that despite Labor's scaremongering and condescension the project has been completed. On 27 March 2012 the environment Minister, the Premier and I attended the dedication ceremony to celebrate with a thankful community. It was interesting to attend with the Minister for the Environment because there were groups present at the dedication that are not traditional Liberal Party voters and were aligned to the former Government. Those groups said that the dedication of Dharawal National Park was something they had been hoping would occur for a very long time under the previous Government. Former Premier Bob Carr announced in 1993 that one of the first acts of his Government would be to declare Dharawal a national park. Sixteen years later history speaks for itself: Labor did not deliver on that promise. It was great to see community groups that had previously supported those opposite recognise that the Coalition Government was a Government of its word and it had delivered on the promise to declare Dharawal a national park.

It was a fantastic day. I have a Dharawal National Park badge that was minted for the occasion. It says, "Community Celebration 2012". It was a fantastic celebration. The expectation was that it would be a small celebration with members of the community but the numbers in attendance were so large that another Dharawal National Park alongside to cater for the crowd would not have been amiss. People from all walks of life attended because they knew the importance of this national park. Unfortunately the Labor Party did not share in the celebration with the community. A member of the Labor Party did turn up to say to the television cameras that it was a farce and there would be mining, fracking and coal seam gas extraction within the national park. The Labor Party member did not participate in the celebrations but hijacked the media at the end of the day. The Labor Party member did not realise that Dharawal National Park is protected to the core of the earth: there will be no coal seam gas extraction, no fracking and no mining. The Labor Party member wanted to diminish the achievement in order to cover up the fact that the previous Government had failed to deliver on its promise.

I look forward to working with the community into the future to enhance the park. I thank the Minister for providing \$1 million towards the establishment of that park and a new entrance that will be created at Appin. That means people from across Appin, Bulli, Wollongong and Campbelltown can easily access the park. Dharawal National Park is an icon in my electorate and Brian Doyle's electorate of Campbelltown. The member for Campbelltown and I look forward to seeing everything unveiled over the next 12 months. It is something I have been fighting for not only in the lead up to the election but as a councillor and a member of that community who understands the importance of looking after the environment. The creation of that park was something that had been promised to the community for a long time by those opposite. I conclude my remarks by thanking the environment Minister and the Premier. I extend my appreciation to the member for Hornsby for establishing a national park in his neck of the woods. It is testament to the commitment of this Government to the environment. I commend the bill to the House.

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

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS**

### **Financial Year 2012-13**

**Debate resumed from 14 June 2012.**

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [4.50 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to share with the House the impact that the budget has had on the electorate of Campbelltown, that great opal of the south-west and great treasure of the Macarthur region. In a nutshell, Campbelltown and the south-west have been identified as an area of major opportunity. The budget contains many projects for the area, including redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital, provision for additional sub-acute mental health services, provision for the purchase of

land for accommodation for people with disabilities, the South West Rail Link, additional nurses for the South Western Sydney Local Health District, funding to commence upgrading of the M5 freeway, funding for creation of Dharawal National Park and funding for upgrades to major regional roads such as Picton Road.

I refer in particular to Campbelltown Hospital, part of the South Western Sydney Local Health District. The hospital provides hospital and medical services to an expanding area of Sydney. In the dying days of the former Government during the election campaign Labor suddenly promised to build an extension to Campbelltown Hospital. On many occasions it was said the only thing preventing that from happening was that Labor did not have a pen to sign the papers. I have a pen. Indeed, Labor did not build about six other hospitals; those hospitals are still on the waiting list. This Government is getting on with the job of building the extension to Campbelltown Hospital.

It was a great day when I brought Treasurer Mike Baird, a leading part of this reformist Government, out to visit Campbelltown. I wanted him to actually touch the ground where the extension to the hospital was to be built. The expression on the faces of the medical staff demonstrated to us the importance of the expansion of medical services. The Government has allocated \$139 million towards the Campbelltown Hospital redevelopment, with \$26 million being allocated in this year's budget. The difference between the Coalition and Labor is that we deliver whereas with Labor there is inaction. People who drive down Appin Road or through Park Central can witness work commencing on the hospital. Abigroup won the tender for the work and is getting on with the job.

Preliminary work is underway towards construction of a new acute care building and the provision of 90 new in-patient beds, bringing the total number of beds at the hospital to 349. The redevelopment includes an expanded emergency department, with 11 new treatment spaces and an expanded maternity section with a new four-room birthing centre. Both my daughters were born at Campbelltown Hospital and I am aware of the need for this service. Provision will be made for expanded ambulatory care as well as outpatients, antenatal and treatment spaces. The hospital will also have an additional 135 car parking spaces, bringing the total to 1,220. There will be an extension to the loading and services dock area. People can see movement at the station: they can actually see the hospital being extended. The Government will leave this legacy for the people of Campbelltown, along with the M5 upgrade.

I drove down the M5 this morning. The community is pleased there is movement at the station on the M5 also, with the allocation of \$900,000 towards construction of an additional lane between King Georges Road and Camden Valley Way on this major arterial route between Campbelltown and Sydney. The extension will help to reduce delays and result in faster journey times for more than 90,000 motorists. In addition, the funding will help to smooth the entire road and pay for noise walls and other noise mitigation measures. The Government has allocated \$397 million towards the South West Rail Link. Drivers travelling down the M5 can see construction of the bridge where it crosses the M5. Drivers can also see the massive work being undertaken at the Glenfield interchange to facilitate the South West Rail Link, a link that will service the great development going on west of the M5. The Government is committed to getting things done and providing resources and infrastructure to support the growing needs of the south-west.

The Government has allocated \$1 million towards the creation of Dharawal National Park, something that has been long awaited. People despaired that this national park would ever be created yet within a year of the Coalition being elected to government the Dharawal National Park is a reality. The budget provides the necessary funding to provide facilities and access so that people can enjoy the area. Perhaps the headline of the *Macarthur Advertiser* says it all about the budget. It states, "Campbelltown Hospital gets its share in the NSW budget". There was great joy in the Campbelltown area that these long-awaited and much-needed pieces of infrastructure were finally being delivered. For too long Campbelltown had been neglected and overlooked. This Government realises that Campbelltown is the opal of the south-west and the key in the great Macarthur region. Many people are pleased that for the first time in their lives they live in a Liberal electorate in Campbelltown, and they are enjoying the change. I commend the budget to the House.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [4.58 p.m.]: Once again the O'Farrell budget has shown the lack of commitment of the Premier and the Treasurer to the people of Cabramatta and south-west Sydney. Ignored, shunned—describe it as one will—the budget disrespects Cabramatta and the hardworking families who reside there. Prior to the last State election the Premier would make his way out to Cabramatta to support his failed candidate Dai Le. Since the time that his dream candidate failed to win the trust of the people of Cabramatta he has been nowhere near Cabramatta. The Premier still has the gall to call himself the Minister for Western Sydney, yet he simply does not care about the people of south-west Sydney and the people of Cabramatta. The Premier thinks that western Sydney starts and ends with the North West Rail Link.

I have a message for the Premier: the families and communities of suburbs such as Cabramatta, St Johns Park and Bonnyrigg deserve their fair share of the budget pie; they do not deserve to be ignored by this uncaring and incompetent Government. They have seen through the Premier: he only cared for Cabramatta when there was a chance for his failed candidate to be elected. The Premier is still propping up his failed candidate, appointing her to the Community Relations Commission. It is nothing less than a blatant political appointment. It is a slap in the face to my multicultural community of Cabramatta, particularly given the insulting remarks the candidate made in the national media before the last State election when she congratulated Pauline Hanson—leader of the One Nation Party—on standing for the upper House.

The O'Farrell Government's budget contains \$1.2 billion of sneaky cuts to services and programs. We have heard of death by a thousand cuts; this is death by a billion cuts. At the same time the Premier is grabbing as much cash as he can from the people of New South Wales: speeding fines hiked up by 12.5 per cent, bringing in an extra \$180 million. Is this the same Barry O'Farrell who promised that he would not use speed cameras as cash cows? At the same time and with the same pen the Premier has slashed the roads budget by \$400 million. The Premier has also continued his assault on public sector workers. Fresh from having their rights to workers compensation cut, more and more public sector workers are facing the sack. They are hardworking people who get up early and go home late every night. They work hard to put food on the table for their families. They will not take this assault lying down, and neither will the Opposition.

In the past few weeks Department of Community Services workers—our unsung heroes who deal with such confronting issues as child protection and domestic violence—have openly stated that the lack of resources and the caseworker vacancy rates are putting vulnerable children at risk. The Minister for Health was jeered at the New South Wales Nurses Association annual conference. A pattern is emerging: the people of New South Wales are becoming tired of an uncaring Government that is not doing anything except actively taking people's rights away from them. I will give credit where it is due. I was relieved that the Canley Vale commuter car park, announced by the former Government before last March has been reaffirmed and will go ahead. I thank the Minister for Transport. She is a good Minister who listens and cares for the community.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Hear, hear! Finally some good sense from the Opposition.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** Always. We have a bit of bad and a bit of good. The Minister for Transport recognises that the residents and commuters of Canley Vale require a car park. I have made representations to the Minister regarding the need for a lift at Canley Vale station. She has indicated to me that it was within the budget and she is quite happy to look at the possibility of having a lift installed at Canley Vale station. The station has a steep incline and the community is united as one regarding the need for a lift. Some of my constituents have told me that although they live locally they alight at Fairfield station because that station has a lift and they do not have to negotiate stairs. They have to walk down the road, about a kilometre or so, to get to their homes at Canley Vale. Currently the station presents a safety hazard and it is very difficult for the old, the infirm, the weak, and pregnant women and young families to negotiate their way up and down to the station.

The President of the Canley Vale Chamber of Commerce, Tony Fornasier, has spoken to me about his concerns regarding the lack of a lift at the station and more than 1,000 of my constituents have signed a petition calling on the Government to provide a lift. Canley Vale is not the only place in my electorate in desperate need of a commuter car park. The Labor Government announced that a new commuter car park was to be built on Railway Parade, Cabramatta—less than a minute's walk from the station. With Fairfield Council's Fisher Street car park in high use and full on most days, the residents and commuters of Cabramatta need the car park. The car park was budgeted for, plans were drawn up and it was going to proceed. Unfortunately, since coming to power Barry O'Farrell has continually told us that the project is being "reassessed". While we do not know whether this reassessment will only be complete if the Premier can get a Liberal over the line in Cabramatta, one thing is clear: Cabramatta needs this car park now.

I have made various suggestions to Ministers in relation to car parking solutions for Cabramatta but all of them have so far fallen on deaf ears. I wrote to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services requesting that the excess land from the old Cabramatta fire station site be used to extend the Hill Street car park. That request was denied because the O'Farrell Government plans to divest the land parcel—in plain terms: sell it off privately to the highest bidder. This situation is ridiculous in view of the facts. The new Cabramatta fire station is on Crown land on the corner of St Johns Road and the Cumberland Highway.

The Government did not have to invest money to obtain the land; therefore, the old site should be quarantined for community use, and what the community desperately wants and needs is more car parking. This

budget ignores my electorate: it ignores the people and the communities who have made Cabramatta the jewel of south-west Sydney. The sooner the Premier and the Government wake up to the fact that they were elected to govern all of New South Wales—not just their mates in marginal and blue-ribbon Liberal seats—the better we all will be. I condemn the Government's lack of commitment to Cabramatta and south-west Sydney.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [5.05 p.m.]: I speak on the budget estimates and related papers for 2012-2013. What a great budget was delivered to the people of New South Wales, particularly to regional New South Wales. My electorate received much in the latest budget and I will go through some of the promises and commitments that have been delivered and their effect in New South Wales. The overall budget for Myall Lakes was about \$128 million. The Pacific Highway is a significant issue right up the coast because it has a terrible history of deaths and injuries: it has affected many people and many families. That is why it is so important that we get the work on the Pacific Highway finished. In last year's budget \$100 million was put towards the Bulahdelah bypass and in the budget this year \$60 million has been allocated. The Bulahdelah bypass is the last piece of the Pacific Highway that needs to be upgraded from Hexham to just north of Port Macquarie. There are some other parts of the highway that are being tidied up but it is the last area on the Pacific Highway that needs a dual divided carriageway. That roadwork is a monumental feat: it has had to go across floodplains and over rivers. Ten bridges are involved in the bypass.

**Mr Andrew Gee:** How many?

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Ten bridges, and the people of Bulahdelah are looking forward to the day when the trucks spewing their poisonous diesel fumes bypass the town, allowing them a clean town to live in. It gave me great pleasure recently to attend the opening of the first of the bridges, which allowed the people of Bulahdelah to go over the top of the new bypass to Alan Mountain. About \$60 million has been spent on that project. For local and regional roads about \$28 million has been allocated, and part of that involves Main Road 90. Prior to the election Greater Taree City Council said that its number one priority was the upgrade of Main Road 90—Wallanbah and Avalon roads. The project was supported by Gloucester council and Great Lakes Council. The council said it needed \$7.5 million, and last year's budget included \$800,000, \$500,000 of which was for the planning and design work for the redevelopment of Main Road 90.

In this year's budget \$5 million has been allocated and \$2 million has been promised in next year's budget to get that road up and going. The tender documents have been completed and the work on the road is expected to commence in October. Of course that work is being undertaken by Greater Taree City Council with funding from the New South Wales Government. We look forward to the council getting started on that road. The upgrade of Lakes Way north was also promised before the election and has been delivered in this year's budget. Approximately \$2.25 million has been provided to upgrade the area from the Blackhead turn-off to the Pacific Highway. That is a notorious and busy stretch of road, with about 8,000 car movements each morning and evening. I have appeared in court hearings, including the Coroner's Court, in relation to a number of the deaths that have occurred on that road.

The Lakes Way south will also receive approximately \$2.25 million to upgrade the section of road from the Smiths Lake turn-off south to the Pacific Highway just north of Bulahdelah. It is a picturesque and scenic road but has more hairpins than Marie Antoinette. It is a dangerous road and we look forward to the upgrade, which will be undertaken by Great Lakes Council with funding provided by the State Government. The intersection of Blackhead Road and the Lakes Way is a notorious blackspot. The State Government will provide \$400,000 for a roundabout at that intersection. I assure the Acting-Speaker and other members of the House that the local community is looking forward to the upgrade of the Lakes Way north, including the new roundabout.

Taree TAFE is another highlight in the budget. It will get a new purpose-built nurse education and training centre, which is fantastic for Taree. At the moment it trains about 50 nurses, and with the new facility that number will double approximately. The new training and education centre will be one of the few to provide this training and we expect many people to move to Taree to undertake the course. This funding honours the Government's commitment to increase the number of nurses and medical and ancillary services in our hospitals. There is also ongoing funding in the budget for disability services and agencies such as Valley Industries, which has provided disability services in Taree since the early 1970s. Members who have been in this place for a long time, such as the member for Mount Druitt, will remember Wendy Machin, whose father founded Valley Industries.

Rather than people with disabilities being looked after in institutions and sitting at home with nothing to do, that organisation was one of the first in New South Wales to provide them with work-like

experiences. Through Valley Industries, disabled people did things that were worthwhile and lifted their esteem, and they received a wage. They made timber pallets for the trucking industry and started a nursery to provide wholesale plants to retailers. Valley Industries has now grown. It has a number of premises at which it provides many other services to people with all levels of disability. The budget ensures its ongoing funding, and that is always pleasing to see. A couple of weeks ago the Minister for Ageing and Disability Services visited Taree to announce funding for Taree Community College, which provides disability day services and education. At the moment the college caters for about 28 students each day and offers computer and other classes.

Some time ago the college bought another building in Taree that it wishes to renovate so it is suitable for use by the college and for the provision of disability day services. The total cost of the renovations is about \$2.5 million, but the college needed \$216,000 to renovate the disability day services area of the building. The funding announced by the Minister is a wonderful boost to disability services in the Manning Valley. Since the early 1970s and the creation of Valley Industries through to today, the Manning Valley area has a proud history of providing disability services. Many families relocate to Taree because of the programs that are available. Of course, their relocation to Taree means that more services are needed to cater for the influx of people who require assistance. That is why Valley Industries has grown from one premise to several premises and why the community college needs to move its day services in order to cater for far more than 28 people. That is another wonderful allocation in the budget.

The budget also contains funding for planning to upgrade a section of the Pacific Highway about four kilometres south of Taree. Although the road is dual carriageway it is speed limited to 80 kilometres an hour because it includes old sections of the Pacific Highway. But it is good that northbound and southbound traffic are separated. There was funding in last year's budget and again in this year's budget for acquisition of land to straighten some of that section so the speed limit can be increased when the road is redeveloped. There is also funding for maintenance of Martin Bridge, which is the main bridge into Taree. The Martin Bridge is one of those bridges that utilised leftover paint and some of the girders from the Opera House. It is an old bridge and requires constant maintenance. There is funding for painting and for the removal of rust from the girders to ensure the bridge is safe.

There is also funding in the budget for painting the Forster-Tuncurry Bridge, which is located close to the beach and is exposed to the elements. Maintaining the bridge is a constant job and it is pleasing that funding for that is provided in the budget. Myall Lakes has received funding for many other programs and projects but I will now move to what the budget means for the State overall. The budget means that the Government will retain the State's triple-A credit rating. The Government is providing funding for new hospitals and upgrades to hospitals. The Government is providing funding for the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway and other roads. The Government is delivering on the promises it made before the election. For the first time, after 16 years of Labor, the budget is pleasing to see.

**Mr Nick Lalich:** Sixteen years and four elections.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** In March last year the people of New South Wales had enough of the moral turpitude and depravity of the Labor Government. The people of New South Wales want to be reminded why they voted the right way in March last year—it was because of the incompetence of those opposite. Some \$500,000 was wasted on the Rozelle metro and \$100 million was wasted on the Tillegra Dam, but those opposite still have not learnt their lesson. There is still a revolving door at the Independent Commission Against Corruption for Labor Party members. Members opposite speak of 16 years and four elections but we must remember that before every one of those elections promises were made and then broken. We could talk about light rail or roads such as the M4 or M5—all sorts of things were promised, announced and then axed after the election.

Those opposite speak of winning four elections as though it is a badge of honour but they conned this State for 16 years. For 16 years the people of New South Wales did not realise the moral turpitude of this mob opposite—a depraved, perverted Government. The scandals and the corruption were absolutely unbelievable. Labor members interject that they won four elections as though power is everything. They have been reading the little Labor handbook written by Graham Richardson, calling on members to do and say whatever it takes. Labor members are proud. It is all a game to them. It is all about power and about money. It is about thinking, "Can I sell a mining licence to a mate for a dollar? What can I pass on to my family, friends and connections? What can I get out of this?" That is what Labor is about. Labor won four elections and New South Wales was corrupted for 16 years.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** Point of order: I could take any one of many points of order but I refer to relevance. I ask that you direct the member for Myall Lakes to come back to the leave of the motion.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I uphold the point of order. I ask the Member for Myall Lakes to return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** After 16 years of Labor finally we have a Government that knows what a budget is and that is fiscally responsible, a Government that is determined to make New South Wales number one again and not fall into the same traps as Labor. We will offer more open, transparent governance, returning decision-making to the people and delivering a budget that retains our triple-A credit rating. I commend the budget to the House.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [5.22 p.m.]: The State budget of 2012-2013 was delivered by the Treasurer on 12 June. If the budget was meant to be the Government's political saviour it has failed because it has sunk virtually without trace. This is a nondescript budget. The best way for people to learn about it is simply to read the Treasurer's Budget Speech. If that does not put them to sleep nothing will. From time to time in speaking in this place to the budget and about fiscal responsibility, which is outlined in Budget Paper No. 2, I must admit I have said, perhaps unfairly, that this Government has built nothing—it has poured no concrete and completed no major projects. In light of the speech by the member for Myall Lakes, I perhaps should withdraw those allegations because he highlighted that there is in this budget paint for the Tuncurry Bridge. I missed mention of that can of paint in the budget papers. Therefore, I withdraw any suggestion that this budget is not delivering something for New South Wales because there is a tin of paint for the Tuncurry Bridge and some planning for four kilometres of roadway somewhere in the member's electorate. I am sorry, I thought there was nothing; I was wrong.

I will refer generally to some aspects of the budget before I talk about the negative impacts on my electorate. In considering the bottom line, I return to a point that I often make about financial matters and the budget. I understand that the deficit for the financial year just ended—being the first full financial year under the Coalition Government—will be \$337 million. That comes after a surplus of \$1.3 billion in the previous financial year, under the Labor Government. I hope the Treasurer will stick to his word regarding the present deficit and the projected deficits and surpluses towards the end of the Government's term—because we will certainly be watching the numbers. The Treasurer did not like having to say in last year's Budget Speech that the surplus for the year ending 30 June 2011 was \$1.3 billion. As the member for Myall Lakes said, this budget is about retaining the State's triple-A credit rating. As I have said many times, of course it is. It is about keeping the triple-A rating that this Government inherited from the former Government, which was in office for 16 years—four election wins—and that lot was in opposition.

The Treasurer wants somehow to disown his words in last year's Budget Speech: he now claims that if we had removed the Federal stimulus money the budget would have been in deficit. This is something new. I want members to get the whole picture. The Treasurer said in Parliament that the surplus for the last financial year was \$1.3 billion. But when we highlight that fact he tries to explain away Labor's 15 straight surpluses. We have to go back and re-write the sums to get a handle on how economic theories work under O'Farrell and Baird. The Treasurer argues that the Federal stimulus money, which was spent on State Government projects such as schools—which were often criticised by the then Opposition—Department of Housing rebuilds and the like is not income. If we take that money out of the equation the State would have been in deficit. The question is: If Federal stimulus money is not income, what about goods and services tax revenue? It is Federal money that comes to the States. Do we count that in the budget? Of course we do.

What about joint funding for projects such as roads, hospitals, housing and social security? Budget Paper No. 2 highlights the money that comes to the State Government from the Federal Government in special purpose payments. They come under various headings, including health care, national health reform funding, education, skills and workforce development, affordable housing, disability, home and community care, and so on. It is all Federal money that is incorporated in the budget as income. The Treasurer wants us to accept his argument that last year the New South Wales budget was not in surplus—even though he told the House it was—because we cannot count stimulus money. But we can count all other Federal money in the budget. If that is not voodoo economics I do not know what is.

The fact is all income that comes to the State Government is—as the word implies—income and all expenditure is expenditure, regardless of whether there is a surplus or a deficit. Last year—the last financial year under the Labor Government—New South Wales had a \$1.3 billion surplus. It included income from all State

Government sources—traffic fines and penalties, stamp duties, payroll tax and so on—general purpose Federal grants that are the result of decades of agreements between the Federal and State governments, and stimulus money. Why does this Government not want to count the stimulus money? It is because the stimulus package has finished. The Coalition Government did not benefit from it so it does not want to count it as income. That is the Treasurer's feeble argument for how the Government did not inherit a \$1.3 billion surplus. It did—and he said so in this House. It is a statement of fact.

Income tax was once a State tax. I will give another example. It was replaced by States getting a share of income tax receipts through the Loan Council. Is that money that comes to the State Government income? The absurdity of the Treasurer's argument gets worse the more he explains it. He says that Labor cannot claim a surplus because it counted stimulus grants as income—which was spent, as I said, on schools and educational facilities. But Federal income—GST, Loan Council grants and all the other funding I have mentioned—is income. Enough is enough. The argument is almost too silly to persist with.

The platform for the Coalition's management of the State's finances is built on two major planks. The first is the triple-A credit rating, which is the major plank of this budget and was the major point in the Fiscal Responsibility Bill 2012 that passed through Parliament last week. I repeat that this State has had a triple-A rating for 15 or 16 years—even more than that. We were on credit watch under the last Coalition Government but this has been a triple-A rated State for more years than we can recall—certainly more than 16 years. This Government inherited that credit rating. The second plank is the other point I raise time and again: the budget—whether it is last year's budget or this one—started with a \$1.3 billion surplus left by the former Labor Government. The Treasurer acknowledged that last year but not this year.

Last year many newly elected Government members spoke with optimism about what was going to happen now that the Liberals and The Nationals were in town. The Government said all sorts of things would occur. They had all the slogans—"Make New South Wales number one again" and so on. Of course some things will happen. As I said, there will be paint on the Tuncurry Bridge. The budget contains \$397 million for the Coalition Government's blue ribbon project. My political opponents, of whom I am always critical, have staked their reputation on this project. I represent western Sydney. Two stations on the western rail line are in my electorate—Rooty Hill and Mount Druitt. It is the major railway line linking Sydney all the way to Perth, if you take it to the end, through the western suburbs of Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Lithgow. Of course, CountryLink services go beyond that and the national rail line extends even further. It handles all major passenger and heavy freight movements.

Looking at this budget, I wish the people of north-west Sydney good luck in getting a good railway line like I have in western Sydney and the member for Cabramatta has with the south-western line. The people of north-western Sydney were given a big promise but will they get a real railway line with full-size train tracks that are able to take large, heavy gauge passenger trains that run from the north-west of Sydney to the central business district, for example? There is money in the budget for planning—it is only for planning; we have not seen any concrete or railway tracks yet. We all want to see the north-west rail line linking the north-west to the central business district with big trains—a project worthy of national recognition. But what do we have so far? This may be an unfair comment but there are no tracks yet. We have not seen much about the stations and their design. There is no detail about rolling stock.

What we do know is that it will be no more than a light rail, yo-yo service from the north-west part of Sydney not to the central business district—to Central, Wynyard or Town Hall—but to Chatswood. So the North West Rail Link will be a little yo-yo service that goes back and forth to Chatswood. I do not believe this is what the Coalition promised before the last election. The details of the line are so sketchy the Government cannot even give the national infrastructure people a completion date for the project. We can say only that we wish the people of north-west Sydney well in getting a real rail line. We cannot give the Government a mark yet, but as I am sure any teacher would say: Must try harder. The budget has an impact on Mount Druitt. The commuter car park at Mount Druitt is going ahead and the Minister tells me by way of answer to a question on notice that it will be completed this year. I would like to think it was a Coalition project but before the election we were getting the tenders and contracts signed. It was a big job. We had problems with the contractor—the whole lot—but the project could not be stopped, unlike some others in metropolitan areas.

I turn to the first home buyers grant, and there ends the good news. From 1 October there will be a first home buyers grant of \$15,000 for first home buyers who buy a brand-new home. About 15 per cent to 20 per cent of first home buyers in this State buy a brand-new home. Why? It is because brand-new homes are far more expensive. That is why the vast majority of first home buyers purchase an existing home. In my



electorate the percentage is probably even lower—perhaps as low as 10 per cent. Most new homes in my electorate are built when developers knock down old houses and erect a cluster of townhouses, for example. The Government is going to double the allowance for first home buyers—which we all welcome—but only if they buy a new house. The great majority of people will buy an existing house and therefore on 1 October they will get no stamp duty concession—because the Coalition Government got rid of that in last year's budget—and no first home owners grant. State Government assistance to a first home buyer who cannot afford a new home is absolutely nil—nothing. That is an appalling policy.

The glue that holds budgets together is starting to come unstuck. There will be rotating fire station closures, for example. Heaven knows what will happen as the weather starts to warm up. Last week in Parliament Opposition members raised the issue of police being withdrawn from stations such as Hurstville and those in the Illawarra. I understand that Mount Druitt is not affected at this stage. The Government's response through the Premier was to say that police numbers will increase to 16,000 this year. The Government gets a question about the withdrawal of officers from a station and replies that that is rubbish because police numbers are increasing to 16,000 this year. Police numbers go up every year. It is a political portfolio. It is impossible for any government—Labor or Coalition—to reduce the overall number of police. The debate last week was not about whether police numbers are increasing around the State; it was about where police are rostered at individual stations.

It ain't rocket science to work out how this came about. I will explain it—and I will speak more slowly for The Nationals members. The information came to us from within the system. We know that police were taken off rosters. Why? As I just said, it is impossible to reduce the police budget or police numbers. That is a political fact. However, how do you save the budget and not affect this politically sensitive area? You get rid of the railway police, which cuts the rail budget and saves money on the budget bottom line. Then officers are told they have to police the trains. Of course, the police can do that but the officers have to come from somewhere. There is no NSW Police Force railway section so in order to police the trains the officers have to be drawn in from different rosters. Last week Opposition members mentioned several police stations, and they were spot on.

The Premier's argument in response—cleverly not denying specific points—was simply that police numbers across the State will go up to 16,000. They will increase to 17,000 or 18,000. Hopefully, one day we will have 20,000 officers. The fact is that if security guards were withdrawn from this Parliament to effect a saving in the budget, and security of this place was given over to the NSW Police Force, where do Government members think the police would come from? Do they think those would be new members of the Police Force? Of course not; they will be taken from police stations to become the security staff at Parliament. That is what is happening in transport. Gullible Government backbench members have just copped this sweet. They should have spotted the spin the moment the Government said it was doing away with railway police.

**Mr Geoff Provost:** It is a conspiracy.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** It certainly is not a conspiracy; it is out there for all to see. If railway police are replaced with police, the police will do their duties for our railways, but they must come off a police roster somewhere. If, hypothetically, security staff were removed from Parliament House, from the State Museum or any other government building, what happens when police replace the security personnel in those places? Slow down and think—tick, tock. That is how it works. If police are given even more duties that were previously undertaken by some other organisation, then the NSW Police Force has no alternative but to take police from rosters at police stations. If Government members do not know that, they will have to stop listening to the Treasurer and believing those silly little press releases.

If the railway work does not mean that police are coming off rosters, I ask Government members to tell me—because I am happy to learn; I did not know about the paint on the Tuncurry bridge—where they come from. If there is no railway police station in Sydney or elsewhere in New South Wales, and police are given a whole lot of new patrols previously undertaken by railway staff, where do those police come from? If Government members can answer that question I will withdraw my argument on that point. With 30 seconds remaining, let me say good luck to the members who are getting good things for their electorates. I know that some will be getting a tin of paint for their bridges and a bit of bitumen for their roads, but things are not quite as good as they told this Parliament last year they would be. This is a budget that has turned the State's finances into a deficit rapidly after the Coalition Government inherited a triple-A rated State with a \$1.3 billion surplus.

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [5.42 p.m.]: In speaking to the take-note debate on the budget estimates and related papers for 2012-13 I express my support for the Treasurer. It is important to recognise the current

circumstances of Australia and New South Wales in general. We are in a challenging global economic environment, and that is having a number of adverse impacts upon the Australian, but especially the New South Wales, economy, with reductions in GST revenues, as were predicted. The disappointing residential house-building market in New South Wales has certainly impacted stamp duty revenues. Those factors, and the need to make New South Wales number one again, are particularly important considerations in developing a budget. I agree with the Treasurer that this budget offers a way to bring this State from the dark days of the past 16 years into the light of a better fiscal position.

Last week I was privileged to debate some of the principles that go to balancing a budget. It is certainly all about delivering a budget that spends less than the amount received in revenue. Anybody in a household knows that the main thing to do is to spend less than is coming into the household. To balance a budget and stay within one's means is important not only for households but also for businesses and for the State. It is all about striking a balance between what you can and cannot afford and making some difficult decisions. It is also important to maintain the triple-A credit rating of New South Wales because of the impacts of that rating in the long term. Queensland is now feeling the impact of losing its triple-A rating. South Australia will in the near future feel the impact of the increased costs of borrowing money, which unfortunately translates into fewer on-the-ground, face-to-face services, that is, fewer services for the people of that State, as well as higher interest payments—that is if it can raise the money. So the ultimate aim is maintenance of the State's triple-A credit rating, and that is equally important to New South Wales.

The Treasurer put it well when he spoke about the transparency of the budgetary processes of this Liberal-Nationals Government. We want to make full disclosure, and then provide accounting to that disclosure—to ensure we are delivering what we say we are delivering. Some of the 2012-13 highlights for Parramatta include extra funding for Westmead Hospital, that is, \$1.4 million for additional neonatal intensive care services at that hospital. I was privileged to accompany the Minister for Health on a visit to the Westmead children's hospital to look at neonatal and prenatal intensive care facilities. I was really amazed by the dedication of the doctors, nurses and all the other staff there who look after very small babies in the first weeks after they are born, knowing that they provide that care round the clock, 24 hours a day. Another highlight is \$7 million for new and upgraded accommodation for people with disabilities in Parramatta. That is particularly important. One has to judge society on how we help those who are most in need of help.

Parramatta is one of those areas that a lot of people choose to live in because of access to community and health services, counselling and social services. People with disabilities are entitled to enjoy the fruits of whatever Parramatta can offer. The \$7 million will go a long way towards the provision and upgrade of new and existing accommodation. In this budget the Government makes a large commitment of \$30 million for the Westmead Millennium Institute for Medical Research. I should note that Professor Cunningham of that institute has invited me to come out again and have a look at the new building, which is being progressed. The concrete is being poured as we speak. I commend the Millennium Institute for its project of about \$135 million in total. It will employ something like 500 research staff, other staff and students. It is part of the Westmead education precinct, the biggest health precinct in Australia. Westmead hospital alone will have something like 5,000 staff.

Minister Jillian Skinner said that plans were afoot for a much-needed hospital car park. Residents and people in the area want a car park above many other things. I am very proud to say that \$3.6 million is committed for relocation of government services to Parramatta—Parramatta being the capital of western Sydney, as all members of the House would agree. I note members nodding in agreement. The member for Drummoyne obviously is very vocal in his support of that fact, as is the member for Mulgoa and the member for East Hills, who is nodding profusely. I thank them very much for recognising the important leadership role that Parramatta plays in western Sydney. That money will be used to fit out offices in the Eclipse building, a new development, which will house Deloitte, another company expanding in Parramatta: it will increase its staff from something like 200 to 400.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** A hardworking member.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I acknowledge the comment of the member. It is kind of him to say that. However, it is the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW who is making inroads into streamlining the process. Parramatta police station has received an allocation of \$126 million. Parramatta police station and its approximately 400 dedicated staff have an important role to play. The \$20 million upgrade in a few years will be welcome. Parramatta police station also services the Parramatta justice precinct, which is the second-largest precinct of court and allied services in New South Wales.

**Mr Geoff Provost: The State Crime Command.**

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I thank the member for Tweed for reminding me of the State Crime Command. The budget allocated \$100 million for home and community transport services, and \$1.5 million for the final stage of the Great Western Highway and M4 upgrade at Wentworthville. That is a poor intersection during peak hours. Some \$900,000 was allocated for an upgrade to the intersection of Victoria and Clyde streets in Rydalmere—another election promise that has been delivered by the Premier and this Government. It is good to see that the community building grants are continuing in 2012—applications will soon be accepted. In these difficult economic times the Government is able to strike a balance with affordable and necessary changes. The plans for a hospital car park at Westmead are important and I look forward to further announcements on that project. I will continue to lobby the Minister for funds for that project.

The schools budget increased by \$466 million in the 2012-13 budget. That is a tribute to the Minister for Education and his commitment to education. Schools are important in the electorate of Parramatta. On one occasion I was able to meet with student leaders from Macarthur Girls High and on another occasion I met with student leaders from Catherine McAuley High at Westmead who were taking part in the secondary school leadership program, which is part of a Department of Education and Communities training program. They are fantastic students and leaders in their schools who come here to experience Parliament. In the winter recess I was able to see some of the schools in my electorate during Education Week. It was a busy time. I visited Rydalmere Public School, where I spoke with Principal Martin Naylor. It is a small and compact school that exhibits lots of enterprise. Principal Martin Naylor is working hard with the community and parents and friends to deliver iPads for students to share so they have access to technology. He is working hard with the community and businesses in the local area in partnership, and that was impressive.

I visited St Mary's Primary School where I spoke with Principal Anthony Hughes. I have visited the school a number of times and I have always been impressed with the calibre of its students. The principal has developed the school's reputation to such an extent that there is a waiting list of students who want to go to the school. I congratulate the principal, staff and parents on their team effort to build the reputation of that school. I was privileged to attend Parramatta North Public School, where I met Principal Kathryn Methven. I was lucky enough to hear the open day speeches and see the dance performances. I was particularly impressed with the parents and friends new canteen—a great initiative that will raise small amounts of money and will also contribute to the students' welfare.

I visited Parramatta Public School on Macquarie Street—a large, multicultural, popular school—where I met with Principal Dawn Artiss, who does a great job. The school has more than 500 students in a limited school footprint. Ms Artiss does a wonderful job in providing extracurricular activities such as games and after-school activities that the students need. I visited Oatlands Public School where I met Principal Robyn Baker. That school covers a larger area, it is greener than others, but it does not have as many students as others. It is a well run school in all aspects. I visited Our Lady of Mt Carmel school where I was hosted by Principal Stephen Jones. I was delighted to hear his dedicated vision to ensuring that his young students understand and appreciate creative and critical learning skills. Basic literacy and numeracy are critical to learning, and that will empower them in their future studies to enhance their wonderful experience of learning.

At Ermington West Public School Principal Kerry Goldhagen showed me the school's excellent learning facilities. I was impressed with their dedication to providing the best care and learning for the students. The parents and friends are obviously committed to the school. The grounds are excellently maintained, which is only possible with the contribution of parents and friends. I commend the Ermington West Public School for its role in the community as a centrepiece for the community. I had the privilege of visiting Mother Teresa Primary School for the first time, which is part of the Westmead learning precinct. It is a fantastic school. Principal Gary Borg offers state-of-the-art learning and teaching facilities in a brand new building. It was nice to be able to help the school with community builders' grants to build gardens.

I am a former horticulturist, and it was fantastic to involve those students not only with technology but also with the hands-on grassroots understanding of nature and biology. I was privileged also to visit Parramatta East Public School, which is under the stewardship of Robert Ieroinanni. The school, which is close to my home, impressed me with its involvement in local community sport and the principal impressed me with the openness he displayed to adapt, adopt and embrace Local Schools Local Decisions, and how that impacts his students and his school. I was privileged also to visit St Bernadette's Primary school and Principal Janette Hawes. It is a relatively small school that impressed me with its refurbished learning facilities. Every inch of the school is used productively, whether it is for passive recreation, teaching or ball games.

I was privileged to visit St Patrick's Primary School where Principal Gloria Bryant was kind enough to explain the school's teaching philosophy. I commend her for the school's focus on the core teaching principles of literacy and numeracy. We discussed how syntax and grammar were essential to assisting primary school children in their later years. I commend Gloria for her efforts. She has been with the school for a little while and the school is flourishing under her leadership. It was an honour also to visit Telopea Public School, the smallest school in my electorate. Principal Alan McGovern said that the real focus of the school was on literacy skills. What impressed me more than the grounds and range of facilities of this small school was Mr McGovern's dedication and entrepreneurial spirit as a teaching principal to making things work and looking after his students.

I was pleased to also attend special events during Education Week such as those at Rydalmere East Public School for Planet Ark Schools Tree Day where I planted grasses and native plants with teachers and members of the school community. I commend Angelique Brown and the students at Rydalmere East for their dedication to the environment, and for learning how they can contribute to such a wonderful cause and look after our environment. Another highlight was attending Dundas Public School for its awards ceremony, including the wattle awards. These awards encourage positive reinforcement of children's behaviour. I join with the President of the Dundas Parents and Citizens Association, Melissa McAulay, in congratulating the principal on her wonderful work in the school. The school is also part of the Walk Safely to School Day, which encourages safe practices. Parramatta has fantastic schools and I look forward to visiting them again over the summer recess. I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with staff and students, and I thank them for their hospitality.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.02 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Budget Estimates and Related Papers for 2012-2013. This budget is a really important one for the Government. It commits to building for the future of this great State, a State that we are all proud to represent, to furthering the community's needs and to meeting their expectations. This budget in particular builds on the results that we delivered in the first year of government. It shows that we are getting on with the job of building a stronger New South Wales. We on this side of politics firmly believe that being financially and fiscally responsible today provides opportunities for the future. It is a tough job; it involves taking some tough decisions but it is the job of government.

Governments have to be good economic managers and Coalition governments have shown that they can be good economic managers. The public looks to us to fix up the financial messes that we inherit from Labor governments. We cannot leave the financial messes—in this case the one that we inherited from a 16-year-old Labor Government—for our children's generation to clean up; we have to clean it up now. Let us look at what happened in Europe recently: the tough economic management decisions were not made. They were paid forward, and now a number of European economies are suffering—their credit quality is impaired—and that is impacting the financial markets around the rest of the world and the appetite for capital investment. We feel the backwash of that here in Australia. We want to protect New South Wales against that as best we can.

Coalition governments are also about investing for the future. Labor failed to do that. I do not really understand it. During the last 16 years of the former Labor Government there were record stamp duty receipts. We had a booming economy. Where did all the money go? I have no idea. It did not go to prepare a war chest for those things that the public have elected us on this side of politics to clean up. What we have had to do in this budget to address the oversights of the former Labor Government in its economic management of the State is to propose \$1.2 billion in cuts to existing programs, to work with the private sector to help deliver better services for our community and to make sure that value is achieved for the budget that we have cut to suit our cloth. Why do we do this? We have done this because our role as a Government is to act responsibly for the whole community.

The decisions that are being taken in this particular budget ensure that we can provide the critical infrastructure, spend on the programs that are essential, provide vital services for the community and protect our triple-A credit rating. We have to protect that credit rating—we have seen the impact on Queensland and countries in Europe who have let it slip—or government cannot provide the services or the infrastructure that the community demands, needs and deserves; governments can only do that if they are fiscally responsible. We have had to make some tough decisions due to the unprecedented drop in revenue from the budget we inherited from the former Labor Government.

Not only that, a difficult financial position has been exacerbated by the fact that the Commonwealth GST projections have collapsed and we have had a shortfall of \$5.2 billion over four years for the period to

2014-15. The Federal Government has also done some accounting shuffles that have reduced the 2012-13 revenue in New South Wales by \$690 million. There is a further \$234 million in Commonwealth funding allocated to infrastructure that is being delayed beyond 2012-13. Those three factors have additionally impacted our position for our 2012-13 budget and framed the reference from which the Treasurer has had to cut the State's cloth to suit our purposes.

Despite these difficult financial times, which we are seeing across the world, this budget delivers for the future through responsible spending to deliver more housing, which was a cornerstone of the budget released on 16 June 2012 by the Treasurer. In addition it has actually built a base for more infrastructure spend to stimulate economic growth in New South Wales. I welcome the budget's focus on infrastructure to get this State moving again. While the Federal Government is actually contributing less to New South Wales infrastructure, the New South Wales budget increases the infrastructure spend by 17 per cent over the next four years compared with the last four years. Over the four years to 2015-16 the New South Wales Government will spend on average \$1 billion more a year on infrastructure. This year \$318 million will be spent on school maintenance, which is \$20 million more than last year and 22 per cent higher than the former Labor Government's last budget.

The budget will also deliver better services, including 500 new nurses, 400 more police and more teachers throughout New South Wales. While laying the foundations for economic development for infrastructure, we are also providing for more front-line services. I come back to a point that I made earlier, which is about housing activity and the construction sector. As its cornerstone this budget introduces the Building the State package to significantly kick-start housing construction activity in New South Wales. There is a range of measures in this package. They include some fast-tracked approvals for the State-significant projects, clearing the backlog of stalled approvals, building vital infrastructure to unlock that new housing and redirecting some financial incentives to new housing. Importantly, from 1 October this year the first home owners grant will more than double to \$15,000 and then continue at \$10,000 from 2014 for first time buyers of new properties.

The existing first home buyer stamp duty concessions will apply to new properties worth up to \$650,000. This budget also introduces a new measure—the New Home Grant, which will provide \$5,000 to all non-first home buyers of new properties worth up to \$650,000. Those are just some of the measures in the package announced by the Treasurer which will provide greater incentives to invest in new homes rather than established homes across New South Wales. It is a significant package of housing measures. It will encourage more investment in new homes, which will lead to an increase in housing supply and bring housing affordability to the people of New South Wales so they can make a new start with a new home.

In regard to the budget for education, as Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills I am proud that this budget invests in the education and schooling needs of our young people across the State. Announced in the budget were six new schools, a 22 per cent increase in school maintenance and \$98 million for early childhood education and care. As well as building for the future of New South Wales, this budget invests in the growing needs of the residents I represent in this State Parliament. The people of Vacluse will see in the budget a focus on building better infrastructure for the services they rely on, which they expect, they demand and they should have. To complete the resurfacing of New South Head Road \$900,000 has been allocated. That road is one of the three main arterial roads in the electorate of Vacluse.

The budget provides for the acquisition of 155 replacement buses for the Sydney metropolitan area, and 69 new buses to cater for growth in demand. I carried out a recent survey of my electorate and my office received about 900 responses. The top issues that the electorate mentioned in some detail as matters of concern relate to the quality of the road surfacing on the three main arterial roads in the electorate and the provision of good and reliable public transport. Safety is also of concern to the electorate and I note that the budget provides \$300,000 for the upgrade of the approximately 10 pedestrian refuges as well as two new refuges on Old South Head Road, Vacluse—another of the three major arterial roads in my electorate.

Although Prince of Wales Hospital is based in the electorate of my colleague the member for Coogee, people in the electorate of Vacluse turn to the Prince of Wales Hospital to provide top-quality emergency and ongoing medical assistance for them. I note that \$8.2 million has been set aside to continue work on the cancer and blood unit at the hospital, as well as \$4.1 million to continue construction of the Prince of Wales mental health unit and \$3.9 million in recurrent funding for its operation. We all know what a great concern it is to us as parents, as friends, as sisters and brothers and as elected members of this House to see the distress in our community caused by mental health issues. We need to provide good medical treatment and facilities for those people who suffer from mental illness. There are more people out in the community than we know of who deserve our support with medical services and infrastructure to help them get well.

First home buyers will be up to \$19,000 better off when they buy a new home under a new Building the State package. The budget also includes a \$30 million boost to our Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme, which helps councils with the cost of loans to address infrastructure backlogs. I note that Waverley Council—one of the two local councils in my electorate—was one of the 69 councils that applied promptly in the first round of the scheme. The Government is getting on with the job of building a stronger New South Wales. I am proud to be part of a team that is delivering on its commitments made in March 2011 to the people of New South Wales. The Liberal Party and its Coalition partners take very seriously our commitments to be fiscally responsible, to live within our means, to end wasteful spending, to build for the future for our children's children and not leave them with the legacy of budgets that are underfunded and without essential services being provided.

We will meet the expectations of our community and make more medium-term decisions rather than acting with political expediency instead of planning for the future with fiscally responsible budgets. It has involved some tough decisions. As I said before, if we do not take tough decisions we could end up in the sort of situation we observe across Europe currently, where there is great social upheaval and tough decisions having to be made, born of governments that did not take those decisions, did not build for the future and did not take a fiscally responsible approach to their budgets. But this Government does. We have made those necessary decisions in this budget.

It is not easy to achieve that commitment but we will continue to work hard to make those decisions in the tough economic times in which we find ourselves. I commend the budget estimates and related papers for 2012-2013 to the House. It has been a pleasure to speak to those initiatives. I commend our Treasurer for his leadership in the delivery of the budget. I look forward to working with the Treasurer and the Government to do what we have to do, which is to provide the fiscal framework for the betterment of the people of New South Wales.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [6.16 p.m.]: I speak on the New South Wales budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. It is the second budget delivered by the Treasurer for the Coalition O'Farrell Government. To say that the Treasurer had picked up from where he left off from last year's inaugural O'Farrell Government Budget Speech is an understatement. As with the previous budget, the 2012-2013 budget is more about public service job cuts, broken promises and the privatisation of publicly owned infrastructure than any real vision for the people of New South Wales and, more importantly, for working-class communities such as in my electorate of Fairfield.

Last year the electorate of Fairfield and south-west Sydney were dealt a number of low blows by the O'Farrell Government. In its first 12 months it increased household electricity prices not once but twice. The first increase came just two months into the O'Farrell Government, with an increase of up to 18 per cent. A second increase added another amount of about \$12 to the initial 18 per cent increase. The O'Farrell Government also began its attack on the workers of this State. To start with the Government placed every public servant not working in Governor Macquarie Tower on notice. The Government slashed 5,000 public service jobs. It then turned back the clock on the working entitlements of nurses, firefighters, teachers and other public servants by pegging the movement of their wages to an increase of 2.5 per cent, irrespective of changes to the rate of inflation. The Government also went on to attack the most vulnerable members of the community.

After the Federal Government increased pensions to help struggling households with the cost of living, the O'Farrell Government saw fit to increase public housing rent by almost \$10, accounting for almost one-third of the relief package the Federal Government provided to struggling households. In education the O'Farrell Government introduced compulsory fees for public preschools. Those fees add up to \$12 per preschool student per day to household budgets. Further, there are no guarantees that the revenue will be returned to improve and increase public preschool services. On the topic of education, perhaps the biggest fail mark for the last fiscal year belongs to none other than the Minister for Education.

After campaigning in front of Fairvale High School prior to the elections and calling for the replacement of demountable classrooms in public schools with permanent school buildings, he followed his catch cries and media stunts in front of local schools across New South Wales with a backflip of Olympic proportions—the cancellation of the demountable replacement program. That was the very program set in place to rid schools of old demountables. However, this was not the Minister's finest hour or, rather, his lowest form. Instead that dishonour must go to the Minister's failure to oversee the renegotiation of disability student transport services, which left many school students with disabilities at the side of the road at the beginning of the first term.

Eight months on from the O'Farrell Government's first budget it is set to build on the misery it has inflicted upon the people of New South Wales. First, the Treasurer has announced another 10,000 public service

job cuts. This is on top of the 5,000 job cuts announced in last year's budget. These cuts will have an effect on the services that residents of New South Wales have come to rely upon. These job cuts are mark II of the O'Farrell Government's attack on workers. On 13 June 2012, prior to the winter recess, there was a mass protest at the steps of this Parliament by workers concerned about proposed changes to workers compensation. The protesters were concerned that the Government's proposal would lead to the watering down of a system that was built to ensure that workers who are injured in the course of their employment are able to continue to feed their families and pay their bills.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Not a very good score card so far, boys.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** That is right. The proposed system will set back the rights that workers have fought for and won over the years. Perhaps the worst of all the pre-election commitments that the O'Farrell Government turned its back on was its promise not to introduce any new speed cameras. Prior to the elections members of the Government denounced speed cameras as nothing more than blatant revenue raising that amounted to bad policy implementation. However, a week prior to the budget the Government dealt a massive blow to all motorists in New South Wales by announcing that it was set to install 109 new fixed speed cameras and another 39 new mobile speed cameras.

We all know what is happening with the Liberals in Fairfield. At the moment they are jumping all over each other, but even they blogged about the fact that they did not agree with Barry O'Farrell's decision to increase the number of fixed and mobile speed cameras. In fact, one well-known restaurateur in Fairfield, who is a Liberal Party supporter, attacked his local member, Andrew Rohan, and said that it was a dumb policy. The O'Farrell Government also increased speeding fines by a whopping 12.5 per cent—a move for which members of this Government were chastising their predecessors not more than 18 months ago. How times have changed. Back then that move was considered unacceptable by many members opposite but now that they are in government it is suddenly good policy. I notice the member for Drummoyne smirking because he knows that I am speaking the truth.

What a difference 18 months makes. When in opposition those sitting opposite wanted nothing less than perfection from the Government of the day. However, 18 months later—and with the realities of government setting in—the standards to which they once sought to hold their predecessors no longer apply: wipe it clean; it no longer applies because they are in government. Whilst in opposition they did one thing; now that they are in government they will pirouette and do the other. This is no truer than in the case of the double standards they put forward about their predecessors and themselves when it comes to the economy. Less than 17 months since the Government gained office the New South Wales economy has headed south. I think it has taken a leaf out of the book of Coles by getting out those big hands and saying that prices are down.

The economy is down, down, down. It is going down and this Government knows it. Key economic indicators have shown the malaise that has set in thanks to the lack of vision and uninspiring reforms that defined the first 12 months of the O'Farrell Government. Economic growth has slowed. In the last quarter the New South Wales economy contracted, with a 0.3 per cent drop in State final demand. Unemployment has increased. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that New South Wales unemployment increased to 5 per cent in the month of May. In 18 months the O'Farrell Government and its Treasurer, Mike Baird, have overseen the replacement of a \$1.3 billion government surplus with a deficit to the tune of \$826 million in this year's budget.

This is in the face of the fact that investment in infrastructure for the preceding period was down by \$1.5 billion. The Government has done an about face on privatisation. It has approved the sale of electricity power generation assets—a move it rejected more than three years ago. Three years ago members opposite said it was the dud deal of the century. They become the Government and do the opposite, the only difference being the price they will receive from the sale of this vital energy infrastructure will be a fraction of what would have been received before. This budget has failed the people of New South Wales and it has absolutely failed the people of Fairfield.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! Government and Opposition members will come to order. The member for Fairfield will be heard in silence.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** Thank you, Mr Acting-Speaker. You are doing a great job in the chair. I would like the member for Smithfield to come to Fairfield and talk to the people about the fact that his Government is neglecting the people of south-west Sydney. The people of south-west Sydney are the very people who elected

this Government. Members opposite talk about a whitewash and their 69 members. The member for Penrith is a ticking time bomb. This budget has done nothing for the people of Fairfield. I turn to road infrastructure. The budget again remains silent on the Government's pre-election commitment to upgrade the roundabout at the Cumberland Highway and Polding Street, a major thoroughfare connecting Fairfield with its neighbouring electorates. Government members keep talking about the 16 years: they are so hopeless in opposition that they were kept in opposition for 16 years.

The people would not elect them. Government members should not talk about those 16 years. They are the Government now: they are on the dance floor and they should start dancing. The budget has no funding for more nurses and doctors at Fairfield Hospital. Once again I ask the member for Smithfield what he is doing about that. He is neglecting the people of Smithfield: Fairfield Hospital is in the electorate of Smithfield and it impacts on those in the Fairfield local government area. I ask Andrew Rohan: Why do you not stand up to the Premier and the Minister for Health and start advocating for more nurses and doctors for Fairfield Hospital? It is simple. It is not rocket science. Recent reports indicate that emergency patients at the hospital are waiting up to 32 minutes for treatment.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** He is a good member.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** I hear the interjections by those opposite that he is a good man. They should talk to the Liberals in Fairfield. But are there are Liberals left in Fairfield? I think they were all disendorsed for the local government elections. We will not go there. I must say that credit should also be given where it is due. In this case I thank the Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, for having the broader vision of allowing the budgeted commitment of the previous Government to upgrade the Fairfield transport interchange to continue. I sincerely congratulate the Minister on that, but I add that it was the previous Labor Government that budgeted for and committed to the Fairfield interchange. However, the foresight exhibited by the Minister is not evident in the other members of the O'Farrell Government and the people of Fairfield and New South Wales are again made to endure another year during which they will be effectively punished for living in the State of New South Wales.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)** [6.29 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak in this take-note debate on the budget estimates and related papers for 2012-2013. From the outset I congratulate the Treasurer on handing down his second very successful budget, which goes to the heart of the Liberal-Nationals Five Point Action Plan to make New South Wales number one again by building the future of this State by strengthening our economy. There is an expectation in our communities and particularly in the communities of western Sydney, which I represent, that the O'Farrell Government will fix the disastrous state in which New South Wales finances were left by the former Government.

The community elected us in substantial numbers to rein in the Labor Government's wasteful spending and to divert the wasted resources and funds to kick start the New South Wales economy. It does not take me very long when I walk up and down the main street of St Marys, Queen Street or the shopping centre at Glenmore Park or talk to the shoppers in the St Clair shopping centre to hear how badly they were suffering under the Labor Government. Voters in western Sydney were being taken for granted. This side of the House believes that government's role is to support business and industrious, entrepreneurial and innovative individuals, especially in western Sydney, which is the engine room of the New South Wales economy. This budget does just that and so much more. It has included the cuts and efficiency measures that the State desperately needs. It is focused on responsible spending to provide more housing and more infrastructure to boost the economy.

While the Federal Government is contributing less to New South Wales infrastructure, the New South Wales budget increases infrastructure spending by 17 per cent over the coming four years compared with the last four years under the Labor Government. This budget announced the more than doubling of the First Home Buyers Grant to \$15,000 and the raising of the upper threshold of stamp duty concessions to \$650,000, in line with Sydney's median house price. As a result, first home buyers will be up to \$19,245 better off when they buy a new home thanks to the new Building the State package. A new home grant of \$5,000 has also been introduced for non-first home buyers who purchase a new dwelling up to the value of \$650,000.

When the Liberal-Nationals were last in government we were overseeing up to 55,000 new homes approved each year; in the last five years under the Labor Government approvals fell to just over 30,000 new home approvals in each year. That is a dismal, dismal record and one that is affecting my families and my community in western Sydney, who are struggling to even find a place to rent. In addition, \$481 million has



been allocated to a housing acceleration fund. The fund will be used to invest in the infrastructure required to support new housing, particularly in greenfields areas. The fund will be used for projects such as the upgrading of main roads and the provision of sewerage and water infrastructure. Ten projects have been identified to benefit from the housing acceleration funding, including six in western Sydney. These identified projects are worth \$181 million and will support the release of 76,000 homes.

Another \$30 million has been allocated to the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme to encourage councils to provide local infrastructure, and I am pleased that Penrith City Council was one of the councils that applied in this first round. The amount of \$13 million has been allocated as part of the Building the State package to improve the development approval process. This will allow double the number of major application determinations per year and 255 major applications with the potential to deliver another 100,000 homes will also be processed.

Specifically in Mulgoa, \$25 million has been allocated to the completion of the Erskine Park Link Road, which will benefit the constituents of Mulgoa. This road will provide a vital link between the western Sydney employment area and the M7 and M4 motorways and networks. It will reinforce the western Sydney employment area as a significant employment hub and reduce transport costs for industry located in that area. The Erskine Park Link Road is a perfect example of the O'Farrell Government strategically investing in infrastructure to strengthen the economy. The link road will also reduce industrial traffic on the existing Erskine Park Road and adjoining local roads and improve traffic flow in western Sydney.

Residents in streets in St Clair such as Lockheed Circuit, Halifax Circuit and Omega Place have come to meet with me out of sheer frustration at the noise from the trucks impacting on their life. They have given me photographs of their homes showing cracks in walls and in the cement foundations in back patio areas that have occurred because of the constant use of Erskine Park Road by trucks. Had the Labor Government adhered to one of its three promises to build the link road, I would not have met these people on this issue of trucks causing home damage and noise problems. I have spoken on this link road on previous occasions in this place over the last 16 months documenting the dates when previous Premiers promised to build the road: the Hon. Bob Carr, the Hon. Nathan Rees and finally the Hon. Kristina Keneally. Yet it was under the O'Farrell Government that we actually saw the contract signed, the turning of the soil and the work beginning.

This budget is a responsible step toward our second action point of returning quality services to the people of New South Wales. Western Sydney will see a major investment in health infrastructure, including commencement of a \$270-million expansion of Mount Druitt hospital. In question time this afternoon the health Minister, with great enthusiasm and passion, updated the House on the progress of the many improvements to the hospital network that she is overseeing, including a detailed update on what is happening at Mount Druitt hospital. At that point I wished that the member for Mount Druitt had called out, "Thank you, health Minister, for sending that money to my electorate." But he remained silent. So on his behalf I will say a thankyou to the health Minister.

The amount of \$18.9 million will be allocated to complete the joint State and Commonwealth funded Nepean Hospital redevelopment, which will cost in total \$46.8 million. The project adds more beds and frontline services and is a huge win for people in my electorate. The budget also includes \$34.7 million for car parking at Blacktown, Nepean and Liverpool hospitals. Nepean Hospital will have a new multi-storey car park with more than 600 spaces that will be opened next year. I know from experience, let alone from the constituents and staff who attend and work at Nepean Hospital, of the sheer frustration of trying to get to the hospital either for appointments or to visit people. People have missed appointments or been delayed because they simply could not find a car park such is the demand on Nepean Hospital.

I am very pleased and very proud that the health Minister, under the leadership of Barry O'Farrell, is allocating the money necessary to build that desperately needed car park. There is also a huge investment in returning quality services in public transport. The budget includes \$148 million this year for the new transport access program to improve access to the public transport network, including station upgrades, better accessibility to CityRail stations, improved parking and transport interchanges. The amount of \$124 million will be delivered to ensure electronic ticketing for ferries, trains, buses and light rail across the greater Sydney region. The Opal card will begin to be rolled out on ferries at the end of this year.

The sum of \$2.2 million will be allocated to improve and upgrade passenger information systems, including audio systems on CityRail trains, to provide more accurate and reliable information to customers about their services. We have also recently been advised that Google maps will now include public transport

options. This is a fantastic and simple innovation that will make it easier for people to choose public transport. In question time earlier today we heard that the Labor Government had the opportunity to do that in 1996 but failed to put the people of New South Wales first. On that subject of improving public transport, particularly train access, I place on record that the reduction in the cost of monthly, quarterly and annual train fares has received the huge response from people in my electorate. Specifically, St Marys station reported a maximum number of discounted tickets sold when that policy change was announced by the Minister for Transport.

The Government's commitment to improving quality services to frontline staff, including nurses, police and teachers, has seen an increase in the allocation of new nurses to our hospitals. I doorknocked a substantial amount before the election—and have done so since—meeting nurses who work at Nepean Hospital and talking to them on their front doorsteps. They were desperate for a change of government because they were really suffering, having to bear the weight of additional work because nurse staffing numbers were insufficient. It is wonderful to be part of a government that recognises the need for more frontline services and is taking action to meet that need.

I also put on record my congratulations to the Minister for Fair Trading, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, on his continued support of the No Interest Loans Scheme. A couple of weeks ago the Minister came to St Marys and spoke with staff who work at the St Mary's Community Centre, particularly Lisa Foster and Narelle Rowe, who oversee and manage the scheme. The personal feedback they gave to the Minister and to me at the time was extremely moving. People, particularly families, were coming to the centre seeking support under the No Interest Loans Scheme and for a couple of hundred dollars—maybe \$1,000—they were able to purchase a particular piece of equipment they needed, whether it be a fridge, a television or a computer. That program has helped households begin to move out of the poverty cycle. It is a hand up, not a handout, and I commend the Minister for his support of the scheme.

To summarise, last week I spoke on the Fiscal Responsibility Bill 2012. In that debate I happened to mention that those opposite had been saying repeatedly—and we heard it again today in this debate—that their Government oversaw budget surpluses in 15 out of their 16 years in government. They delivered budget surpluses and they are condemning us for our budget deficit. I say pointedly that the Fiscal Responsibility Bill that those opposite introduced in 2005 included the requirement for a statutory review of that Act, whereby the government of the day analysed its performance against its own set of measures. That review contained 14 measures that the Government had to aim for. The statutory review revealed that it failed to meet 11 measures out of the 14. If that review was over a period of five years, 11 of the measures failed to be met. One of those measures was to maintain a budget surplus. So we can say definitely and confidently that for five years out of 16 those opposite failed to deliver a budget surplus in government.

I commend the O'Farrell-Stoner Government for making the tough, sometimes unpleasant or unfavourable decisions to get the State's finances back on track. As an individual, as a family, as a household, if you spend more money than you bring in, you are going to end up in serious trouble. We have seen that in Europe—it is starting to happen in southern Europe—as well as the impact in Queensland and South Australia when the triple-A credit rating was downgraded. I commend the O'Farrell Government for taking a tough stance and beginning to change the direction in which New South Wales was heading. When we have a strong, stable financial base—and this is the second year that we are living within our means as a State—it puts New South Wales in a strong financial position to respond to potentially more overseas financial difficulties. If not, we will be in a strong financial position to begin to invest in our State, to build what needs to be built and to deliver the programs that people need. I commend the budget estimates and related papers to the House.

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

#### **GRAFFITI LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

**Message received from the Legislative Council not insisting upon its amendments disagreed with, but proposing further amendments.**

**Consideration of Legislative Council's further amendments set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! Government business having concluded, the House will now consider the matter of public importance.

**CANCER COUNCIL NSW****Matter of Public Importance**

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [6.47 p.m.]: Today I speak about the great work of Cancer Council NSW and the tremendous services it provides for our community. I am certain that all members of this House will join me in acknowledging the important advocacy and research that Cancer Council NSW undertakes to continue the fight against cancer in our community. According to the council, sun exposure in the first 15 years of life is linked to the increased likelihood of skin cancer, including melanoma, as an adult. Given this alarming reality, it developed the SunSmart program for schools—a free national program that provides schools with sun protection guidelines, policy and curriculum resources. As somebody who knows all too well the effects of our sun, I can but encourage people to take up the message in relation to this policy. The policy covers three areas: the environment, behaviour and information. Under the heading of "environment" is scheduling outdoor activities outside peak ultraviolet times and using shade.

Under the "behaviour" heading are wearing sun-safe hats, wearing sun-safe clothing and applying SPF 30+ sunscreen; role modelling by staff and teachers; and wearing sunglasses. Some members might not be aware that school students, in particular, need to be aware of retinal cancer. Under the category of "information"—I know the member for Wagga Wagga in particular is interested in this—is teaching about sun protection within the school curriculum; providing information to school communities; and policy reviews every three years to make sure that schools are implementing that important message at the local level. All New South Wales primary schools are invited to become SunSmart partners through a formal relationship with the Cancer Council NSW. The program recognises and values the sun protection principles that a school is currently addressing while supporting schools to extend their commitment towards adopting all 10 SunSmart recommendations.

The Cancer Council NSW outlines the following reasons as to why a SunSmart protection policy in schools is so important: students attend school five days a week and are often playing outdoors when ultraviolet radiation levels are high; teachers play an important role in influencing students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour; teachers have a role in showing leadership at the school level; teachers have the opportunity to educate students and families about the importance of sun protection and to help establish lifelong behaviours that will lead to attitudinal changes in our schools and encourage people to slip, slop, slap; sun protection measures complement the occupational health and safety and duty of care policies already in place in schools; and a visual commitment to sun protection increases the profile of the school within the community.

I support the SunSmart program, the many benefits it provides for local schools along with the aims of the sun protection policy initiative of the Cancer Council NSW. I will continue to fight for a fair share of funding for our schools, particularly in the Kiama electorate, in relation to programs such as this. In the few moments remaining I would like to commend the efforts of the O'Farrell Government in a number of areas where it has partnered with the Cancer Council NSW. We have seen revolutionary reforms in tobacco smoking. I know the Cancer Council is particularly supportive of those measures.

In my area we have seen commencement of construction of the long-awaited cancer centre at the Shoalhaven hospital. I recall my mother having to travel between home and Wollongong to the hospital—a journey that so many people from my electorate have had to endure. I know all too well the need for other services in our area, such as in Wollongong, which is currently receiving improvements—be that clamping down on tobacco smoking or the sun bed policy that we introduced to clamp down on and see the eradication of sun beds by 2015. I am proud of the work that is being done in this area, and I commend this matter of public importance to the House.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [6.52 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I too speak to the subject of this matter of public importance, the New South Wales Cancer Council. Cancer Council NSW is a topic that is a bit like an onion: We could probably speak daily about it as a matter of public importance and still not get to the bottom of all that it does in our community and its value in preventing cancer. Importantly, I would like to start with the vision of Cancer Council NSW—a vision that I guess we are all 100 per cent behind. It is that our vision will be realised when lives are not cut short nor the quality of life diminished by cancer. For me, the second part of the vision is probably the most striking. We have done so much and made so many improvements in the treatment of cancer that we can now talk about quality of life—not just about survival, but about how well we survive and quality of life after survival. The more we have that conversation, and the less we need to say about death from cancer, the better.

Cancer Council NSW is a charity dedicated to defeating cancer. It is working towards a society where lives are not cut short. Cancer Council NSW has been a trusted cancer charity for more than 50 years. It is a charity that is community funded and community focused. About one in two people in New South Wales will develop cancer in their lifetime; that is a lot of us, and our families and our friends will need support. Indeed, a child with a mother and father grows to think that one of those parents will have a cancer experience. Cancer Council NSW has an amazing website; it provides us with much information about treatments and support groups. One of the most striking things about cancer is that people feel they go through a cancer experience alone. Every cancer experience is unique, but none of us should feel we go through that experience alone.

Each year Cancer Council NSW provides around 244,000 "Understanding Cancer" booklets, on 40 different topics, to hospitals, treatment centres, libraries and cancer patients and their families. Yet another Cancer Council NSW initiative covered on the council's website is enabling people to get support information, providing support for patients, families and friends, information and support for employers and workplaces, practical support services, and the helpline. The helpline, which is staffed by experienced oncology nurses, responds to more than 16,000 calls each year—callers seeking information about cancer, its treatment and effects. The website also has a section titled "Get Involved", which lists information under the headings of "Events", "Fundraise", "Donate", "Campaign" and "Volunteer"—as were mentioned by the member for Kiama, who has spoken previously in this Chamber about the Relay for Life campaign.

There are 37,000 volunteers who work with Cancer Council NSW in their mission to defeat cancer. I would like to mention now one such volunteer from my electorate who keeps me informed of progress and events in relation to the New South Wales Cancer Council. Her name is Kelly Moylan. Kelly is the member of Parliament liaison officer for the Cessnock area. Kelly has been volunteering with the council since February 2008. She is a survivor of breast cancer. Kelly has experienced firsthand the impact that cancer can, and does, have on individuals, their families, their friends and their work colleagues. Kelly puts much effort into her role, and I thank her very much for her dedication and the time that she spends with me. I meet with Kelly regularly, usually in conjunction with Kathy Duggan, the regional programs coordinator. They keep me up to date, answer my questions and also get me thinking.

Indeed, recently they got me thinking a little about two topics, one of course being smoke-free areas, which members recently discussed in this Chamber, and whether the high rollers room at the casino should be smoke free. They also talked about making outdoor dining areas smoke free, and discussed making our sporting fields, playgrounds and parks smoke-free areas. More recently, I talked with Kelly about schools and the need for them to embrace the SunSmart policy—a policy framework that seems to have waned a little. I agree with the member for Kiama that if we are talking about it every three years, we should make sure that that information and that policy stay up to date. As a former physical education teacher, I recall many lessons in which I talked with students about being sun smart, and practising SunSmart policies as something of a role model. In New South Wales there are more than 2,680 childcare services and 1,270 primary schools that are part of the Cancer Council NSW SunSmart program. I commend this matter of public importance to the House, and I commend the member for Kiama for bringing it before the Chamber.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [6.57 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Kiama on bringing this matter of public importance, the Cancer Council NSW, to the attention of the House. As we know, on Friday 24 August we will celebrate Daffodil Day. Daffodil Day raises much-needed funds for the Cancer Council to continue its essential work in cancer research, providing patient support programs and prevention programs to all Australians. Each year more than 36,000 people in New South Wales hear the words, "You have cancer", and more than 13,000 families lose loved ones to cancer. It would be near impossible to find an individual who was not impacted by a family or friend who had received a cancer diagnosis and subsequently underwent treatment. It is in the interests of everyone that policy, fundraising and financial commitments are dedicated to ensuring that fewer people get cancer, and that those who do contract the disease receive the information, support and expert treatment they need.

According to analysis by the Cancer Institute NSW the overall rate of cancer in my region of Sydney is significantly lower than the New South Wales average. That is good news. However, some specific cancers have a higher incidence in our region and they include liver cancer in both men and women, and lung and stomach cancer in men. There is still a long way to go. The survival rate for many common cancers has increased by 30 per cent in the past two decades but there is still work to do. The smoking rate is down from 24 per cent in 1997 to 14.7 per cent in 2011. The number of smokers has reduced by 260,000 in the past decade. The five-year survival rate is at 64 per cent, which has increased from 61 per cent in 2001. Investment in cancer research in 2011-12 and 2012-13 is more than \$54 million.

Another positive outcome is that New South Wales now has Australia's only integrated population and clinical cancer registry, which was launched on 1 July. The wealth of information being captured about cancer will provide an unprecedented opportunity to look at how cancer services are performing and to drive improvements across the system, both public and private, in terms of prevention, early detection, treatment and care. While some cancer outcomes have significantly improved in recent years, they are distributed unevenly across the community. Aboriginal people, people from low socioeconomic groups, some members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and peoples from regional and rural New South Wales are affected by cancer to a greater degree than other communities. I commend the Cancer Institute NSW for their never-ending fight against this insidious disease and I commend all members of the House to get behind Daffodil Day on Friday 24 August 2012.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [7.00 p.m.], by leave: I thank members for this opportunity to speak and to support the member for Kiama in discussing the matter of public importance. The member for Kiama has already said that this Friday is Daffodil Day. Cancer Council NSW also runs great campaigns such as the Relay for Life and the SunSmart program. Those of us who have children or a background in education know the latter is a worthwhile program that ensures our children are aware when they are out in the sun that they need to wear a hat, put on 30-plus sunscreen, wear sunglasses—even if they do not like to do so—and move into the shade wherever possible. I commend the marvellous work of the Cancer Council NSW in my electorate of Fairfield, across the State and the nation.

I support the member for Kiama in bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. Not long ago I met Ms Aruni Ratnayake, the regional programs coordinator for Cancer Council NSW greater western Sydney. As we have been discussing the importance of the work of Cancer Council NSW I will focus on the Relay for Life, which is a community charity event to raise funds for Cancer Council NSW. The Relay for Life is fun. It is an outdoor event at which the community comes together to fundraise, celebrate and remember those people who have battled cancer, the survivors and our loved ones who have not survived cancer. The teams take turns to walk or run around a track while enjoying the entertainment and activities at the event.

In New South Wales around 40,000 people take part in the Relay for Life, and on 3 November 2011 I had the honour and privilege of being part of the Fairfield Relay for Life held at the Horsley Park Reserve. The event raised a total of \$25,454.55. The great success of past relays demonstrates the essence of the close-knit Fairfield community, and the care and concern people express in the fight against cancer. The event is not limited to Fairfield; relays are held across the State. The member for Kiama speaks highly about the organisers of the Kiama Relay for Life and the work they do. Each step taken in the relay raises money to support Cancer Council NSW research and advocacy initiatives. I take this opportunity to spruik the next Relay for Life in Fairfield, which is on 3 November 2012. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [7.03 p.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Cessnock, Mulgoa and Fairfield for their contributions to this discussion about the Cancer Council NSW. I also thank members for their comments in relation to the SunSmart program. I feel very strongly about supporting this program. I remember attending my swimming carnival in high school.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Two years ago.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** No, it was not two years ago. I recall being out in the sun and, because I am probably more susceptible to the sun than anyone else, I came home as red as a beetroot—I was a darker shade of Ribena. That experience and a couple of other incidents reminded me how important it is for younger people to make sure they are aware of the dangers of ultraviolet light. I can only implore governments at Federal, State and local levels and schools to do all they can to encourage people to be aware of the dangers that ultraviolet light can cause. Having had those experiences, I must thank Cancer Council NSW for its work in this area. It will save lives. There is an extraordinarily high danger of ultraviolet damage to our skin in this country and it is important that people bear that in mind.

Another cause I feel strongly about—and I know members of the House are united in their support of this initiative—is clamping down on tobacco smoking. The Greiner and Fahey governments were the first in Australia, or perhaps the world, to ban smoking in public offices, to ban tobacco advertising at sporting events and to introduce many other anti-smoking measures. The Liberal-Nationals Government has supported all tobacco control legislations introduced in this Parliament. The Government wholeheartedly supports the Federal Government's plain packaging legislation, and I commend the Federal Government for its victory in the High

Court recently. The NSW Tobacco Strategy 2012-2017 is one of the most progressive tobacco reforms ever seen in Australia. It will see smoking banned in playgrounds, public sportsgrounds, swimming pools, public transport stops and will enhance public buildings. From 2015 the ban on smoking will be extended to all commercial outdoor dining areas.

I strongly support these measures because it is the right thing to do by the 85 per cent of adults in New South Wales who do not smoke and yet are exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke in public places. The distress and cost that smoking causes for families and the burden on the health system is unacceptable. Smoking-related illness accounts for 5,200 deaths and 44,000 hospitalisations every year in New South Wales and costs an estimated \$8.4 billion. The New South Wales Government is leading the way in relation to tobacco control. I commend Cancer Council NSW for its support of this campaign and all the other campaigns it is involved in, such as the SunSmart program, Relay for Life and Daffodil Day.

**Discussion concluded.**

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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### **VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC DAY**

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [7.08 p.m.]: Last week I was honoured to attend the annual Victory in the Pacific Day commemoration in my electorate of Cabramatta at the Cabra-Vale Diggers or ex-servicemen's club. The other clubs involved in the commemoration were Fairfield RSL Club, Smithfield RSL Club, Canley Heights RSL Club, Ingleburn RSL Club and Liverpool RSL Club. As the ceremony is held in such esteem, Mounties Club also asked to be part of the ceremony and the directors of that club were there on the day. I thank the presidents and boards of directors for their presence on that important day. The ceremony was attended by Her Excellency Governor Marie Bashir, who spoke emotionally of the sacrifice of our armed forces. Victory in the Pacific Day marks the day that Japan surrendered, effectively ending World War II. On that day in 1945 Japan accepted the Allied nations' terms of surrender nine days after the American bomber *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The official documents of surrender were signed on 2 September 1945 aboard the USS *Missouri*, which was stationed in Tokyo Bay, Japan, officially bringing an end to a brutal war. Australia is not the only country to commemorate this important day in our history: on 3 September China celebrated the Victory of War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, which eventually evolved into Armed Forces Day. Even now there are still "September 3" streets and primary schools in major cities across China named after the war. Victory in the Pacific holds important meaning for China due to terrible events such as the Rape of Nanking. In Korea 15 August is a public holiday and is celebrated as Liberation Day. In the United States, Rhode Island recognises the day as a public holiday but to distance itself from claims of discrimination and persecution and in the interests of harmony the Rhode Island General Assembly—the equivalent to our New South Wales Legislative Assembly—passed a resolution in 1990 that states:

Victory Day is not a day to express satisfaction in the destruction and death caused by nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In Australia we remember the tragic fate of Australians caught up in the violence of World War II with ceremonies across the country remembering their sacrifice on what is the sixty-seventh anniversary of Victory in the Pacific. During the six years, 40,000 Australian soldiers were killed sacrificing everything so that future generations such as ours could live lives in a world of peace and harmony. Some 17,000 of these brave soldiers fought the Japanese in places such as Malaya, the Netherlands, the East Indies—now known as Indonesia—and Borneo. Many more Australians also became prisoners of war following the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942. Australia played its part in the war and the war exacted a heavy toll on our people.

Our 40,000 heroes, who died defending our rights and freedoms left behind countless war widows and grieving families. Their sacrifice must never be diminished and their memory never forgotten. Australia came close to peril in World War II. It is hard to imagine today but the war was brought right to our doorstep. Darwin, Broome and Townsville were bombed during World War II. Newcastle was shelled, a naval ship was torpedoed off Nambucca Heads and Japanese midget submarines even entered Sydney Harbour. We were right in the thick of this war, as the many surviving veterans can attest to. Their acts of bravery made us a stronger nation—a nation that learned that we could make a difference—a young nation that would bravely stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies in the fight against oppression and invasion.

I pay tribute to the distinguished services of the men and women of the Australian armed forces who have served our country throughout our short history. I thank them for their service. I acknowledge them for their sacrifice. I know I speak for other members of this Chamber when I say that veterans of our armed forces have our utmost respect, the highest level of respect that we can give for their bravery in the face of danger, for the pain they have suffered from injuries and the time spent in prisoner of war camps, and for having the courage to stand up and be counted when our country needed them the most. You are our heroes and we thank you for all that you have done for us. Lest we forget.

#### **MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S AWARDS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [7.12 p.m.]: I advise the House of the regional director's awards function that I attended recently as part of Education Week at which a number of awards, including student awards, staff awards, community member awards and school awards, were presented.

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

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**: I congratulate all the recipients of those awards. The primary school recipients of the regional director's award for excellence in student achievement were Molly Arens from Old Bar Public School, Hannah Garven from North Haven Public School, Grace Camilleri from Forster Public School and Irena Cashman from Pacific Palms Public School. The high school recipients for the regional director's award for excellence in student achievement were Katie Gilfillan from Great Lakes College Tuncurry Campus, Saul Brady from Great Lakes College Forster Campus and Christopher Diessel from Chatham High School. Deb Elliott and Sue Lowe from Bulahdelah Central School were joint recipients of the regional director's award for excellence in teaching, along with Karen Austin from Forster Public School, Peter Bull and Leanne Ralston from Taree High School.

We were then treated to a fantastic performance by the Bungwahl School Skippers. Bungwahl Public School is a small school with a maximum of 50 students. The skipping groups commenced a few years ago and the tricks the students can do with their skipping ropes are just unbelievable. Their dexterity and fitness were amazing. Concern has often been expressed in the community about childhood obesity and many schools would do well to adopt the initiative of this small school. The recipients of the regional director's award for outstanding leadership were Kim Hamilton from Great Lakes College Forster Campus and Jillian Davies from Great Lakes College Tuncurry Campus.

The recipients of the regional director's award for outstanding school administration and support were Robin Rowe from Pacific Palms Public School, Kate Morse from Chatham Public School and Jenny Schultz from Old Bar Public School. Elizabeth Worth from Forster Public School and Bronwyn Sheridan from Old Bar Public School were awarded the regional director's award for excellence in educational support. We then enjoyed a wonderful dance item performed by Taleesha Easton from Great Lakes College. Finally, Gwen Gibson from Harrington Public School was awarded the regional director's award for outstanding contribution to public education by a community member.

The regional director's award for school achievement went to Great Lakes College Forster Campus and Great Lakes College Tuncurry Campus as a joint award for student volunteering with Meals on Wheels as the first part of the award. Like so many voluntary organisations, Meals on Wheels is finding it difficult to attract volunteers so the school is filling that gap. As a result, those young students see firsthand on a semi-commercial basis what volunteering is about and some students have the opportunity for the first time to meet with senior citizens, who in turn get to enjoy a visit from young people. I thought that was a particularly good award. The second part of the award went to North Haven Public School for technology in learning and life. It is great that these functions acknowledge volunteers and others who achieve. Although they do not seek recognition, the function encourages those volunteers and helps to encourage others to become involved. I congratulate all recipients of the awards.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.17 p.m.]: I commend the member for Myall Lakes, who is a strong advocate for public education. It was wonderful to hear about the regional director's awards in his electorate. I know the member is a proud advocate of the commitment given by teachers to delivering quality education and it was wonderful to hear about the performance and quality of students in those schools. Only last weekend the Premier was involved in the Premier's awards which rewarded 25 teachers across New South Wales for their excellence and commitment to teaching through scholarships and awards.

I note that they received money that will go towards furthering their careers. I congratulate the member for Myall Lakes on advising the House of the wonderful work of our teachers across New South Wales and, in particular, in the Myall Lakes area.

### **BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [7.18 p.m.]: As members are no doubt aware, the electorate of Bankstown is one of the most culturally diverse in New South Wales. As well as our great cultural diversity there are a large number of different religious groups within the Bankstown area. The recent census confirmed the impressive religious diversity of the Bankstown electorate. The percentage of people identified as not having a religion is one of the lowest in Australia, with just over 6 per cent of respondents nominating as non-religious. Catholicism remains the largest religious denomination in Bankstown, including Roman Catholics, Maronites and Melkites. However, Islam, Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Buddhism are all well represented also in our community.

Our religious character is evident not only in the many places of worship in our area and higher attendance at religious observances but also in the generous nature of our community. Charity has been an important issue for the past couple of weeks as many people in my community have been celebrating Iftar and Ramadan. Iftar dinners mark the end of daily fasting throughout Ramadan and it is traditionally celebrated with a communal meal among family and friends. One of the great traditions of Iftar and Ramadan has been community organisations and businesses hosting Iftar dinners for the broader community. I was delighted to have the opportunity to once again attend several Iftar dinners in my local area.

I thank the Al Mimea Association and the Lebanese Muslim Association for inviting me to their Iftar celebrations. I note that several of my colleagues in this place and the other place, as well as our colleagues in Federal Parliament and representatives from Bankstown and Canterbury councils, were also in attendance at both events. The Australian Christian-Muslim Fellowship—an important interfaith group in my area—also held an Iftar dinner, which was a great success. The dinner was attended by Consul General George Ghanem; Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed; parish priest of St Charbel's Church Father Superior Antonios Tarabay; and many representatives of both the Bankstown and broader Sydney Muslim and Christian communities—all sharing a wonderful Iftar dinner. I also thank the Bankstown scouts group for inviting me to their Iftar dinner earlier this month, which I enjoyed. I had the opportunity to hand out a number of different achievement awards at the dinner.

I also attended Darulfatwai graduation ceremony and Iftar dinner. Along with other parliamentary members I celebrated the young Australian-Muslim graduates of the Al-Azhary course. The evening was a resounding success. The Bayt Al-Zakat Australia Association, which is a great Islamic charity that provides aid to orphans from Lebanon, also had its annual Iftar dinner. During the Ramadan period, the Mayor of Bankstown City Council, Khal-Asfour, also hosted an Iftar dinner, which I was delighted to attend. As Ramadan drew to a close last weekend, many organisations coordinated Eid al-Fitr celebrations. I attended the Lebanese Muslim Association's morning prayer service on Sunday along with more than tens of thousands of people. The Leader of the New South Wales Opposition, the Premier, a number of parliamentary colleagues from both sides of politics—both State and Federal—and representatives from councils were in attendance. On the same day the Islamic Charity Projects Association's festival was held at Paul Keating Park. The festival allowed the entire community to come together and celebrate the first day of Shawwal and the end of Ramadan.

Our local Muslim population is diverse and events such as Ramadan and the Iftar dinners that take place during that period provide the opportunity to experience all elements of this important community. I note that while I enjoyed attending several community Iftar dinners, there was one dinner I did not attend—the Iftar dinner hosted by the Premier and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities. This is the second year running that I have not been invited to the event despite the fact that my electorate of Bankstown has one of the largest Islamic populations in New South Wales. It is particularly disappointing for me as many people from my local community are invited to the dinner and they expect that I will be in attendance. With these types of dinners it is important that we do not play politics: members on all sides of politics should be invited to them. I take this opportunity to wish the broader Muslim community in New South Wales and in Australia a very happy Eid and I conclude by saying Eid ul-Fitr Mubarak.

### **KIAMA STUDENT LEADERS FORUM**

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [7.23 p.m.]: Tonight I bring to the attention of the House the outstanding success of the Kiama Student Leaders Forum, which I hosted in Parliament House earlier today.



I was extremely pleased to welcome 16 high school students—10 from Kiama High School and six from Albion Park High School—to the oldest parliament in Australia. I acknowledge the following students and student representative council members who participated: Riley Richardson, James Malin, Jackson Calverley, Kate Sinclair, Barbera Cheung, Tara Miller, Hayley Dean, Jacqui Jervis, Jesse Hancock, Kelly Poole—the head teacher of welfare at Albion Park High School—Declan Wall, Damon Stevens, Amy Keelan, Amanda Blazevska, Brendan Paniagua and Michael Swain.

Following the success of last year's Student Leaders Forum, the outstanding depth of ideas and talent of our young leaders was again on display at Parliament House today. All of these 16 students made very intelligent and significant contributions; they are a credit to both Kiama and Albion Park high schools, which they represented so brilliantly in Parliament House today. When they arrived they were given a table topic, which was to discuss lowering the voting age from 18 to 16. They split up into two groups—opposition and government—and they came into this Chamber to debate that issue, which they did very vigorously. Wonderful arguments were put by both sides and I walked out of the debate not knowing which side I should support.

During the brainstorming sessions I split the students into three groups and asked them if they were Premier for a day what policy issues would they pursue. Some of their excellent suggestions included raising the P-plate curfew from 11.00 p.m. to 12.00 p.m.; faster response times by the New South Wales Ambulance Service; increasing funding for learn-to-drive initiatives; building a second Sydney airport; funding for schools to provide sunscreen and hand sanitisers for students; breaking the stigma and encouraging more discussion in schools about mental health and support, which was an issue that attracted particular attention; funding for more life skills education in classrooms on tax, car loans and how to handle money; strengthening Indigenous language and cultural connections; encouraging more local sister-school competitions; creating more jobs for unemployed young people; and improving car parking around high schools—a particular issue in Kiama, and this issue was raised by the students from Kiama. I was particularly impressed with the questions that were asked and the answers that were given by some of the students. I am sure that they appreciated the opportunity to discuss issues in the forum.

During lunch in the Jubilee Room the students were addressed by a number of my colleagues, whom I commend for doing that. The Minister for Transport spoke about her portfolio and answered questions on rail transport, in particular, as well as public transport in regional New South Wales, which continues to be an issue; young people who do not have a driver licence often experience the problem firsthand. The Minister for Communities and Citizenship, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Youth spoke about the current Aboriginal Affairs Taskforce and the important generational reforms to close the gap. He spoke passionately about his portfolio and I know that one Indigenous student in attendance particularly appreciated the Minister's contribution.

My close friend the Speaker and member for South Coast spoke about her role as one of the presiding officers of the New South Wales Parliament, and about her role in local government and in making contributions to local communities, which she has certainly done very well. My good friend the member for Hornsby, who I note is in the Chamber, spoke about leadership and the need for young people to get involved in the democratic process. I appreciate his participation in the forum today. One student who attended the forum last year came back this year and remembered the contribution made by the member for Hornsby. That student had some follow-up questions and I know that the member for Hornsby appreciated participating in that particular exercise. Once again I acknowledge the stellar contributions made by each of these school leaders today. They have served their schools tremendously well and have made me very proud of the leaders of tomorrow.

The role of leaders is to create more leaders and not more followers. Having come to this place as a younger person, I remember wondering what this place meant to the people in it—whether they cared about the views of younger people. If we as leaders in our community are to take young people seriously we need to engage them and talk with them about their ideas, and that is what this forum was about. I know that the young people who participated, spoke to Ministers and stayed for question time found the parliamentary process interesting. I appreciate some of the Facebook status updates and comments that I saw this evening as the students were heading home on the train. I thank my staff—Ben Blackburn and Paul Ell—who organised this event, I thank the staff of the Parliament who accommodated us and I thank all my colleagues who were involved in listening to these student leaders. I am sure that they will be making their mark well into the future.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.28 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Kiama on holding the Student Leaders Forum here in Parliament House for the second time. What a great opportunity he is giving to the schools and students in his electorate by not only bringing those students to Parliament House today but also by giving them the experience of being here—an experience they can take away with them. I congratulate the member for Kiama on coordinating this event. I saw him walking around with the students today. They were thrilled to be in Parliament House and to have a hardworking local member like the member for Kiama working for them. It was also a great opportunity to have Ministers and various members of Parliament speak about how the Parliament works. It was also good to hear about the students' ideas and experiences and for them to come here to see what opportunities they may take up in the future. As the member for Kiama said, they are the future leaders. What a great opportunity they were given today.

## PALLIATIVE CARE

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [7.29 p.m.]: It is hoped that most residents in this State will never have to call on our palliative care system. However, thousands of individuals and families nationwide are negatively impacted by the inadequate funding provided to palliative care services. Most people would rather spend their last days in the comfort of their homes, pain free, with the required services and surrounded by family and loved ones. But, sadly, this wish is becoming a privilege. As a result of a lack of palliative care services, countless people are denied this necessary support, while a parent, grandparent, sibling, husband, wife or friend looks on in distress. A lack of intervention will soon only exacerbate the problem. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare there was a 51 per cent increase in the number of palliative care hospitalisations between 2000-01 and 2009-10. Our country's ageing population will most certainly lead to a stronger demand for such services.

Fortunately, our society has strong advocates who are willing to speak out and represent some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Dr Yvonne McMaster is one such advocate. A retired palliative care doctor and campaigner, Dr McMaster understands the complexities surrounding palliative care and the public policy reforms required to address them. Her vision and leadership in founding and growing the "More funds for palliative care" campaign has helped raise awareness of palliative care and mobilised thousands of people to support this important cause. This year the campaign is seeking to collect signatures from throughout New South Wales. Following this a petition will be presented to the New South Wales Parliament prior to the Government starting budget discussions. Last year's campaign collected 24,000 signatures and this year's campaign looks promising. Already 3,000 signatures have been collected. Further information can be found at <http://morefundsforpalliativecare.wordpress.com>.

The campaign's dedication and commitment to addressing this great social injustice has not gone unnoticed. Last year the New South Wales Government responded by ensuring that \$1 million in funding that had been cut by the former Labor administration was restored to the northern Sydney local health district for palliative care services. It also provided a \$5 million boost to palliative care services in the last State budget. I am here to provide in principle support for this campaign and for the increase in palliative care funding goals it aspires to achieve. I take this opportunity to put my support on the record and commend the Minister for Health for her efforts in addressing this significant issue. The Minister has been relentless in her support for this important area of health. Under her leadership, palliative care services received the funding increases I have mentioned. Despite this tremendous level of commitment, more funds are required to ensure the problems and challenges associated with palliative care are ameliorated.

All regions of New South Wales would benefit from an increase in palliative care funding, particularly northern Sydney. An increase in funding would enable palliative care services to visit acute hospitals and nursing homes, allowing them to consult and advise, as well as teach medical professionals. Such empowerment would enhance quality of life for individuals who require such support, and assist in making a person's last days as peaceful and dignified as possible. We are fortunate to live in one of the world's most advanced and prosperous countries. Much of our prosperity can be attributed to the strong and dedicated civil society that works tirelessly to ensure positive social outcomes are achieved. The true test of a government is how it cares for the most vulnerable in society. I call on my Government to commit to investing the necessary funds towards palliative care services for the betterment of present and future generations.

Although consultations and frameworks are crucial, committed funds from governments is what is required to alleviate this health concern. I will share with members an experience I had recently when I visited

my local hospital at Neringah. The hospital specialises in caring for those in their last days. A local constituent was too sick to attend a constituent meeting in my office and he asked if I would take the time to visit him in the hospital. Walter Penzies and I spoke for about an hour about his views on what we need to do to improve public transport in this State. He left this world not long after that discussion, but I knew that at Neringah Hospital he was in the best hands and received excellent palliative care services. That opportunity should be afforded to anyone in their final days.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.34 p.m. until  
Wednesday 22 August 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**

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