

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 6 September 2012

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

NSW JOBS COMMISSION BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 16 August 2012.

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services) [10.10 a.m.]: I lead for the Government in debate on the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. We waited 18 months for a policy from the Opposition. After an incessant period of whingeing, whining, carping and opposing everything, the Opposition has now put forward an idea as a policy of sorts, that is, the NSW Jobs Commission Bill. I am sorry to say that after the wait the only policy produced by this lazy and negative Opposition is, like the Leader of the Opposition himself, a dud. The bill reflects a proposition by the Labor Party that somehow it could do better on the jobs front by creating yet another taxpayer-funded body, a jobs commission.

Let us look at the Government's record on the jobs front. Since taking office in March last year we have created a total of 28,400 jobs. We have delivered NSW 2021, a strategic plan to make New South Wales number one again, including 19 soon-to-be-released regional action plans that were developed following extensive community consultation. We have delivered a Jobs Action Plan supporting 100,000 new jobs across the State, including 40,000 in regional New South Wales, through payroll tax rebates for companies hiring new employees. We have appointed a Small Business Commissioner to support our State's 650,000 small to medium enterprises and to advise the Government on how best to support the sector.

My agency, NSW Trade and Investment, is partnering with industry to develop six key industry action plans for sectors that are key to the State's future economic prosperity. These include the visitor economy, creative industries, the digital economy, professional services, including finance, engineering and legal services, the manufacturing industry and international education and research. NSW Trade and Investment also administers a number of programs for employment generation in regional New South Wales, including the Regional Industries Investment Fund, which has helped to create more than 2,800 new jobs through projects such as the establishment of Southern Cotton's ginning facility in Whitton and the expansion of National Engineering's steel fabrication operations in Young.

Yesterday I told the House about 79 new public sector jobs in the northern rivers region, including through a production company for a new television series, *The Gods of Wheat Street*, and an architectural salvage company in Grafton. We have a Resources for Regions program, which this year committed nearly \$10 million for projects to be funded in both the Muswellbrook and Singleton shires. We have delivered a \$30 million Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund jointly with the Commonwealth and Bluescope Steel. So far we have provided grants totalling \$16 million, promoting up to 470 new jobs in the region.

We have also delivered Regional Relocation Grants. So far more than 1,000 grants, worth over \$7 million, have been made to people making the tree or sea change between July last year and July this year. We have reformed the State's migration strategy to attract more high-value migrants—investor migrants,

business migrants and skilled migrants—as well as make the system easier for international students studying and subsequently working in New South Wales. We have also worked with the Commonwealth through the Regional Development Australia Committees, providing \$2.2 million in 2012-13 to grow jobs in our regions. Yesterday the Treasurer told the House about the outstanding economic data just released on State final demand, which is up by 1.5 per cent for the last quarter and 3.4 per cent for the year.

New South Wales has the best economy of the non-mining States. Incidentally, the economies in the mining States are starting to tank as rising prices for coal and iron ore are kicking in, affecting jobs and the economies in those States; and mining companies are starting to withdraw investment as they are hit hard by Federal Labor's mineral resources rent tax and the carbon tax. New South Wales has a strong and diversified economy. However, Labor does not want to pursue those policies; it simply wants to create another public sector organisation. Members opposite criticise the Government. However, the Government is making every effort to make the New South Wales economy number one again and we are turning things around in this State through our support for our strong and diversified economy.

This bill gets to the inherent philosophical differences between the Labor Party and the Liberal-Nationals. The Government opposes this bill because we believe the private sector, not the public sector, drives jobs growth. That is why we are focussed on rebuilding our economy through lower taxes and business growth. The hypocrisy of Labor's sudden focus on job creation—the one policy it has managed to produce in 18 months—is demonstrated by the fact that our efforts to reduce the tax and regulatory burdens on businesses have been resisted by members opposite at every twist and turn. Labor opposed our WorkCover reforms and an unsustainable workers compensation scheme, with premiums set to rise by nearly 30 per cent had we done nothing.

Labor opposed our reform of the occupational health and safety laws to bring them into line with what the Federal Government wants, that is, a more national uniform scheme that would strip away some of the powers of unions to impede business and tell businesspeople what they can and cannot do. We are getting on with the job of creating a better business environment in this State. Labor opposed all of those reforms, and members opposite want to solve the problem by creating yet another public sector body, another bureaucracy. They have learned nothing from the message that the people of New South Wales, including 650,000 small to medium enterprises, sent them at last year's State election. They still believe the old Labor way of, "We know better than you". Imagine Labor's jobs commissar, standing up in front of business leaders and employers and saying, "You should take on more staff". It is laughable. That is not the way business works.

During tough economic times what business needs is not more of the tail wagging the dog and the Government getting in people's way; rather, business needs the Government to cut taxes and create an environment more conducive to economic growth and job creation. And that is exactly what the Government is doing. I have deep suspicions that this bill is motivated not by a genuine concern for employers and employees in this State but by the Leader of the Opposition's concern that he is no longer able to look after his mates in the unions. Since last year's historic election and the electoral funding reforms delivered by the Premier last year, I suspect that the old Sussex Street slush fund has dried up and Robbo can no longer help out his union mates. The one policy put forward by the Opposition is a proposal for a new addition to the bureaucracy so that some of his union mates can get back on the government gravy train. Who do you think the commissar and his five mates would be—Tripodi, Macca, Eddie, Della, Tony Kelly?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier does not need the assistance of Government members.

Mr ANDREW STONER: What else do we know about Labor's jobs commissar? According to the Leader of the Opposition's media release:

The NSW Jobs Commission would have the power to conduct inquiries into communities and industries impacted by job losses and make recommendations direct to the Premier and government.

Well, that is creating a lot of jobs, isn't it? The commission also would evaluate regional development funding initiatives, make recommendations on where funding should be allocated and carry out regional impact studies into proposals that cut or relocate public sector jobs. Importantly, the NSW Jobs Commission would prepare an annual report to the Parliament on issues impacting jobs growth in New South Wales. According to the Leader of the Opposition, we will have a new \$188 million letter-and-report-writing department, doing things that are already done within existing agencies, including Trade and Investment, Treasury and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The challenge to Labor is to explain how this initiative will create one sustainable job, other than

the jobs for the commissar and his mates. This bill demonstrates Labor's complete misunderstanding of the various economic drivers of employment creation. The Government opposes the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 because we have a better solution for supporting jobs and economic growth across New South Wales and our strategy is working.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [10.22 a.m.]: That little performance that we have just witnessed—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour has the call and will be heard in silence.

Ms ANNA WATSON: That little performance we have just witnessed from the previous speaker goes to show the contempt that those opposite have for workers in New South Wales. The Deputy Premier just demonstrated what the people of New South Wales already know and have felt over the past 18 months. I contribute to debate on this private member's bill, the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012, which will see the establishment of a NSW Jobs Commissioner and NSW Jobs Commission. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on bringing this bill to the House. It is a sensible and well thought-out plan, and it is the type of initiative that a Labor government has always delivered on. The O'Farrell Government has let down the workers of New South Wales. Since its election we have seen massive job losses across New South Wales in all sectors, including construction, manufacturing, retail, local government, police, teaching and nursing—and the list goes on and on.

Under Barry O'Farrell's watch, New South Wales has lost more than 23,000 jobs. This is a shameful and poor record for a Government that made so many promises prior to the election. As we know, most of the promises they made have been broken. I draw attention to one of those promises: We will lower taxes and create 100,000 new jobs, including 40,000 jobs for regional areas. In the Shellharbour electorate I have not seen any of these new jobs. In fact, we have seen massive job losses in New South Wales. The Labor Government, during its final year in government, created over 126,000 new jobs in one year. We led the country in jobs growth. The O'Farrell Government's Jobs Action Plan has been nothing more than an embarrassment and a total failure. Jobs have been slashed, public sector workers have been sacked and our police, teachers and nurses have moved to other States.

For example, within the first six months of the O'Farrell Government, New South Wales lost over 5,000 public sector jobs. We are seeing their conservative, right-wing mentality kicking in again with the privatisation of our ports. The Illawarra cannot afford to lose the amount of money that is generated from its ports. The loss will not be matched by a one-off payment. It is an insult and it will have a detrimental impact on the economy of the Illawarra. The regional areas of New South Wales need economic activity to support local jobs. That is why I support the Leader of the Opposition's private member's bill. The bill will implement five specific and clear functions. The first function of the NSW Jobs Commission will be:

1. To conduct inquiries into communities and industries impacted by job losses and make recommendations to Government to enhance economic opportunities in these areas.

This task is a matter of priority in this State, particularly in regional areas. The other functions are:

2. Identify issues affecting jobs growth and retention and to make recommendations to the Premier regarding such issues.
3. To prepare an annual report for tabling in Parliament in relation to the results of its inquiries into matters affecting jobs growth.
4. Evaluate regional development funding initiatives, which would include overseeing the Opposition's Regional, Agricultural and Manufacturing Promotion, and make recommendations for where funding should be distributed.
5. Undertake regional impact studies on any proposal to cut public sector jobs; or relocate public sector offices.

The Premier and his Government have failed the people of New South Wales. The Premier has failed to make jobs a priority, directly cutting 15,000 government jobs and standing idly by while thousands of jobs are lost in construction, manufacturing, finance and the other sectors I have mentioned. Before the election Barry O'Farrell committed to delivering more public servants and front-line staff, but it did not take him long to break that promise.

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

Ms ANNA WATSON: The Government has attacked child protection services, emergency services, prisons, schools and TAFE colleges. It just goes on and it does not stop. The first priority of a Premier is jobs, jobs, jobs. This Government, with its slash-and-burn mentality, has undone the good work of Labor. Its actions are a far cry from the words of Barry O'Farrell, "Pick me, pick me. You have got nothing to fear". We now know that those promises were all pastry and no pie. They were just not true. History shows that it is always a Labor Government that brings in legislation, and private members' bills like this one when in opposition, to ensure, enhance and enshrine jobs as our number one priority. That is because Labor historically is the party that cares about jobs growth, that cares about our economy, that cares about manufacturing staying in this country, and that cares about workers and their families. Only Labor knows how to create jobs. Only Labor can deliver jobs growth—

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

Mr Ryan Park: Throw them out.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I will throw out the member for Keira if he does not resume his seat.

Ms ANNA WATSON: As I said—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Only Labor knows how to create jobs. Only Labor can deliver jobs growth and only Labor has the economic credentials to ensure that the State of New South Wales will retain Labor's triple-A credit rating. The O'Farrell Government does not even come close to claiming any of these attributes. The people of New South Wales, especially those in western Sydney, are realising that if you buy a lemon there is no doubt it is going to be very sour. That is what they are seeing now. I speak for my own electorate—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Monaro to order.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I speak for my electorate—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the second time.

Ms ANNA WATSON: —in congratulating the New South Wales Opposition on bringing forward a plan that will deliver for regional areas and the greater State of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.31 a.m.]: The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government opposes the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. I say at the outset that this bill is about as useful as an ashtray on a motorcycle. The member for Shellharbour talked about Labor creating jobs and delivering growth but I can tell her that after 16 years of Labor there is no record of that at all. I say to the member for Shellharbour that some create happiness wherever they go—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Monaro and the member for Keira are testing my patience.

Mr Mark Coure: Throw them out.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Oatley to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This bill clearly shows the differences between the Liberal-Nationals and Labor governments' philosophies. It shows that we are promoting growth, jobs and opportunities for people in New South Wales. The Labor Government did not even know where regional communities were; we were forgotten. All Labor members cared about were their mates, the cities of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and their union buddies.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Government members are making more noise than Opposition members. They will not deny the member for Bathurst the call.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I quote from Frank Sartor's book about one of the programs that was put forward again. This bill is another waste of taxpayers' money proposed by the Opposition. They love bureaucracy that achieves nothing. Frank Sartor said, "I could see dozens of programs/services that could be greatly improved. I could also see massive waste created by a recklessly indifferent bureaucracy overseen by a bunch of elected seat-warming pissants who passed motions but made bugger-all progress."

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Government members will come to order. There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Bathurst will be heard in relative silence.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: It is on the basis of the unparliamentary language—

Mr John Barilaro: That's not a point of order.

Ms Noreen Hay: You are not the Chair. Mind your own business.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I deem the word "pissant" to be unparliamentary; the member for Bathurst should withdraw it.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I will withdraw but I point out—

Mr John Williams: Point of order: That was a quote taken from Frank Sartor's book *The Fog on the Hill*.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I am sorry. I did not realise it was a quote. Was the member for Bathurst quoting from a document?

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Yes.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I did not realise it was a quote. There is no point of order.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: You had just made a decision that it was unparliamentary—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I apologise to the House. Because of the level of interjection from both sides I could not hear the member for Bathurst and therefore I did not realise he was quoting. He is entitled to quote from a document. Therefore I cannot rule that language out of order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I have plenty more quotes. I point out that Labor wants to expand this bureaucracy and spend \$180 million to create a department just to do letter and report writing. Our Government is putting policies in place that will deliver outcomes to the people of New South Wales. We are getting on with the job of creating economic growth and jobs across the State.

Ms Noreen Hay: Where?

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Our Government's priority is to restore economic growth by generating sustainable jobs and investment in metropolitan, regional and rural areas throughout the State. We have an approach that looks at the whole of New South Wales and does not just consider union buddies and mates in Sussex Street. Under Labor there were 16 years of lost opportunities. Under Labor New South Wales grew more slowly than any other Australian State, yet the member for Shellharbour claimed that Labor created more jobs and more growth. Under Labor New South Wales lagged behind the rest of Australia in terms of jobs growth. Over the past decade when Labor was in power New South Wales suffered the lowest jobs growth of any Australian State. We can see the challenges that face us in dealing with the massive problem that was left to us—New South Wales government debt. The previous Government did not live within its means and left a \$5.3 billion black hole that has to be overcome.

Savings have to be made and this Government is living within its means in order to be able to deliver the services required for the State of New South Wales. Small business had little confidence in the former Labor Government. In 2010 the Sensis Business Index survey recorded the New South Wales Labor Government

having one of the lowest approvals and one of the biggest drops in confidence in the index's 15-year history. Let us look at population growth. In places such as the electorate of Murray-Darling population has declined. What did the Labor Government do when in office? It did nothing to try to assist those towns. We have introduced a relocation grant, which has been taken up by many residents across New South Wales to enable them to move to regional and rural communities and assist them. Who would be on the jobs commission proposed in this bill? If we left it to the Opposition I am sure it would be another case of jobs for the boys. I know the member for Keira is one who has benefited from jobs for the boys over the years.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I will not tolerate that behaviour.

Mr Ryan Park: Better send them off early.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! That is not in the standing orders. Government members will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Since March 2011 we have created 28,400 jobs in all parts of New South Wales, including the electorate of Bathurst. I refer to the latest expansion of Blayney SeaLink. Why did that occur? Because we had the Department of Trade and Investment working with this company to create the expansion that was required, which resulted in further employment for the people of New South Wales. Nestlé has expanded. Laser welding has the support of the Department of Trade and Investment. In the Bathurst electorate there are more police, nurses, firefighters and teachers. The Leader of the Opposition does not support jobs in rural communities. In May this year he is quoted as saying, "We need to take police out of regional communities and put them into metropolitan areas."

Mr John Barilaro: Shame.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: That is a shame. It clearly shows that members opposite have learnt nothing since they were kicked out of office only last year. I point out that this Government is making the necessary reforms that are required to get this State back on track. If we had not reformed WorkCover, small businesses would have copped a 28 per cent increase in premiums. For example, a small residential construction outfit pays wages of \$250,000 per year. In Victoria, it would pay \$2,500. In New South Wales, with the increase it would pay \$16,000. The Opposition vehemently opposed the bill. Yet today they have the hypocrisy to claim that they support—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order for the second time. Government members will be called to order if they continue with their disruptive behaviour.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I have so more to say but I have been interrupted so many times. The Government opposes the Opposition's NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. It will achieve nothing because we have policies already in place that are addressing the issues affecting New South Wales.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [10.40 a.m.]: I support the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 and I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his foresight in introducing it. I think all members would agree there is nothing more important than creating jobs in our communities. It is widely accepted that jobs afford dignity to those who benefit from them. Jobs give individuals the opportunity for self-determination; they contribute to economic growth and they are a central part of a civil society. Mr Acting-Speaker, I ask for some order in the Chamber, please.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Lakemba will be heard in silence.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: To reiterate, I think we all accept that jobs offer the dignity that we want for people in our communities. They provide opportunities for self-determination for families, they provide the basis for economic growth in our communities, and they are an essential element of the civil society that we all seek to promote. If we accept the importance and the role of jobs in our society, I am at a loss to understand why those opposite are vehemently opposed to establishing a jobs commission that will focus on creating and promoting employment across the State of New South Wales. The Government opposes this bill not because the bill is a bad idea or will not help to bring attention and focus to an issue that we all agree is central to our communities. It opposes this bill because it is an Opposition bill.

It is disappointing to see in this Chamber—where we should be working in the interests of the people of New South Wales—that those opposite have decided that their basis for opposing a bill that focuses on jobs creation is: We did not think of it so it must be bad. That is nothing more than unfortunate arrogance. We need investment. We need investment in training and in infrastructure. A jobs commission will provide the framework for that investment. It is not about reinventing the wheel; it is about giving guidance and clarity to the government of the day—to the Premier and his Cabinet—to assist in making decisions about where investment should take place and how we can ensure that people across New South Wales have access to employment. A jobs commission will provide the framework for making decisions about training and support for jobs across New South Wales. The bill states:

The Commission will be subject to the control and direction of the Premier.

I would have thought those opposite would think that is good. It further states:

Its functions will include conducting inquiries into communities and industries that have been affected by job losses ...

A number of areas in New South Wales are struggling at present for a range of reasons, such as competition from international imports. We need to find ways to support those industries. A jobs commission is a reasonable way to move forward with that objective. The commission would also be:

... making recommendations to enhance economic opportunities in these areas and identifying issues affecting jobs growth and retention.

I think we all accept that one core obligation of government is the provision of jobs. A framework in which decisions can be made about the allocation of resources requires a transparent system for determining priorities. A jobs commission will take the politics out of decision-making. It will put in place a process and a system that delivers benefits to the people of New South Wales, focusing on important issues such as giving them the opportunity to have the dignity, the pride and the self-determination associated with employment. The Government opposes this bill not because a jobs commission is a bad idea. The Government has established the offices of Small Business Commissioner and Mental Health Commissioner. There is clearly a role for commissioners, public servants and bureaucracy in the decision-making process of this Government. If it is important to have commissioners for small business and mental health, why is it not important also to have a commissioner for jobs for the people of New South Wales? I return to the simple observation that the Government opposes this bill not because it is a bad idea but because it is an Opposition bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Monaro to order.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: It is unfortunate that members argue against a bill that supports jobs not only in the Sydney metropolitan area but across this State. For the people in country and regional areas, the Jobs Commission is the mechanism through which we can drive employment, jobs growth, dignity, self-determination, and opportunities for economic growth in our State. We are having this debate not because the Government is opposed to creating commissions or creating bureaucracies to support its objectives but because it opposes an idea that was not its own and therefore cannot be supported. What a shame. I would like to think members opposite can rise above petty politics, above their need to own every idea, and their need to ridicule the decisions of the previous Government.

This is an opportunity for us to work together for a common purpose—something we all accept is a priority and a responsibility of government. This is an opportunity for us to work together to find a solution, to give the people of this State a chance at dignity and self-determination, and to drive economic development and jobs in New South Wales. The fact that those opposite have not joined us to support this commission and employment in New South Wales shows that they have put politics ahead of good policy. The Government has put self-interest ahead of the interests of the people of New South Wales. Members opposite should hang their heads in shame.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [10.48 a.m.]: The NSW Liberal-Nationals Government opposes the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. This debate has put into sharp focus some of the philosophical differences between the two sides of this Chamber.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I remind the member for Monaro that he is already on a call to order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is good to know that members on both sides of the House support jobs creation as a means of reform. Jobs are essential to giving people a hand up, not a hand-out. But we are divided by our philosophical differences. Those differences are highlighted by this legislation. If passed, it would result in an even bigger bureaucracy. It would create a letter-and-report-writing department that would cost the State \$188 million, which would be appalling. Instead of streamlining government and reducing taxes and red tape, the Opposition wants more bureaucracy and more red tape. Members opposite have the hide to say that they are trying to do the right thing for the people of this State. This Government is encouraging employment and business by lowering taxes and cutting red tape. I believe in the philosophy that the only way to ensure that we have a good economy is to create new jobs. It is business, not government, that creates new jobs. How can we help business?

This Government has reduced red tape, made amendments to the workers compensation legislation—which the Opposition refused to support—and aligned the occupational health and safety legislation to national objectives. The Coalition is removing the dead hand of government from businesses so that they can do what they do best: employ people and reward those who work hard. We must ensure that the economy supports the 650,000 small and medium businesses in New South Wales that employ people. The businesses of this State drive innovation, growth and employment. It is not hard to understand why the Opposition is misguided. Unlike members opposite, many Government members have been employers—and some still are. Most members opposite come from a union background and their sole purpose is to hold employers to ransom with spurious arguments. This Government is boosting the economy and proposing the best solutions to encourage small business. New South Wales has 650,000 small businesses.

Mr Paul Toole: They are the backbone of the economy.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I agree with the member for Bathurst; they are the backbone of the economy.

Mr John Sidoti: They are the engine room.

Dr GEOFF LEE: No, western Sydney is the engine room of the New South Wales economy. With 250,000 small businesses it is the third largest economic zone in Australia. The most important role of government is to encourage businesses to do a better job. Since the Coalition came to office it has created 28,000 jobs and delivered the State Plan 2021, and it will soon release 19 action plans, including one for western Sydney's 250,000 small business operators. It is fantastic to note that many of those enterprises are not typical small businesses. Many are home-based businesses, and I pay tribute to the women who run 60 per cent of them. Those micro-businesses—some of which are part-time endeavours—contribute an enormous amount to the economy of this State.

The Government is also developing industry action plans for six industries that are the key to future economic prosperity. The visitor economy is of particular significance in my electorate because Parramatta hosts many international, interstate and intrastate visitors, and has ranked highly in many surveys for the contribution it makes in that area. I take a keen interest in the international education sector, which three years ago earned about \$15 billion in export revenue. My work at the University of Western Sydney demonstrated to me the importance of that export revenue. Of course, the increased value of the Australian dollar and other factors have impacted on that revenue and it now stands at about \$12 billion. Offering education to international students is an ideal way to generate income for this State because they demand tertiary services and that, in turn, generates jobs and stimulates the economy. The Government has also launched the Jobs Action Plan, which targets 100,000 new jobs, including 40,000 in regional areas. While I come from Parramatta, the capital of western Sydney and a major metropolitan area—

Mr John Barilaro: Don't forget the Monaro.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The regions are very important. I acknowledge the member for Monaro and the member for Orange for their strong advocacy on behalf of their electorates. I am sure we will hear praise about what they are doing.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members who wish to have private conversations should do so outside the Chamber. The member for Parramatta will be heard in silence.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Government members are a passionate bunch because they are committed to restoring the economy and creating real jobs. Unlike members opposite, they do not want to increase the

bureaucracy so that they can give jobs to their mates. Other important government initiatives are the appointment of the Small Business Commissioner and the creation of Smallbiz Connect. I commend the universities for joining with the commissioner to deliver the Smallbiz Connect program. For the first time, small businesses in western Sydney will be offered face-to-face services that will not only help them to prosper and employ more people but also provide them with research opportunities that have been so sadly lacking. The program will also address the barriers confronting small businesses and establish the best way for the Government to help them to prosper and grow. In addition, it will help the Government to determine how best to facilitate a competitive environment in which business can trade not only in New South Wales but also interstate and internationally. I commend the universities for their commitment to the research component of the Smallbiz Connect program.

If it were passed, the Opposition's bill would also duplicate many of the core functions performed by the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services. As the Deputy Premier said, this very disappointing bill is the first policy offering from the Opposition in the past 18 months. Sadly, it would lead to a duplication of work and result in an expansion of the bureaucracy. It would be a \$188 million mistake that the taxpayers of this State would have to wear. That money would be better spent on front-line services or initiatives that help small business, such as this Government's changes to the payroll tax regime. I oppose this bill. While the Opposition and the Government both want to create jobs, we go about it in a philosophically different way. The Opposition tries to create jobs by employing more public servants, building up the bureaucracy and creating more red tape, but in the process it hampers business development. The Coalition Government wants to reduce red tape and it is doing that and stimulating small business by encouraging it to innovate and in so doing drive the economy.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I call the member for Keira.

Mr Andrew Gee: The old public servant.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Orange will come to order. Government members will come to order.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [10.59 a.m.]: It is unusual to hear members opposite opposing a bill about jobs growth and investment in regional New South Wales.

Mr John Barilaro: The bureaucracy is in Sydney so it does not help regional New South Wales.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Monaro will find himself ejected from the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Mr RYAN PARK: There are things with which we should deal in a bipartisan way. I would have thought that job creation would have been one of the things that both sides of the House actually agree on. Obviously we do not. I am very pleased to support the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 because it focuses on growing jobs in regional New South Wales and on evaluating the effectiveness of the Government's job-creating programs. I will talk about the Regional Relocation Grant Program to which the Deputy Premier referred.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: I would ask you to draw the member back to the leave of the bill. He is talking about programs that have nothing to do with the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Keira to address the substance of the bill, rather than other Government programs. That is for another debate.

Mr RYAN PARK: To the point of order: Both the Deputy Premier and other speakers—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I have already ruled on the point of order.

Mr RYAN PARK: This bill targets regional communities through effective means by evaluating programs that work and those that do not work. The Government, through the Deputy Premier, the Leader of The Nationals, raised the Regional Relocation Grant in this debate.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: The member for Keira is flouting your ruling.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! As the member for Keira knows, I give members in this place an extraordinary amount of latitude but the Regional Relocation Grant is not a matter for debate. I remind the member for Keira that a take-note debate on budget estimates and related papers, which is the debate in which to deal with this matter, is currently before the House. This bill does not relate to that matter.

Mr Robert Furolo: To the point of order: The member for Bathurst referred to the Regional Relocation Grant in this debate, but you did not draw him back to the leave of the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! It is not my job to draw members back to the leave of the debate.

Mr Robert Furolo: So it was okay for him.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. It is not my job to interrupt speakers. Any member can ask for clarification, which the Minister has done, and I have asked the member for Keira to direct his comments to the leave of the bill and not to other matters that are before this House.

Mr RYAN PARK: Mr Acting-Speaker, because you are a good moderate I am happy to oblige. That is also true for the Minister for Ageing; the rest I am not so worried about.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Keira will be heard in silence.

Mr RYAN PARK: The overview of the bill is to establish a NSW Jobs Commission to inquire into and advise on matters affecting jobs growth and retention, particularly in regional areas. I come from a regional area, as does the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour, communities where this commission would be able to inquire into programs, the way in which jobs and industries are changing, and how governments can play a role in job creation. The Illawarra has suffered a significant downturn in its manufacturing industries, resulting in the loss of approximately 1,000 jobs. When the Deputy Premier, Leader of The Nationals, spoke 30 minutes ago to this bill he referred to the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund. One would think that is a reasonably important fund. It sounds good. However, the small problem with it is the downturn in the manufacturing industry with a loss of about 1,000 jobs. The Government's answer—

Mr Andrew Gee: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The member for Keira is straying well beyond the leave of the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! At this point I do not believe the member for Keira has done that.

Mr RYAN PARK: I am talking about the ability of the commission to inquire into and advise on matters affecting jobs growth and job retention in regional areas, which is part of the overview of the bill. Part of the Government's solution was to hand out \$5 million, but it forgot to tell the community something that the member for Wollongong and I very quickly realised, that is, that at the same time it scrapped the highly successful Illawarra Advantage Fund, a fund that helped to create 4,000 jobs over 10 years. We have one of the biggest downturns in our local manufacturing sector in the Illawarra and we have a \$5 million fund replacing a \$10 million fund.

Mr Andrew Gee: Point of order: I ask that the member for Keira direct his comments through the Chair. I feel that he is speaking to the gallery. My point of order is also relevance.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! All members should direct their remarks through the Chair.

Mr RYAN PARK: The Labor Opposition introduced this bill because at the moment this Government is delivering program after program that is designed to reduce the number of jobs in regional communities such as the Illawarra. We have a downturn in the local economy and the Opposition has been forced to introduce this bill to make sure that governments of all political persuasions focus on programs that create jobs in regional communities, such as the Illawarra. This bill is about making sure that we do not have pork-barrelling programs.

Mr Andrew Gee: Point of order: I hate to interrupt the old public servant in full flight, but my point of order is relevance. Once again, the member for Keira is straying well beyond the leave of the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I do not believe the member for Keira is straying necessarily from the bill at this point.

Mr RYAN PARK: The New South Wales Opposition is doing the work that a government and Government members are expected to do in regional communities by introducing this bill.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: The Nationals should hang their heads in shame for opposing a bill that is designed to encourage jobs in regional New South Wales by making sure that taxpayer-funded programs that are put in place are right and that they hit the ground. The people in the Illawarra, communities represented by the member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour and me, do not want to see pork-barrelling. They want to see governments introducing bills that support regional jobs.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I remind those in the public gallery that applause or any form of interjection is disorderly. Neither I nor the Speaker will hesitate to remove members of the public who interject. I would never want to do that but they are the rules. I know that people feel passionate about these particular debates, and they are entitled to do so.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Tanya Davies and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

RETAIL LEASES AMENDMENT (MEDIATION) BILL 2012

Second Reading

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

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

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

TRIBUTE TO JAN RICHARDS

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding service that Jan Richards, Manager of the Orange City Library and Central Western Libraries, has given to the State's public libraries network.
- (2) Notes that Ms Richards was admitted to the roll of life members of Public Libraries NSW in July 2012.
- (3) Congratulates Ms Richards on the excellent work she does locally and across the State and wishes her further success in her chosen profession.

ALEX SAID AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM SELECTION

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Orange Wanderers hockey player Alex Said on his selection in the Australian country men's hockey team.
- (2) Notes that Alex gained selection after contributing to New South Wales' second place at the Australian Country Championships.
- (3) Congratulates Alex, who had previously toured with the Under 21 team, on his selection and wishes him well playing for the Australian Country XI.

ORANGE PARAMEDICS LONG SERVICE MEDALS

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Orange paramedics Peter Wiggins, Maritsa Karamina and Trevor Nobbs on receiving their long service medals.
- (2) Notes that Trevor Nobbs has received a 20 years service clasp, Martisa Karamina a 15 years service clasp and Peter Wiggins a 12 years service clasp.
- (3) Thanks these officers for the service they provide to the Orange community, often in very challenging circumstances.

TRIBUTE TO ALAN ANDERSON

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Alan Anderson, of Wellington, on his 60 years of volunteer service to the NSW Rural Fire Services.
- (2) Thanks Mr Anderson for donating a portion of land on his property for the construction of the new Arthurville Brigade Station.
- (3) Notes that Mr Anderson has fought many fires, including major blazes in the Catombal and Goobang Ranges, and is still active as the contact officer for the brigade.

TRAMPOLINIST BEN McDERMOTT

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ben McDermott on winning gold in the under 11 years double mini trampoline event at the recent Australian Gymnastics Championships, for the second consecutive year.
- (2) Notes that Ben trains with the Ingleburn RSL Youth Club's Gymnastics and Trampoline Division and that he has been nominated for the *Macarthur Chronicle* Junior Sports Star Award.
- (3) Wishes Ben all the best for his competitive trampolining career and acknowledges Ben as a wonderful ambassador for his club, school and community.

NARELLAN MOTOR INN

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Paul and Sue-Lei Mingay of the Narellan Motor Inn on becoming finalists for the Greater Sydney Tourism Awards in the standard accommodation category for 2012.
- (2) Notes the involvement of the Narellan Motor Inn in the community, supporting many local businesses and associations, such as the Lifeline Macarthur, Youth Solutions, Macarthur Weddings and the local chambers of commerce.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to Paul and Sue-lei and the Narellan Motor Inn in the tourism awards and in their future endeavours.

CAMDEN RSL LADIES BOWLS TEAM

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Camden RSL ladies lawn bowls no.4 pennant team for making the State championships.
- (2) Notes the team finished at the top of the ladder in the Nepean District Zone play-off.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to the team in the State championship tournament.
- (4) Notes that these ladies are a wonderful example to their peers and to the local community.

CAMDEN SPORTING CLUBS DONATION

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges donation of netballs and other sporting equipment to an orphanage in Cambodia by the Camden and District Netball Association.
- (2) Notes that the association's clubs all rallied together to donate balls, bibs, skipping ropes and uniforms.
- (3) Acknowledges that Debbie Morgan travelled to the orphanage earlier this year to deliver soccer equipment from the Narellan Rangers Soccer Club.
- (4) Congratulates the Camden and District Netball Association and the Narellan Rangers Soccer Club on their work for the orphanage.

NARELLAN JETS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Narellan Jets Junior Rugby Club on hosting the Masters of Rugby League Australia, with 36 teams participating.
- (2) Acknowledges the importance of such events within the community in keeping people active in sports and for promoting healthy lifestyles.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to the Narellan Jets in its future endeavours.

BATON TWIRLER JESS COLLESS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jess Colless, who will represent Australia at the 2012 Baton Twirling World Championships in Paris.
- (2) Notes that Jess has competed at every Champion of Champions event at both State and national levels in 2011.
- (3) Notes that Jess twirls with Sutherland Shire Twirling Academy and she teaches and trains with Platinum Baton Twirling in Mount Annan.
- (4) Extends its best wishes to Jess for the championships and in her future baton twirling career.

SOCCER PLAYERS SAVANNA GREENWOOD AND ROSIE GALEA

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Savanna Greenwood and Rosie Galea on their selection to the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association soccer team to compete in the Australian Championships in Darwin.
- (2) Notes that Savanna attends Mawarra Public School and will attend Westfields Sports High School next year, joining the soccer program.
- (3) Notes that Rosie attends Cobbitty Public School.
- (4) Acknowledges that Rosie and Savanna are members of the Under-12 Macarthur Rams girls team and wonderful role models for their school, club and community.
- (5) Extends its best wishes to Rosie, Savanna and their team at the championships.

PETER DURRINGTON FUNDRAISING EFFORT

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Peter Durrington on his successful completion of Dry July and for raising \$18,150.
- (2) Acknowledges that Mr Durrington was motivated to raise funds after a friend, Mr Scott Tully, was diagnosed with cancer.
- (3) Acknowledges that Mr Durrington's employer, Australian Wool Handlers, donated \$8,000.

NARELLAN CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the staff and volunteers of Narellan Congregational Community Services on their wonderful work with the elderly.
- (2) Notes the importance of linking isolated and lonely elderly with a service that unites and encourages socialising and developing new skills.
- (3) Encourages the staff and team of volunteers of Narellan Congregational Community Services to keep up the level of care and service to the local community.

DANCER LAUREN DEEGENAARS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lauren Deegenaaars, a year 10 student at Wingham High School, on gaining a place at the prestigious Brent Street Dance Academy in Sydney.
- (2) Notes that Lauren and her mother, Annette, will move to Sydney in 2013 so that Lauren can commence study at the academy and that Lauren will undertake her Higher School Certificate studies by distance education.
- (3) Notes that Lauren has been dancing since the age of four and attends the Sherrienne Christie Dance and Talent Academy in Taree.

NARELLE SAVILLE EDUCATION WEEK HONOUR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Narelle Saville on being recognised for her hard work and dedication with an Education Week honour.
- (2) Notes that Narelle works at Wingham Brush Public School as an administration officer and was recognised for her excellent customer service and efficient and effective management of school resources.

STEVEN REEVE EDUCATION WEEK HONOUR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Steven Reeve on being recognised for his hard work and dedication with an Education Week honour.
- (2) Notes that Steven is employed at Wingham Brush Public School as a maintenance officer and was recognised for his enthusiastic support in all school activities.

COUNCILLOR EDDIE LOFTUS CIVIC SERVICE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Councillor Eddie Loftus for his service in local government and in particular to the Greater Taree City Council.
- (2) Notes that Councillor Loftus is retiring from the council at the local government elections in September 2012.
- (3) Notes that Councillor Loftus is a former mayor of Taree.

COUNCILLOR MAL MARKS CIVIC SERVICE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Councillor Mal Marks for his outstanding service in local government and in particular to the Greater Taree City Council.
- (2) Notes that Councillor Marks is retiring from the council at the local government elections in September 2012.
- (3) Notes that Cr Marks has served on Taree Council for the past seventeen years and during his last term in office served on the Access Committee and on the Traffic Committee.

SIR LESLIE HOOKER AWARD WINNER AMANDA TATE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Amanda Tate for winning the prestigious Sir Leslie Hooker Award in recognition of her outstanding achievements and success in real estate.
- (2) Notes that Amanda Tate is the owner of the Taree LJ Hooker franchise.
- (3) Notes that the citation for the award is for Amanda's business skills in establishing one of the group's most successful franchises.
- (4) Notes that LJ Hooker Taree also received the award for Top Community Relationship 2012.

MANNING VALLEY RIFLE CLUB AWARDS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the members of the Manning Valley Rifle Club who attended the annual awards presentations.
- (2) Notes that Mark Boyle is the 2012 Club Champion.
- (3) Notes that Ron Nutt is the 2012 hunting class champion.
- (4) Notes that Joshua Becroft is the junior champion.
- (5) Notes that the Beryl Heath Memorial Trophy for the most successful shooter was won by Janeane Barlin in both the hunting and the target classes.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT IRENA CASHMAN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Irena Cashman on being recognised as an outstanding student at the Regional Directors Awards which were part of the Education Week celebrations.
- (2) Notes that Irena attends Pacific Palms Public School and received her award for excellence in student achievement in primary school.
- (3) Notes that Irena is a keen sportsperson who is learning to sail on Wallis Lake with the Coomba Aquatic Club.

SIKH COMMUNITY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Offers prayers and condolences to the people of the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in the USA following the murders and shootings of 5 August 2012.
- (2) Commends the Sikh people within the East Hills electorate for their contribution to the community.
- (3) Urges people of all cultural and religious backgrounds to reach out to one another in the spirit of peace and harmony.
- (4) Wishes peace and prosperity to all the Sikh people throughout Australia.

ALMA MYOTT 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Revesby centenarian, Mrs Alma Myott who turned 100 on 10 August 2012.
- (2) Recognises the excellent work of the management, staff and volunteers at Beechwood Aged Care for its outstanding service to the aged.
- (3) Acknowledges the family and friends of Mrs Myott for giving their mother, grandmother and great-grandmother a wonderful 100th birthday celebration.
- (4) Wishes Mrs Myott continued good health and many more birthdays.

IDA FITZGERALD 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Panania centenarian, Mrs Ida Fitzgerald who turned 100 on 11 August 2012.
- (2) Recognises and acknowledges the family and friends of Mrs Fitzgerald for giving their mother, grandmother and great grandmother a wonderful 100th birthday celebration.
- (3) Wishes Mrs Fitzgerald continued good health and many more birthdays.

BANKSTOWN EQUINE ART EXHIBITION

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Bankstown Harness Racing and Agricultural Society and the Bankstown Art Society on its inaugural equine art exhibition, "Our Racing Heritage".
- (2) Commends the Bankstown Paceway committee members for their efforts in hosting "Our Racing Heritage" as part of the 2012 Bankstown City Cup Carnival.
- (3) Encourages everyone to get behind harness racing and to support Bankstown Paceway.
- (4) Congratulates all exhibited artists and prize winners.

NANCY TAYLER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Padstow Heights centenarian, Mrs Nancy Tayler who turned 100 on 6 August 2012.
- (2) Recognises the excellent work of the management, staff and volunteers at Southaven Nursing Home for their outstanding service to the aged.
- (3) Acknowledges the family and friends of Mrs Tayler for giving their mother, grandmother and great grandmother a wonderful 100th birthday celebration.
- (4) Wishes Mrs Tayler continued good health and many more birthdays.

PRIDE OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL NOMINEE NORM PERRY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Norm Perry for his 21 years of coaching special needs children in baseball.
- (2) Commends Bankstown City Council for providing Norm and the "Field of Dreams" much needed support.
- (3) Recognises the incredible efforts of all volunteers and community groups who raise funds to keep Norm's dream alive.
- (4) Wishes Mr Perry all the very best as a Pride of Australia Medal nominee.

PANANIA PUBLIC SCHOOL OLYMPATHON

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students, teachers, parents and citizens and the principal of the Panania Public School for staging the 2012 Panania Public School Olympathon.
- (2) Commends Julie Parsons and the Parents and Citizens Fundraising Committee for making the Olympathon a reality.
- (3) Recognises the tremendous effort of the school's parents and other supporters who attended the fundraiser.
- (4) Wishes everyone at Panania Public School all the very best for a successful future.

NEW SOUTH WALES CLUBS LIVE MUSIC VENUES

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that 15 August 2012 was the 35th anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley, the King of Rock and Roll.
- (2) Commends the Australian entertainment industry for keeping the memory of Elvis and many other performers alive.
- (3) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of NSW Clubs in providing venues for Australian artists to perform.

RIVERINA REGION QUALITY TEACHING AWARD RECIPIENT JANINE WEBSTER

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Janine Webster, a teacher at James Fallon High School, Albury, on receiving the Riverina Region Quality Teaching Award during Education Week.
- (2) Recognises her dedication and outstanding contribution to teaching.

COROWA SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Corowa South Public School on being nominated for the Westpac Education Award in the 2012 National Landcare Awards.
- (2) Recognises the school's dedication to environmental learning, including a project to provide a habitat for threatened bird species.

REVESBY LADIES GROUP

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Revesby Ladies Group for the excellent work it does throughout the community in raising funds for worthy causes.
- (2) Commends the Revesby Ladies Group for holding its fundraising morning tea for Bankstown Hospital on 22 August 2012.
- (3) Recognises the incredible efforts of all volunteers and community groups who raise funds within the East Hills electorate.
- (4) Extends best wishes to the Revesby Ladies Group as it continues its community work.

GOLDWELL RISING STARS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT SHIRALEE CUMMINS

Ms PRU GOWARD—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Shiralee Cummins, of Kaos Hair Goulburn, has been selected to participate in the Goldwell Rising Stars program, which celebrates and encourages up and coming creative hairdressers.
- (2) Congratulates Shiralee Cummins for being one of four New South Wales hairdressers accepted into this program.

FOOTBALLER TIM COENEN

Ms PRU GOWARD—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Tim Coenen, of Chevalier College, represented New South Wales in Australian Football at the Combined Independent Schools Australian School Championships in Adelaide.
- (2) Congratulates Tim for being selected in the Australian All Schools Australian Football team as a result of his excellent performance at the championships.

KOREAN LANGUAGE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION WINNER AMY CLARKE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Amy Clarke, from Hornsby North Public School, for winning an international Korean language public speaking competition held in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- (2) Notes that Amy competed against speakers from eleven countries including Germany, Malaysia and Japan.
- (3) Wishes Amy all the best with her public speaking.

ROB SHARPE FUNDRAISING EFFORT

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Rob Sharpe, of Mt Colah, on completing the Gold Coast Airport Marathon in July and raising over \$2,000 for the KU Mobile preschool that operates at Mt Kuring-gai and Brooklyn.
- (2) Notes that Rob is a kindergarten teacher with KU Mobile and his motivation for the race was the thought of the happy young faces at the kindergarten.
- (3) Thanks Rob for all his hard work on his achievement and fund raising.

LOUISA MUNCEY FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Louisa Muncey, a year 12 student at Asquith Girls High School, for organising events to raise money for the Salvation Army's Couch Project.
- (2) Notes that Louisa organised a school version of the TV show "The Voice" with Viktoria Bolonina, a former student at Asquith Girls as a guest judge, and raised over \$1,000.
- (3) Thanks Louisa for her efforts in raising money and awareness of this project and wishes her every success for her upcoming Higher School Certificate.

SAILING CHAMPIONS LAUREN AND AIMEE GALLAWAY

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lauren and Aimee Gallaway for being the Hornsby PCYC sailing club's spring, summer and sprint champions.
- (2) Wishes Lauren and Aimee the best of luck with their sailing.

INGLIS EQUINE ART PRIZE FINALIST KASEY SEALY

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kasey Sealy for being chosen as a finalist in the international Inglis Equine Art Prize.
- (2) Notes Kasey's painting "Fractious at the Barrier" is being exhibited with 34 other works of art from four countries.
- (3) Wishes Kasey every success with his painting.

HORNSBY RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER KEN TURNIDGE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Ken Turnidge, of Galston, on his 57 years of loyal and dedicated service to the Rural Fire Service and to the community.
- (2) Notes that Ken is a life member of both the Galston and Cowan brigades and has made an important contribution across the Hornsby Shire.
- (3) Congratulates Ken on his outstanding achievement and thanks the Turnidge family for the sacrifices they have made to make this possible.

BARELLAN COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Barellan Branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA) for its 90 years of service to its community and to women in rural areas, which was celebrated on 15 August 2012.

- (2) Notes the efforts of the CWA to improve conditions for families and women generally through health centres, rest rooms and baby health centres.
- (3) Acknowledges the contribution made by the CWA members during World War II by making camouflage nets, socks and balaclavas.
- (4) Recognises the achievement of rural women who have contributed so much to the rural way of life and supports the work being done by country women to foster social networks in western New South Wales.

THARAWAL LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council on its flag raising ceremony at the Gibbergunyah facility in Picton.
- (2) Acknowledges the chief executive officer, Greg Bondar, and his team for their hard work.
- (3) Notes that this flag raising ceremony was in celebration of the International World's Indigenous People.

WOLLONDILLY RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS COLIN MILLER AND ROBERT BONNETT

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Colin Miller, who celebrates 72 years of service, and Robert Bonnett, who has 49 years of service, and notes they have dedicated most of their lives to Wollondilly's Rural Fire Service.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work, commitment and dedication of these two men to protecting the lives of those in Wollondilly and across the State.

WOLLONDILLY EDUCATION WEEK EVENTS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wollondilly schoolchildren who celebrated Education Week.
- (2) Acknowledges teachers, support staff, parents and the children who all provide support in Wollondilly through education.
- (3) Notes that Picton Public School and Appin Public School celebrated Education Week by having a "flash mob" and various other performances for the local community.

TRIBUTE TO CRAIG GIBBONS

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Sydney civil and structural engineer Craig Gibbons of Clontarf on his contribution to the profession as a bridge design engineer with the Department of Main Roads, the Road and Traffic Authority and Roads and Maritime Services.
- (2) Extends best wishes to him on celebrating his 60th birthday on 3 September 2012 and wishes him continued good health.

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL ENERGY EFFICIENCY AUDITS

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Canterbury City Council on conducting energy audits on its properties, to define energy saving initiatives.
- (2) Notes that this program could save the Council up to \$30,000 per year in energy costs.

CANTERBURY BOYS HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Thanks Canterbury Boys High School for hosting the national launch of the R U OK Foundation Youth Suicide Prevention Program on 9 August 2012.
- (2) Thanks Wendell Sailor, Anthony Albanese, Mark Butler and other guests for attending this important event.
- (3) Extends best wishes for the success of the program and its endeavours.

CANTERBURY YOUTH SHORT FILM AWARDS

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Canterbury City Council on introducing its inaugural Canterbury Youth Short Film Award as part of the National Year of Reading.
- (2) Notes that entries for this award are open to young people aged between 12 and 18 years.
- (3) Calls on the young people of Canterbury to get creative, enter the competition and produce works on the theme of books or reading.

AUSTRALIAN KOOKABURRA KIDS FOUNDATION INC.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Camp Kookaburra on the launch of the new foundation, Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation Inc.
- (2) Commends the work of Kookaburra Kids in supporting children who live in families affected by mental illness.
- (3) Acknowledges the support and contribution by patron John Brogden and commends Chief Executive Officer, Pam Brown, of Kookaburra Kids on their work in the Sutherland Shire.
- (4) Thanks Jessica Rowe, Peter Overton, Chris Bath and Jim Wilson for their advocacy of this organisation.

POINT CLARE PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION WEEK AWARDS

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the three members of Point Clare Public School who received awards at the Hunter/Central Coast Education Week Awards Ceremony.
- (2) Recognises the awards to: Linda Willer for selfless service; Bob Jeffrey for outstanding contribution to improving literacy skills; and Cheryl Barany for dedication in religious education.

JULIA DOUKAKIS AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA SELECTION

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 18 year old violinist, Julia Doukakis, of the Central Coast, on her selection as a member of the Australian Youth Orchestra.
- (2) Notes that Julia learnt to play the viola at the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music and was selected for the Australia Youth Orchestra against competition from tertiary qualified and masters qualified musicians up to the age of 25 years.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to Julia during her time with the orchestra.

VIETNAM VETERANS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Vietnam Veterans Day was commemorated on 18 August 2012.
- (2) Notes that the day was originally called Long Tan Day to commemorate that battle.
- (3) Notes that eighteen Australians lost their lives and 24 were wounded during the Long Tan battle.
- (4) Commends the Vietnam Veterans' Peacekeepers' and Peacemakers' Association of Australia, New South Wales Branch, for co-ordinating a Vietnam Veterans Day service at the Bankstown Sports Club.

NOVA EMPLOYMENT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the NOVA Employment Open Day was held in Bankstown on 9 August 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the important service NOVA Employment provides for people with a disability.
- (3) Commends the staff, clients, carers, employers and volunteers associated with NOVA Employment on their dedication to furthering equal employment opportunities for people with a disability.

BANKSTOWN WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE AND SUE MCCLELLAND

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Sue McClelland on her service at the Bankstown Women's Health Centre.
- (2) Notes that Ms McClelland has worked at Bankstown Women's Health Centre for 17 years, with 14 years as its manager.
- (3) Recognises the important contribution Ms McClelland has made by helping to co-ordinate various campaigns, including "It's time to talk", "Reclaim the night", "16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women", White Ribbon Day and International Women's Day.
- (4) Recognises the contribution that Bankstown Women's Health Centre makes to the community.

KU-RING-GAI LIONS CLUB COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the recipients of the 2012 Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai Community Service Awards:
 - (a) Fay Burrell for services to the community;
 - (b) Ross Pearson for services to the aged;
 - (c) Professor Martin Cooper for services to the arts;
 - (d) Beverley Honey for services to the disabled;
 - (e) Malcolm Moore for services to humanitarian aid;
 - (f) Lorraine Swalwell for services to youth;
 - (g) Meredith Breden, Greta Quan, Wylie Tam, Shirley Wells and Bronwyn Bevan for services to education;
 - (h) Fiona Mance for services to sport; and
 - (i) Rev. Dr. Manas Kumar Ghosh for services to multicultural integration.
- (2) Congratulates the Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai for holding its annual awards to recognise the valuable work of those who serve the community through volunteering.

AUSTRALIAN PARALYMPIC TEAM

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Wishes the very best of luck to our Australian Paralympics Games athletes competing in London from 29 August 2012.
- (2) Extends best wishes to the athletes competing from The Hills area: Andrew Pasterfield, Hannah Dodd, Kristy Pond, Stephanie Schweitzer and Rosemary Little.

CASTLE HILL RSL GYMNASTICS CLUB

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Castle Hill RSL Gymnastics Club on receiving the best Overall Club of the Year Award at the Gymnastics NSW annual awards night on 12 August 2012.
- (2) Recognises the work that the club undertakes in the community by providing assistance to many sporting clubs and groups.

BLACK DOG RIDE

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Extends best wishes to all motorbike riders involved in the "Black Dog" ride to Alice Springs to raise awareness of depression.
- (2) Congratulates organiser Philip Wesch, of The Hills, for his part in removing the stigma associated with depression among men.

PREMIER'S TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT FIONA POLLOCK

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Fiona Pollock, a teacher at Carlingford High School, for being one of 25 teachers from NSW who received a 2012 Premier's Teacher Scholarship.
- (2) Wishes Fiona well as she prepares to travel and visit universities, schools, libraries, theatres and literary sites around the world that will be relevant to the teaching of English in the NSW curriculum.

CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates year 12 art students at Castle Hill High School on their preparations to display their major works in a three day visual arts exhibition from 28 August 2012.
- (2) Extends best wishes to all these students in the lead up to their final examination.

NSW SURF LIFESAVER OF THE YEAR ANDY CROSS

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates South Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club's chief instructor Andy Cross on being named 2012 NSW Surf Lifesaver of the Year.
- (2) Recognises Andy Cross' contribution towards the safety of South Narrabeen Beach and the education of Pittwater's next generation of surf lifesavers.
- (3) Commends Andy Cross on his advocacy for surf lifesaving and his selfless interest in ensuring our beaches are safe and available for everyone to enjoy.

THE ENTRANCE NORTH DUNE PATH

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Coastcare and The Entrance North Progress Association on the completion of The Entrance North Dune Path.
- (2) Notes the support of The Entrance Lions Club in the completion of this project.

KBT URBAN FOOD FOREST

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the collaborative contribution of three job service providers—BreakThru People Solutions, Jobfind Centre Australia and The Salvation Army Employment Plus, together with Housing NSW, Samaritans, Tuggerah Lakes Community College, Youth Connections and The Entrance Lions Club, to the Urban Food Forest project at Killarney Vale, Bateau Bay and Tumby Umbi.
- (2) Acknowledges Ian Sutton for his leadership role in creating the thriving garden.
- (3) Congratulates program participants and the local community for the ongoing success of the community garden project.

THE ENTRANCE MARINE RESCUE

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the hard work and dedication of members and volunteers of Marine Rescue NSW.
- (2) Commends The Entrance unit for its commitment to local waterways.
- (3) Congratulates The Entrance unit of Marine Rescue NSW on the commissioning of its new rescue vessel "The Entrance 20" and the extensions to its facilities.

PALM GROVE OURIMBAH CREEK LANDCARE

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the ongoing hard work and dedication of the Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare members and volunteers.
- (2) Notes that the Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare project has been ongoing since 2000.
- (3) Congratulates Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare on successfully regenerating the native rainforest and returning an extensive variety of biodiversity to the area.

TEIGAN VAN ROOSMALEN PARALYMPIC GAMES SELECTION

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Teigan Van Roosmalen, of Bateau Bay, on her selection to represent Australia in swimming at the 2012 Paralympic Games.
- (2) Notes she will be competing in the 50m and 100m freestyle, the 200m individual medley and in the 100m breaststroke.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to Teigan for her success in London.

GEORGIE'S CAFE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mark and Judy Hackett on the 10 years of fine dining they have provided to the community through Georgie's Cafe at the Grafton Regional Art Gallery.
- (2) Acknowledges their commitment and dedication in providing a wonderful venue with excellent cuisine and their staff for the high level of customer service provided.

GRAFTON PROBUS CLUB THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Grafton Probus Club on celebrating its 30th anniversary.
- (2) Acknowledges the good work the club does in initiating projects for the senior community.
- (3) Pays tribute to the many members of the club and in particular to Mr Jack Lumley and Mr Athol Mulligan who were awarded life membership for their loyalty and support.
- (4) Congratulates Milestone Award recipients: Mr Tas Cameron, Mr Harry Layton and Mr Bill Skelly on their 20 years or greater membership; and Mr Stan Attewell, Mr Bill Marr, Mr Ron Timbs and Mr Neville Truer on their 25 years or greater membership.
- (5) Wishes the Grafton Probus Club continued success for the future.

TRIBUTE TO MRS JOAN NELSON

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Joan Nelson on her retirement as the publicity officer of the Grafton Women's Bowling Club.
- (2) Congratulates Mrs Nelson on holding this position for more than 20 years.
- (3) Acknowledges her dedication and endurance in having held this volunteer position for so many years.

TRIBUTE TO MRS NORMA THOMAS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Norma Thomas on her recent retirement as an Australia Post mail contractor.
- (2) Congratulates Mrs Thomas on holding this position for more than 30 years.
- (3) Acknowledges the level of dedication and professionalism over such a long period of time and wishes her well in her retirement.

MACLEAN ROTARY CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Rotary Club of Maclean on hosting its 58th changeover dinner.
- (2) Acknowledges the commitment and dedication of its past president, Daniel Butt; past vice president, Paul O'Halloran and all members of the outgoing executive.
- (3) Congratulates the incoming executive which is led by president, John King; vice president, Ken Ford; secretary, Greg Saul; treasurer, Ian Buddle; along with the other members of the executive.
- (4) Acknowledges the contribution made by the Rotary Club of Maclean and wishes it continued success in all its upcoming endeavours.

BENDIGO BANK, GRAFTON

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the tremendous work done by Mr Des Plunkett, the past manager of the South Grafton branch of the Bendigo Bank.
- (2) Congratulates the Bendigo Bank on its community spirit in providing community grants to the value of \$20,000 to extremely worthy groups from the community including Cowper Public School, Coutts Crossing Coronation Hall Inc, the Cowper Music Group, Copmanhurst Campdraft Club Inc, the Ulmarra Rural Fire Brigade, Glenreagh School of Arts Hall and the Clarence Valley Dragons Abreast Inc.
- (3) Wishes Mr Plunkett well on his retirement.

"REACH FOR THE STARS" SHOWCASE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of Showcase 2012 "Reach for the Stars" on providing an opportunity for primary and high school students to showcase their talents in all performing arts.
- (2) Notes that Showcase is a major event of the Lakeside Learning Community involving students from Irrawang High, and from Wirreanda, Medowie, Grahamstown and Irrawang Public Schools.
- (3) Commends the performers, back stage crew and staff for the wonderful production.

ATHELSTANE PUBLIC SCHOOL GRANDPARENTS DAY

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Athelstane Public School, Arncliffe, on hosting Grandparents Day on 14 June 2012 and commends all those involved in making the day a success.
- (2) Acknowledges that grandparents play an important role in family and community life.

ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL RON RATHBONE LOCAL HISTORY PRIZE

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that the Rockdale City Council Ron Rathbone Local History Prize is awarded to the author of the best piece of original research on the city of Rockdale.
- (2) Recognises that the Rockdale City Council Junior Ron Rathbone Local History Prize is awarded to both a primary school student and to a high school student who write an essay relating to the history of city of Rockdale.
- (3) Acknowledges the proud history of Rockdale and encourages local residents to learn as much as possible about one of Australia's oldest cities.

NEW SOUTH WALES RUGBY LEAGUE STATE OF ORIGIN TEAM

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ben Creagh, Trent Merrin, Brett Morris and Beau Scott on their contribution to the NSW rugby league team in the 2012 State of Origin series.
- (2) Recognises that the St George Illawarra Dragons is the local team of many residents in the Rockdale electorate and extends best wishes to the team for the remainder of the season.

ARNCLIFFE FREE ARTS FESTIVAL

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House acknowledges that the Arncliffe Community Centre has launched the inaugural Arncliffe Free Arts Festival 2012 and congratulates the community on a successful festival.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that Education Week was held from 30 July to 3 August 2012.
- (2) Notes that the theme for Education Week 2012 was Creating the Future.
- (3) Recognises that Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate the work of students, teachers, staff, volunteers and the broader school community.

ARNCLIFFE COMMUNITY CENTRE RUGBY LEAGUE CLINIC

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Arncliffe Community Centre on organising the rugby league clinic held on 11 July 2012 at Arncliffe Park for school-aged children during the school holidays.
- (2) Recognises the importance of positive role models for children in our local communities.
- (3) Notes that activities such as these promote co-operation, teamwork and healthy lifestyles.

SAINT MARK'S COPTIC CHURCH

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that Saint Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Arncliffe held a celebration for Saint Mary on Sunday 19 August 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the valuable contributions made by Father Yacoub Magdy, Father Augustinos Nada, and Father Jonathon Ishak to the church community.
- (3) Extends best wishes to Saint Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in all its activities and for many more successful celebrations.

TRIBUTE TO BEN HORNBY

Mr JOHN FLOWERS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ben Hornby, captain of the St George Illawarra Dragons, on his retirement at the conclusion of the 2012 season.
- (2) Acknowledges that Ben Hornby led the St George Illawarra Dragons to its first premiership in 2010 and is the current record holder for the most first grade games played.
- (3) Notes that Ben Hornby has proudly represented New South Wales and Australia during his 13 season career.
- (4) Extends its best wishes to Ben Hornby for his future endeavours.

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL FORUM ORGANISERS PETER HAYNES AND NYSSA SUCHANOW

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the work of Peter Haynes, Northern NSW Football community football manager, on the success of the inaugural women's forum on 25 July 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges and thanks, Ms Nyssa Suchanow, female participation officer Northern NSW Football, for her efforts in co-ordinating the event.
- (3) Wishes Mr Haynes and Ms Suchanow all the best with establishing and growing future women's forums as an annual event.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the importance of international students to the Australian economy and to the culture of our education system.
- (2) Congratulates Mr Ireneo Pelayo, an assistant professor at Mindanao State University in the Philippines, on graduating with a Master of Education at the University of Newcastle.
- (3) Notes Mr Pelayo was one of 60 international students who graduated at a recent special ceremony.
- (4) Congratulates Newcastle University on fostering and mentoring international students.

LAKE MACQUARIE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PLAN 2012-2015

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates the Lake Macquarie City Council on its efforts in developing its Aboriginal Community Plan 2012-2015.

HUNTER INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH MINDPLAY DRAMA COMPETITION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Hunter Institute of Mental Health on its efforts to raise awareness of various mental health issues, including running the MindPlay drama competition, which encourages year 11 drama students to put on plays addressing mental health issues.
- (2) Acknowledges the efforts of Lambton High School students in winning the MindPlay competition which is judged on the quality of the dramatic performance as well as and the play's accuracy in conveying the mental health issue of gender identity disorder.

LAMBTON-NEW LAMBTON LIONESSE CLUB

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work done in the local community by the Lioness Club of Lambton-New Lambton.
- (2) Congratulates the new executive of the club for 2012-2013, including: president, Laurel Leddy; secretary, Elizabeth McHugh; treasurer, Patricia McMahon; vice presidents, Suzanne Walker, Wanda Ritchie and Margaret James, and the directors.

HUNTER ACADEMY OF SPORT ATHLETES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Hunter Academy tennis and track and field talent development squads on their invitation to compete in the country championships at District Park in July 2012.
- (2) Recognises athletes: Georgia Rowan and Aiden Hampton, of Wallsend; Tim Bowman, of New Lambton; Dean Colligan, of Fletcher; and Daniel Mazzantini, of Cardiff, on their continued involvement in the track and field squad.

LIVEWIRE PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of the Starlight Children's Foundation, with the assistance of a NIB Foundation grant, in setting up and launching Livewire, a specialised space for teenage patients at John Hunter Children's Hospital.
- (2) Congratulates those involved for their efforts to create a safe, peer-oriented space for teenage patients.

ASTHMA RESEARCH

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates the University of Newcastle's Microbiology, Asthma and Airways Research Group on its asthma research, particularly in establishing a link between chronic bacterial infection and steroid-resistant asthma.

ANGLICAN CARE EXECUTIVE COLIN OSBORNE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates well known health executive, Colin Osborne, on joining the aged care sector at Anglican Care.
- (2) Acknowledges the importance of Anglican Care as an aged care provider and wishes Mr Osborne and Anglican Care further success.

PATRICK BEINKE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Patrick Beinke on his photographic exhibition held at the Cornucopia Cafe, Gladesville Hospital.
- (2) Notes that the exhibition was opened on 17 August 2012 by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO, Governor of New South Wales.
- (3) Notes that the photographs depict Australian landscapes, seascapes and landmarks including his outback tour of the Northern Territory.

RETIREMENT OF DON BOLLARD

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS— That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Gladesville RSL Gymnastics founding head coach Don Bollard on his tireless work in coaching young Australians in gymnastics over a long career.
- (2) Notes that a gala farewell retirement dinner was held at the Gladesville RSL on the 3 August 2012 at which Mr Bollard was made an honorary citizen of the Lane Cove electorate.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to Mr Bollard in his retirement.

NORA HEYSEN FOUNDATION

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the friendship agreement signed between Hunters Hill Council and the Nora Heysen Foundation on 13 August 2012.
- (2) Notes that members of the Heysen family, including Dr Peter Heysen from South Australia, attended the signing of the friendship agreement.
- (3) Notes the agreement honours the legacy of artist Nora Heysen, an Archibald Prize winner and former Hunters Hill resident.

RYDE-HUNTERS HILL FLORA AND FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Society's contribution to bush care and the preservation of the local area.
- (2) Notes that the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Society will hold an afternoon of walks and social events on 1 September 2012 in the Field of Mars Reserve to celebrate spring.
- (3) Notes that the day will be family orientated fun in the heart of Sydney to celebrate the environment.

HOCKEY PLAYER SIMON ORCHARD

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Australian Men's Hockey Team for its success at the 2012 London Olympic Games.
- (2) Congratulates Simon Orchard on receiving the bronze medal in hockey.
- (3) Wishes Simon the best for the future in his sporting endeavours.

TRIATHLETE BRENDAN SEXTON

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Brendan Sexton on his efforts at the 2012 London Olympic Games, finishing 35th in the triathlon in his Olympic debut.
- (2) Acknowledges Brendan's intention to compete at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

BROCK LAMB SCHOOLBOYS UNDER-15 RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM SELECTION

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Brock Lamb on his selection in the Australian schoolboys under-15 representative rugby league team.
- (2) Extends best wishes to Brock Lamb and the Australian schoolboys under-15 representative rugby league team in their future endeavours.

MAITLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Maitland Neighbourhood Centre for its work with marginalised people to help to achieve social equality and to build a sense of community.
- (2) Thanks the centre manager Naomi Rees and community worker Nicole Cooney for their efforts, especially in the Woodberry area.
- (3) Encourages the community to continue supporting the Maitland Neighbourhood Centre.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE SMITH

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the contribution of Bruce Smith, Maitland Local Court Registrar, in a 41-year career in the New South Wales court system.
- (2) Extends its best wishes to Mr Smith in his retirement and future endeavours.

THE BLOCK WINNERS BRAD CRANFIELD AND LARA WELHAM

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the success of Brad Cranfield and Lara Welham, of East Maitland, in winning the finale of *The Block*.
- (2) Extends its best wishes to Brad Cranfield and Lara Welham in their future endeavours.

MASTERCHEF 2012 WINNER ANDY ALLEN

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the efforts of Andy Allen, of East Maitland, in winning MasterChef 2012.
- (2) Extends its best wishes Mr Allen in his future culinary and sporting endeavours.

LIFELINE HUNTER STEEL MAGNOLIA AWARD RECIPIENT SAMANTHA MEYN

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Samantha Meyn on her receipt of the Steel Magnolia Award on establishing "Harry's House".
- (2) Commends Mrs Meyn for her tireless effort in supporting families battling paediatric cancer.
- (3) Encourages the community to continue supporting Harry's House and families with paediatric cancer.

HUNTER REGION TRAINING AWARDS

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House congratulates the award winners at the Hunter Region Training Awards 2012, in particular:

- (a) Luke Derwin, of Rutherford, the apprentice of the year for the Hunter Region;
- (b) Joshua Allen, of Thornton, the best apprentice in the category of engineering fabrication;
- (c) James Worth, of Ashtonfield, the best apprentice in the category Competitive Manufacturing Certificate III;
- (d) Ross Lidbury, of Telarah, the award for lifelong learning;
- (e) Michael Wilson, of Largs, the best apprentice in the category of Mechanical Trade Certificate III; and
- (f) Tina Besant, of Aberglasslyn, the best apprentice in the category of Retail Certificate III.

MARDI-MANGROVE LINK PROJECT

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Gosford and Wyong Council on the completion of the \$120 million Mardi-Mangrove Link Project.
- (2) Recognises that this is a significant milestone towards securing the Central Coast's regional water supply.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM TAFE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS— That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges William (Bill) Tafe's contribution to New South Wales and Australia throughout his life-long membership of the Liberal Party.
- (2) Notes that Mr Tafe joined the Liberal Party at the earliest possible date permissible at the age of 16 on the 14 September 1947.
- (3) Commends Mr Tafe for his many years of service to the community through the Liberal Party.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [11.12 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Government for its surreptitious move to reduce funding to NSW Fire and Rescue, as a result of its exemptions from the workers compensation changes;
- (2) acknowledges the magnificent job firefighters do, putting their lives on the line on behalf of the community;
- (3) demands that the capacities of local fire teams are maintained and at the ready, even if it requires overtime; and
- (4) calls on the Government to stop these cuts to emergency services and fund this important safety resource appropriately.

I move this motion following the successful reordering of Notices of Motions (General Notices) No. 2196. This motion condemns the Government for the surreptitious move to reduce funding to NSW Fire and Rescue as a result of its exemption from the workers compensation changes. As I said in this place yesterday, it is of great concern to me as the member for Wollongong and to my community that emergency services are staffed appropriately and are paid accordingly, particularly as the predicted horror fire season draws closer. In my

electorate the F6 has already been closed in both directions along Maddens Plains due to fire. A terrible fire has broken out in Jamberoo, which has been testing the skills of the Rural Fire Service and National Parks and Wildlife officers. That is a frightening sign of things to come this summer.

We should acknowledge the outstanding and often life-threatening job our fires and emergency workers do day in and day out to keep our communities safe. They should be supported in every way possible. The O'Farrell Government, within eight months of its first term in office, introduced outrageous legislation aimed at our hardworking police, which threatened to slash entitlements for injured and disabled police, reduced classes at West Wollongong TAFE and threatened owner-driver protection rights. It also closed the NSW Fire and Rescue communication centre at Wollongong, relocating control outside the region and away from those with expert knowledge of the area. In June this year New South Wales firefighters were pushed to the brink—for the first time since 1956—over threats by this Coalition Government to workers compensation.

Premier O'Farrell did something that no Premier has done in more than 100 years: he shut down debate in this Parliament. Premier O'Farrell gagged debate in the upper House on the Government's industrial relations laws. Thousands of fires and emergency service workers, along with other public sector workers, marched on this place in protest and disbelief that such cuts were even being considered. I am proud to say that more than 3,000 of those protesters were from the Illawarra. But the fight continues to protect the entitlements that were fought hard for and won. Entitlements including sick leave, leave loading, parental leave, penalties for shift workers, regional allowances and flexible work arrangements are in the firing line. As I have said time and again, those opposite went to the last election promising the people of New South Wales that they had nothing to fear from the O'Farrell Government winning office. Recently there has been talk of closing fire stations—

[Interruption]

You should hang your head in shame, Murray-Darling.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Wollongong will desist from directing her comments across the table.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I point out to the member for Murray-Darling that two of those fire stations are in my electorate. The operational capacities of Warrawong and Dapto fire stations are under threat of closure. They are caught up in cost cutting of some \$70 million by the O'Farrell Government. Those cuts will mean that the existing system of off-duty firefighters being called in to cover for sick colleagues will be scrapped in favour of closing fire stations. The O'Farrell Government will be putting lives at risk to save paying overtime. I have met with Darin Sullivan, President of the Fire Brigade Employees' Union (NSW), on a number of occasions. He has assured me that community safety will be comprised should those two fire stations close. Those stations must remain online.

Taking steps to close fire stations demonstrates an archaic attitude to industrial relations and is a step back in time. This is being done to save a couple of dollars and put lives at risk. The community deserves to know that if they need the services of the fire brigade then those services will be provided in a prompt and timely manner. This Government is desperate to cut costs and to cut corners no matter what consequences flow. If the Government is not worried about the loss of jobs, why would the closure of two fire stations in Wollongong matter? But it matters to the people that rely on our firefighters. It matters to those of us who respect our firefighters and wonder where we would be without them. This is completely unacceptable.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.16 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to debate this motion. In doing so I will put the facts firmly on the table, which is something the member for Wollongong sadly neglected to do.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: My point of order is relevance.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Wollongong will resume her seat. The member for Hawkesbury has only just commenced his contribution.

Ms Noreen Hay: With reference to me.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: There is no question that the actions of the Fire Brigade Employees' Union on 21 June 2012 were utterly disgraceful. The actions its members took, which left scores of fire stations completely unstaffed, exposed the community to extreme risk. The Government and the Fire Services Commissioner have made their disappointment at that action clear, but the implication that the budget of NSW Fire and Rescue has been reduced as an act of revenge for that strike is utterly false. It beggars belief that those opposite would make that claim. Those opposite are aware that almost all government agencies have been asked to reduce their labour costs.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The Government notified agencies, including NSW Fire and Rescue, of this decision well before 21 June. Like other heads of department, the Fire Services Commissioner has been given the flexibility to decide how savings are to be made. I ask the member for Wollongong to withdraw her misleading allegation unreservedly. The Liberal-Nationals Government places a high value on our emergency services. Today crews from NSW Fire and Rescue and the NSW Rural Fire Service are working side-by-side to battle a fire at Warren. The Government recognises that firefighters are facing dangers that the rest of us would flee from. That is why this year the Government has invested an additional \$14.9 million in state-of-the-art personal protective clothing for our firefighters. Since coming to office the Government has also spent millions of dollars on new and upgraded fire stations, training centres and fire equipment.

The Government is investing in the facilities and equipment that firefighters need to carry out their vital work, but it is also firmly committed to reducing waste and cost blowouts. As those opposite know, the 2008 Auditor General's report found that NSW Fire and Rescue had the highest rate of sick leave of any government agency in this State. Further analysis shows that Fire and Rescue's rates of sick leave also eclipses that of every other comparable fire service in Australia and New Zealand. Since the Auditor General's review, sick leave levels have continued to escalate despite a commitment by the Fire Brigade Employees' Union to work with NSW Fire and Rescue. In fact, after accepting a pay rise in 2008, based on a commitment in 2008 to reduce overtime-related sick leave, the union banned any management interventions on this practice.

Outstandingly, in the 2011-12 financial year the average sick leave taken was close to 120 hours per firefighter. As I said, this rate is not simply the highest of any government agency in New South Wales; it is the highest rate of sick leave of any fire service in this country. Sick leave taking is strongly linked to an escalation in firefighter overtime. Usually, when a station falls below the minimum safe crewing level of four firefighters another firefighter must be called in on overtime to fill the absence. With sick leave reaching epidemic levels, the overtime bill blew out to \$24 million in the last financial year—more than \$7 million over budget. This is not sustainable. Fire and Rescue NSW initially proposed to reduce this bill through a number of measures. One measure proposed was to extend the practice of temporarily taking a small number of fire stations offline but only in locations where response times can be maintained by other nearby crews.

As members opposite would be well aware, these arrangements are not new; they have occurred for more than a century. For more than 100 years permanent fire stations have been taken offline whenever firefighters attend training information sessions, undertake hazard reduction burns and participate in a range of other activities. In fact, as the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services would be aware, Fire and Rescue NSW can routinely take up to 15 permanent stations offline in Sydney without unduly affecting response capacity. This strategy has been placed on hold for the time being by the commissioner to allow Fire and Rescue NSW to continue discussions in good faith with the Fire Brigade Employees Union. I am pleased to report that the Fire Brigade Employees Union has come forward with a range of alternative savings which it has recently provided to Fire and Rescue NSW for consideration.

However, while the Fire Brigade Employees Union State committee of management has endorsed these savings measures in principle, I am advised that they will also require the approval of its members at general meetings. I understand that the parties will next appear before the Industrial Relations Commission on 14 September 2012 to report back on their negotiations. At this time the Fire Brigade Employees Union will also report back on whether its members will commit to any of its proposed alternative savings measures. I hope that the negotiations will result in a good outcome for Fire and Rescue NSW, firefighters and the community. In the meantime I am pleased to advise that there has been a significant shift in the taking of sick leave since Commissioner Mullins started a concerted staff awareness campaign about the issue.

Fire and Rescue NSW advises that sick leave has now been trending down for some weeks, surprisingly. This demonstrates that firefighters are taking heed of the need to use sick leave responsibly. It also

shows that the entitlement culture that was fostered by the Fire Brigade Employees Union is not supported by the dedicated men and women who staff our fire stations. If the trend continues any future need to temporarily take fire stations offline would be limited. I urge members opposite to immediately cease their dishonest scare campaign and remove this motion.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [11.23 a.m.]: I speak to the motion on firefighting capacities, moved by my colleague the member for Wollongong. I thank her for moving this important matter and bringing it to the attention of the House. First, I acknowledge her continued and long-time support for her local fire service. I support the motion, which condemns the uncaring, incompetent O'Farrell Government for its surreptitious and sneaky move to reduce funding for Fire and Rescue NSW as a result of its exemptions from the heartless changes to workers compensation. Secondly, I join with the member for Wollongong in acknowledging the magnificent job firefighters do, putting their lives on the line on behalf of the community, and demanding that local fire team capacities are maintained and at the ready, even if it requires overtime.

The motion calls on the O'Farrell Government to stop its cuts to emergency services and fund this important safety resource appropriately. The O'Farrell Government is interested in one thing when it comes to workers' rights—slashing and burning. But the Government's gall in cutting back sick leave and overtime budgets for our hardworking firefighters—the same firefighters who run into danger and harm's way as everyone else runs out—is astounding. Our firefighters take on enormous risk in their jobs every day. Like the police, they put their lives on the line for our safety. When a firefighter runs into a burning building, surrounded by thick smoke and fire, it is a fact of life that their body is unfortunately at risk.

Firefighters do their job knowing full well that their health may suffer adverse risk. That is why they need their full sick leave entitlements. How can we expect our firefighters to risk their lives and limbs and then not give back to them properly when there is a problem? What a mean-spirited Government and an abuse of power. The temporary shutdown of fire stations under this new regime is completely unworkable. I have spoken to local firefighters who service my electorate of Cabramatta and they are ropeable. Shutting down a whole station because one person is sick defies belief. It leaves the potential for areas to be at risk, and we can see from the warm weather this week that summer and the fire season are just around the corner.

There are two primary concerns here: the health and wellbeing of our firefighters and the safety of our community. A good government would compromise neither, but that is exactly what the Premier and his heartless Government are doing—putting lives at risk and hurting Fire and Rescue NSW officers. The Government is pushing the line that there are very "high levels of sick leave" and that is why some stations have to be taken offline. As I said, I am sure any firefighter will tell you that there is good reason for firefighters taking sick leave. Taking stations offline as we begin summer beggars belief. The firefighters of the Illawarra region are taking a stand, just like at their protest when they gave Parliament House a deserved wash down. That day was described by this heartless Premier as "pointless". I call on the O'Farrell Government to commit to stopping the cuts to emergency services. The Premier should not put people's lives at risk to save a buck.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI (Strathfield) [11.26 a.m.]: I reject paragraphs (1), (3) and (4) of the motion moved by the member for Wollongong. However, I wholeheartedly endorse and support paragraph (2), which acknowledges the magnificent job that firefighters do, putting their lives on the line on behalf of the community. I had a significant amount of work with Fire and Rescue NSW in a former life, as well as being the military representative on the district emergency management committees of two areas in Sydney. My experience of Fire and Rescue NSW is that it is one of the most professional services with which I have had the pleasure to work. Only last Friday night I was with emergency services, including Fire and Rescue NSW, on an operation. I was again reminded of their commitment and dedication to their work. After 16 years in government members opposite still do not understand how emergency services work. The emergency services comprise a network of capability.

Members opposite should listen to this, instead of moving motions in the House that are misleading. There is a network of capability: as with many other uniform services, the capabilities of that network vary day by day. It is well known within emergency services that capabilities vary day by day because of sick leave, training and all sorts of other activities. Every day the first thing the operational managers—including those in Fire and Rescue NSW—do is balance the resources that are available on a particular day with the coverage that is required in the area to which they provide emergency services. Essentially, every day they deploy resources to manage risk. Nothing that we have suggested in any way, shape or form takes away from that operational requirement. It does not reduce it; it happens every day.

For example, members opposite would be aware that on a number of occasions these sorts of things have happened. On 8 January 2009 the fire stations at Cranebrook, Penrith, Castle Hill, Gladesville, Smithfield and Baulkham Hills were taken offline temporarily so that firefighters could attend training and station forums. I understand that on that occasion the responsible duty commander coordinated resources for the area, with the help of a 000 communication centre. For example, Castle Hill Fire Station was covered by a move up of a rescue unit from the nearest rescue station, Blacktown. These arrangements were successful. There have been many other occasions on which similar arrangements have come into play. The risk has been managed and there has been little exposure to the community. Again, on 11 June 2009, the Blacktown, Schofields, St Marys, Eastwood, Guildford and Bonnyrigg Heights fire stations were temporarily taken off line. Once again the responsible duty commander coordinated resources for the affected area with the supervisors of the triple-zero communications centres. On both of those occasions, as well as many others, the fire stations were taken off line without incident.

Mr Nick Lalich: Lucky.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Lucky? I do not think it is luck at all.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Cabramatta to order.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: It is due to the professional training and commitment and dedication of the operational managers of Fire and Rescue NSW. We should be supporting them doing their job. It is not luck.

Mr Nick Lalich: It is luck.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Cabramatta to order for the second time.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI: We provide training opportunities. That is the difference between the Government and the Opposition. The member opposite needs to hone up on his understanding of emergency services. This Government is very pleased that the firefighters are responding to the challenge of reducing sick leave. We value the work of our firefighters and, unlike those opposite, we are confident that they will take heed of the need to access sick leave for the right reasons. I commend the firefighters for the wonderful work they do for our community.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [11.30 a.m.], in reply: I acknowledge and appreciate the contributions to debate on the motion by the member for Cabramatta and the member for Strathfield. As always, the member for Cabramatta supported the firefighters in his electorate and throughout New South Wales. The member for Strathfield acknowledged the great work done by the firefighters before he went off on a tangent about misleading motions. He then went on to talk about the relocation of firefighters. As to the Government's attack puppy, the member for Hawkesbury would not know the truth if it stood up and hit him in the face.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The member for Wollongong is making imputations of improper motives towards other members of the House.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! If that was the worst thing I heard in this House I would be shocked. I encourage all members to remember that this is the nation's oldest Parliament and they should behave accordingly.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I have to say that nothing is new. The plan of those opposite to save money is to attack the sick leave entitlements of people who fight fires on our behalf. Firefighters keep us alive, safe and well, but the plan of those opposite is to attack their sick leave. Why would they take sick leave? Perhaps they have been fighting a bushfire, been affected by smoke or debris and become sick. The response of members opposite is to say, "Come to work". Let me deal with some of the comments of the member for Strathfield, who spoke about the reorganisation of firefighters. I have been the member for Wollongong for nine years and I have been a resident of that city since the day I arrived in this country many years ago, and I have yet to see a time when Liberal conservatives do not blame the workers for their injuries, for taking sick leave or for any of their needs.

[Interruption]

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I again warn visitors in the public gallery not to interrupt proceedings.

Ms NOREEN HAY: One member opposite said, "Many of us were employers." Of course they were; that explains a lot. For a Government member to call this motion misleading is a joke. No-one believes that this is a misleading motion. Everyone knows the grubby plans of members opposite when it comes to workers' entitlements. All I am going to say about the member for Hawkesbury is that we heard nothing new from him. One would think that the members opposite, having seen the media coverage on this issue, would hang their heads in shame. Some of them represent electorates in which many workers—including firefighters and their families—reside. Those constituents will not be impressed by what those opposite have to say about their working entitlements.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 21

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

Noes, 57

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

Pair

Mr Richard Amery

Mr George Souris

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

[*Interruption*]

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I inform visitors in the public gallery that this is their last warning. I will have them removed if they continue to interrupt the proceedings.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Postponement of Business**

General Business item No. 390 postponed on motion by Mr Craig Baumann.

PORT KEMBLA

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [11.46 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the former Government and the Port Kembla Port Corporation on their vision for the port and the recent launch of the land reclamation project, injecting hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to establish a world-class facility;
- (2) notes the hundreds of additional jobs in the local area created particularly through the car imports facility at the port of Port Kembla; and
- (3) calls on the Government to ensure that the port of Port Kembla remains in public ownership with continued investment.

I acknowledge the presence of Port Kembla community representatives in the gallery who have travelled here today to listen to the debate. It is unfortunate that following the division on the previous motion before the House the member for Terrigal incited visitors in the gallery to interject. I apologise to them on behalf of the Parliament because they were then given a warning by the Acting-Speaker. I am sure he was not aware at the time of the comments by the member for Terrigal. I have said a great deal in this Parliament about the retention of the port in public ownership and the reasons for doing so, including the need to protect jobs and investment to maintain those jobs. It is interesting that this motion is before the House today.

Since I raised this matter in a private member's statement and lodged this notice of motion in September 2011 much has been said by members of the Government. I know that today members of the Government will tell the people of the Illawarra and Wollongong that the sale of our port represents a great deal for them. They will tell us that we will have wonderful opportunities once they sell off our port. If that is true, why did they not say that during the run-up to the election? When I said in the *Illawarra Mercury* that the Coalition would sell the port if it won the election, did they say, "Yes we will because it is going to be fantastic for the people of the Illawarra"? No, they did not. They said, "Those are Noreen Hay and Labor lies." They said it was fear tactics by the member for Wollongong.

Mr Ryan Park: Scaremongering.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Scaremongering, as the member for Keira says. Surprise, surprise, they get in Government and what do we find? Did they tell the truth? Did they turn around and say that they want to privatise the port? Of course they did. They did not once tell the truth in the run-up to the election. The Government members will tell the community that we have no need to worry because, after all, they will give us \$100 million in infrastructure. Do they know how many roads can be built with \$100 million? Do they know how much infrastructure throughout the entire Illawarra region can be built with \$100 million? They are going to sell the port for \$500 million. The port infrastructure employs thousands of people directly and indirectly. As I have told the Treasurer, we can count in the Illawarra. He is going to buy us off with \$100 million and take \$400 million to pay for projects promised elsewhere. I do not think that is going to happen—not without an argument.

Basically they are saying, "We manage your property on your behalf." And they do because the public owns the port. They say, "We will sell it without your consent. But don't worry, you are going to get 10 per cent of the sale proceeds. However, if you complain, we threaten not to give you that 10 per cent and we will keep that as well." They also will tell us about the wonderful new owners of our property. Would this type of transaction happen anywhere else? I have been a union official in the Illawarra for 13 years and I have a great deal of experience with employment guarantees and privatisation of commodities. My experience is that they look great on paper—jobs will be guaranteed for about two years. But a worker who leaves or retires will not be replaced, which increases the workload of those still employed. This attrition continues until those who are left cannot cope anymore and they leave. In desperation, the new employees will do whatever is necessary to keep their jobs because jobs will be rare. The only beneficiaries will be the private sector.

I acknowledge Wollongong City Council and Shellharbour City Council, which both carried resolutions opposing the sale of the port in Port Kembla because they can see the poor economics of this decision for our region. Everyone can see it. Land that previously was identified for increased car parking for Port Kembla rail users has been handed over by RailCorp to the Port Kembla Port Corporation. That land has now become part of the package to be sold off. All the rail lines that were handed over to the Port Kembla Port Corporation will be part of the package. This means more publicly owned land is to be sold. In January 2011 the Labor Government welcomed the news that plans for a \$10 million car storage facility at Kembla Grange were to be approved by an independent planning panel and had received a green light from authorities. In February 2011 I was reported in the *Illawarra Mercury* as saying I feared the impact on the region should the Liberal-Nationals romp into power. It was stated in the article:

"If they have such an overwhelming majority they can do whatever they want and so where are the checks and balances coming from?" she said. "I want their clear policy for the Illawarra."

They still have not had indicated a clear policy, just a lot of fairytale talk. Mr Andrew Stoner, now Deputy Premier, said, "Labor lies that we will sell the port. We have no intention of selling the port." Here we are today and the decision to sell the port has been made. Jobs will be lost: our future is uncertain. This is not good enough and the community is not prepared to accept it.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [11.53 a.m.]: I thank the member for Wollongong for raising this important issue. There is one critical flaw in her argument: the port will not be sold; it will be leased. The proposal is for a lease, not a sell-off. I do not know how many times I need to say it, but the member for Wollongong obviously cannot read or does not listen. Many industries—copper, cars, biodiesel and coal—use the port of Port Kembla. The future of the port is rosy because of the increased amount of freight the port will manage in the future. Whatever agreements are made, the port's operating hours should be extended to 24 hours a day, which will increase employment.

Ms Noreen Hay: But you will cut overtime and sick leave first.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Wollongong will have an opportunity to speak in reply to the motion. I remind the member that she is on two calls to order.

Mr LEE EVANS: I acknowledge the calls of the member for Wollongong for the port to remain in public ownership. The port will remain in public ownership with a long-term lease. The port's assets are essential to maintain financial viability into the future. As the member for Wollongong said, a percentage of the proceeds from the port will go directly to the Illawarra. This will increase jobs. The lease will not only provide improvements to infrastructure funding but also provide opportunities to enhance the port's operations. The port is a wonderful asset.

[*Interruption*]

Again, a visitor in the gallery interjects about the Government selling the port. It is not a sale, it is a lease. I do not know many times I have to say that. I cannot explain it any clearer: it is a lease. A lease is not a sale, just as a house that is leased is not sold. The industries that use the port include copper sulphate, cars, biodiesel and coal. By increasing the operating hours of the port to 24 hours a day the number of coal loaders off the coast will decrease and more jobs will be created. This simple change could more than double the productivity of the port and double or triple the current employment rate. No longer will dozens of ships be lingering off the coast on our horizon waiting to be unloaded. No longer will the port operators have to bear the significant expense of shutting down and starting up operations every day.

The cost of a ship to wait off the coast is \$35,000 per day. The ships do so because of the restricted capacity of the port and loading facilities. The removal of that one expense would encourage more businesses to use the port. The port is a fantastic facility in the Illawarra and an extension of operating times would be a boon for the area. The member for Wollongong notes in her motion that hundreds of additional jobs in the local area have been created particularly through the car imports facility at Port Kembla. In the future new management could improve the car imports facility so that the port can handle direct deliveries rather than cars being transported to Ingleburn. The motion calls on the Government to ensure that the port remains in public ownership with continued investment. The Government has done that. We have ensured that the port will remain in public hands through a lease.

[*Interruption*]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind visitors in the public gallery that they have been warned twice. If they continue to interject during parliamentary debate, I will ask them to leave the gallery.

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: I direct the attendants to remove from the public gallery the woman who is interjecting.

[*The person interjecting was removed by the attendants.*]

Mr LEE EVANS: I joined the member for Wollongong at the opening of the car imports facility. Biodiesel will be a major part of freight movements at the port facilities. The creation of biodiesel and the import of raw materials through the port will provide a great opportunity for increased employment in the Illawarra. As I have said, car freight is already a major part of the port's facilities.

Mr Ryan Park: A good Labor decision.

Mr LEE EVANS: The port has been there for a long time. I am not saying that it is solely the creation of this Government. The expansion of the copper sulphate business will be assured if more space and facilities are provided for loaders. This Government is seeking more investment from private enterprise, which will ensure the future of Port Kembla.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [12.00 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to speak on this motion as the shadow Minister for the Illawarra. This Government has broken many election promises that it made to the people of New South Wales, and this motion deals with yet another. When this issue was first raised with the then Leader of the Opposition and now Premier in 2009 he promised that the privatisation of Port Kembla port would occur only if the public was informed beforehand. We have heard nothing about this proposal. In fact, in March 2009 the now Premier said:

As long as we convince the public that what we're on about is in their interests and as long as we're upfront with them in advance of the election, they will give us a go.

How true. The only problem is that these people are in the gallery today because the Government was not up-front with them about the privatisation of the Port Kembla port facility. On 13 July 2011 the member for Kiama was reported in the *Illawarra Mercury* as saying:

The New South Wales Government has no plans to privatise Port Kembla Port Corporation.

On 4 August the Hon. Duncan Gay said in the other place:

I have no plans to privatise New South Wales ports.

The Hon. Andrew Stoner is quoted in the 2 February 2011 edition of the *Illawarra Mercury*, when these issues were being raised by the community and the local members—the member for Wollongong, the member for Keira and the member for Shellharbour—as saying:

This is just more fear and smear from Labor.

We know that none of it was smear. There were certainly fears, and they have been validated because this Government is now privatising the Port Kembla port. That is a huge breach of faith with the people of Port Kembla. Is it any wonder that the public is now so cynical about politicians? We have a Premier who promised so much, including that he would be open, transparent and honest with the people of New South Wales, and who had the audacity to say in 2009 that he would be up-front but who has now slunk into Parliament to flog a community asset to the detriment of the people of the Illawarra. I heard the member for Wollongong say that the people of Wollongong and the South Coast can count. I can confirm from my experience over the years that that is one thing they do very well.

We are talking about an asset that generates \$418 million each year for the local economy. What has this Government proposed? It says that it will provide an insulting one-off payment of \$100 million. That is an insult to the people of the Illawarra. It is also worth noting that that money will be spent in the Southern Highlands and

much further south than most people would consider to be the Illawarra. It will not help the local area. Members opposite can split hairs as much as they like about job guarantees and the difference between leasing and selling; the fact is that the facility will not be owned, operated or controlled by the New South Wales Government. We have seen what happens to the job guarantees that this Government offers—they come and they go. We also know what happens when it promises that there will be no forced redundancies. Time and again jobs have been cut, redundancies have been offered and people have left, and those who remain in employment are forced to do more with less. This is a disgrace and an insult to the people of the Illawarra. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! People in the public gallery have now been warned three times—twice by the Acting-Speaker and now by me. Any further demonstrations such as that and I will ask for the gallery to be cleared. I am sure you wish to stay to listen to the debate. Please do so according to the rules of the Parliament. That behaviour is unacceptable.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [12.05 p.m.]: It is always good to debate the best utilisation of government assets, but this debate needs an injection of honesty. Unfortunately, the full range of facts has not been presented. The people who were the kings of privatisation in government are now sitting opposite.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The Leader of the Opposition was heard in silence and he will remain silent.

Mr GARETH WARD: The Leader of the Opposition was a member of Cabinet when that privatisation was happening. He may have fought it, but he was a member of the Government that pursued that path. Do we still own State Lotteries? No, we do not; it is gone. What did the Labor Government do to the electricity industry? It demolished it. Members opposite talk about social justice and claim that they support government ownership. A Government that talked about social democracy was flogging off everything it could. Members opposite have a problem with the Government's arrangements for Port Kembla, which they completely misrepresented. A lease is not a sale. If I were to rent my home each week—

Ms Noreen Hay: Why didn't you say that prior to the election?

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Wollongong that she is on two calls to order. The Leader of the Opposition will apply the same courtesies that were extended to him.

Mr GARETH WARD: I listened to the contributions of members opposite in silence. If I were to lease my home I would not receive the equivalent of the sale price each week. Members opposite have misrepresented this process as a sale. I ask the member for Wollongong and the Leader of the Opposition to show me any document that proves the Government intends to sell the port. Will the Labor Party guarantee that if it were returned to the Treasury bench—hopefully not for a very long time—it would not sell the port? Members have offered no such guarantee today. The Government is delivering a 99-year lease. The Labor Party has a history of privatising government assets. Did the member for Wollongong or the Leader of the Opposition take the opportunity to say that a Labor Government would not privatise the port? No, they did not. They should be more honest. The Government's is delivering a lease that will generate \$500 million for Infrastructure NSW, \$100 million of which will be returned to the Illawarra. I am proud that the Government is investing some of that money in the region. This Government inherited a \$5.2 billion deficit, an infrastructure backlog—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: Everyone in this place knows there was no black hole—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr John Robertson: He is misleading—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat or he will be placed on a call to order. There is no point of order.

Mr GARETH WARD: The Leader of the Opposition has no credibility. He did not make a commitment today. He is a joke. The party that is supposedly the champion of social justice did not take the opportunity to offer a guarantee today. I want more investment in the Illawarra like the \$100 million that is being spent upgrading the hospital car park, the Princes Highway and train stations. We must invest in projects like that to generate jobs, business and economic activity.

Ms Noreen Hay: It is a mess. You haven't done anything yet.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Wollongong should accept my invitation to inspect the work now being done on the Princes Highway. I know that some people in the gallery are unhappy about this decision. However, we must stand up for every resident of New South Wales, not only the unionists. It is in our interests to ensure that we utilise government assets to the best of our ability. We will not give in to the people who are pulling the strings of members opposite—that is, the trade union bosses who preselect them and tell them what to do in this Parliament by remote control

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.09 p.m.]: I am glad that we now know the difference between a lease and a sale. I will be approximately 134 and my son will be 101 when the port is back in public hands. I am glad that the member for Heathcote and the member for Kiama have articulated that it is not really a sale. I look forward to having a good, hard look at the investment when I am 134. People in the gallery and those opposite must understand that the \$100 million is not new money—it is long gone. It is already in the budget. Opposition members know better than most the way Treasury plays these games: "Yes, you can have \$100 million, wink, wink." But \$25 million, \$30 million or \$40 million has already been allocated to the Princes Highway. The funding for the Wollongong Hospital car park upgrade is also part of it. The \$100 million is not new money. Why would we be so stupid as to believe that? I want everyone to understand the sums.

As the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Wollongong said, this asset contributes \$400-odd million a year to the economy but as a revenue source brings in approximately \$50 million. The people of the Illawarra are expected to sign up to a deal that delivers a one-off payment of \$100 million when we know that the infrastructure costs—such as extending Memorial Drive by a few kilometres—are in excess of \$105 million. We will get no extension of Memorial Drive, no full upgrade of Wollongong Hospital and no additional services and infrastructure; the money will be gone immediately. Will Government members explain to the people of the Illawarra and those in the gallery today how they can expect the Opposition to agree to a plan that will deliver an asset back into public ownership when we and our children are all long gone?

I am glad the difference between a lease and a sale has been clarified! That is important. We are expected to accept a deal involving an asset that currently generates \$50 million for the State's coffers and in excess of \$400 million for the local economy, and employs thousands of local people, directly and indirectly. The return on the deal is a one-off payment of \$100 million. But wait, there is more—that is not new money. It is already allocated to projects in the four-year budget. The Government has never said that we can bid for this money. That is because it is already in the budget cycle—it is the way conservatives work. Government members should not try to fool the Opposition with voodoo economics and claims that this is a great deal for the people of the Illawarra; it is not. I congratulate the member for Wollongong on raising this matter today.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.13 p.m.]: I support this motion and congratulate the member for Wollongong on standing up for the future of her community and the Illawarra region. This is a story of two governments: one that saw the merits of public investment to secure the jobs of hardworking mums and dads; and another that I fear only wants to see the numbers, irrespective of the cost to the community. The former Government made a continued commitment to and investment in Port Kembla to create a state-of-the-art stevedoring facility, and in the process created and guaranteed thousands of jobs for the people of the Illawarra. The latter Government views this vital piece of infrastructure only as a potential liability and as an asset only if sold to private interests.

For the 16 years the Labor Government was in office it did not once fail to appreciate the significance of Port Kembla to the people of the Illawarra. In fact, not only did it recognise its significance but also it invested in Port Kembla to make sure it reached its potential. As the member for Wollongong pointed out, the former Government not only earmarked investment for Wollongong but also ensured it played a part in the State's infrastructure growth. In 2003 the Carr Government announced plans to move shipping activity from Sydney Harbour to Port Kembla. In October 2005 the Labor Government then implemented plans to relocate car imports from Sydney's Glebe Island to Port Kembla. The significance of such strategic policy was realised in 2010, when Treasury released trade figures from June 2010 to December 2010 showing that Port Kembla was on target to break records for the amount of goods moved at the precinct.

The member for Wollongong has been a tireless advocate for the importance of Port Kembla and its significance to her community. The member for Wollongong has fought for continued investment and the inclusion of Port Kembla in the industrial and economic strategy plans for New South Wales. With the change of government in the March 2011 elections, the member for Wollongong wants to ensure that the O'Farrell

Government upholds the current improvement projects earmarked for Port Kembla, including the creation of a permanent tug fleet worth about \$13 million. More importantly, this significant piece of economic and industrial infrastructure must remain in the hands of government for the future of the Illawarra community. I commend the motion.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [12.16 p.m.]: I seek leave to speak to the motion.

Leave not granted.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.16 p.m.], by leave: On behalf of The Greens I congratulate the member for Wollongong on moving this motion, which I support. However, I will highlight some of the contradictions and inconsistencies that have characterised this debate. It is a fact that the community does not support privatisation, corporatisation, contestability—there are many buzzwords. The people in the gallery today, progressive elements in the trade union movement and members of broader community do not support privatisation. So it is unfortunate that the leaders of the Australian Labor Party and the Coalition parties support this approach. For 16 years New South Wales Labor went on a privatisation spree—whether it was NSW Lotteries, which was a ridiculous privatisation, waste services or a range of other sales.

The Labor leadership fought tooth and nail against rank-and-file union members and the broad majority of the community to privatise electricity. So it is pretty rich for Opposition members now to oppose the privatisation of Port Kembla. There is no consistency; it is pure opportunism. The Labor logic is the same as that of the economic rationalists. We see that expressed both in the Coalition and among certain elements of the Labor Party, which unfortunately seem to dominate the Opposition's approach to Treasury. That should not be. The Leader of the Opposition does not like that because it highlights the contradictions in the Labor Party, where the rank and file and the union leadership do not support privatisation.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The community does not support privatisation but the Labor Party does. On that basis the hypocrisy is clear. But the Coalition is running the same line. As the member for Keira said, it is clear that this deal will not return the type of investment to the community that the spin claims it will. I pay credit to the member for Wollongong for her long-term defence of the Illawarra and support for her electorate. Members should support this motion. It is time that this privatisation/corporatisation approach, which particularly affects amenities for those in rural and regional areas, was stopped. The Labor Party has made mistakes in the past but it is the clear position of the Coalition to support this type of agenda. The Greens reject it. I am pleased that the Labor Party has acknowledged that this is not the way forward.

As the member for Balmain, I have seen significant changes in the working harbour and on the waterfront in my electorate. My mother was born and bred in Liverpool, England. Her father was a dock worker his entire working life. When my parents moved to Australia my father worked as a fitter in the Balmain shipyards. Over time there have been significant changes and a lot has been taken from our community—heritage and jobs, for example. We must retain what is left of the working harbour. We should also ensure that harbour areas are opened to the community wherever possible. I thank the member for Wollongong for moving the motion. I also thank the community and those in the trade union movement who recognise that keeping such an important strategic asset in public hands is the best way to ensure that jobs, conditions and history are defended into the future.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.20 p.m.], in reply: I begin by thanking the Leader of the Opposition and shadow Minister for the Illawarra for his contribution to this debate. He well knows the Labor Government's track record in relation to Port Kembla and its investment. I also thank the member for Keira for his contribution to this debate. The member for Keira cares about truth. He also cares about our port, jobs, hospitals and so on. I thank the member for Fairfield. He talked about the importance of investment and I could not agree with him more. Unfortunately, leave was not granted to the member for Shellharbour to make a contribution to this debate. I thank the member for Balmain for his contribution, which I was not quite sure about. However, I appreciate the congratulations he offered and I acknowledge that he supports retaining Port Kembla in public ownership.

Members representing the electorates of Kiama and Heathcote also contributed to the debate. During the election campaign the member for Kiama said zilch about how great leading the port would be. Members

know that "lease" is code for "sale". Does anyone who buys a 99-year lease for something not consider it to be theirs? Those opposite think people are stupid. The people of this State understand what they are about. I could give umpteen examples of announcements, commitments, investments and deliveries made by the former Labor Government derived not only from the *Hansard* or from records of Ministers who have visited the region but from the *Illawarra Mercury*. I can give umpteen examples of hundreds of millions of dollars in funding allocated by the former Labor Government and the congratulations it received for investing in an area where unemployment is higher than the State and national averages.

The attitude of the O'Farrell Government towards jobs in the Illawarra is to put more workers at risk. I do not doubt that the member for Kiama could take me to see part of the Princes Highway that is under construction. But I wonder in whose electorate that work is occurring. The people of this State can see the little trade-offs that are being done in order to get the member for Kiama and the member for Heathcote to agree to everything the O'Farrell Government does—even if it is negative and bad for the people of the Illawarra. The member for Kiama did not tell the people of the Illawarra that he would support this deal before he was elected. He did not stand up and say, "Vote for me to be the member for Kiama because I want to sell your port, I want to stop the lifts at Unanderra railway station and I do not want trolley blocks fixed at Wollongong Hospital." No, he did not tell the voters that.

I am not sure where the head of the member for Heathcote is at most of the time. I know he knows the way to the port because he regularly attends functions there. He even has the cheek to gloat at those functions. He takes credit for things that those opposite did not put one cent towards yet there is a Coalition Minister's name inscribed on the plaque. The member for Heathcote has taken credit for hundreds of millions of dollars invested by the former Government when all along the O'Farrell Government was looking to privatise the port and put jobs at risk. Those opposite are dishonest; they did not reveal their intentions to the people of the Illawarra in the lead-up to the election. Those opposite purport to represent the people of the Illawarra yet they continually vote against the Opposition and against the interests of the Illawarra, including jobs and investment. The O'Farrell Government gives nothing to the people of the Illawarra unless it is in the seat of the member for Kiama. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame. But the people of this State will not forget at the next election the kinds of games those opposite are prepared to play with the futures of their kids and grandkids.

[Interruption]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I direct the attendants to remove from the public gallery the persons who are interjecting.

[The persons interjecting were removed by the attendants.]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): I was reluctant to clear the public gallery. I remind Opposition members that the argument is to be made on the floor of the House, not with the people invited into the public gallery. To do so would be in breach of the longstanding rules of this House.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 22

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

Noes, 57

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

Pair

Mr Richard Amery

Mr George Souris

Question resolved in the negative.**Motion negatived.****ILLAWARRA EMPLOYMENT****Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [12.38 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) welcomes the statement by the member for Heathcote that the Government will support the people of the Illawarra in the strongest way possible;
- (2) calls on the Government to increase investment to help create specific jobs; and
- (3) calls on the Government to relocate a government department to Wollongong to help provide job opportunities for displaced workers.

I placed this motion on notice back in September 2011 following the devastating news that BlueScope Steel was moving to make 800 workers in the Illawarra redundant. BlueScope Steel is located in the heart of the electorate of Wollongong and has been the employer for many thousands of blue-collar workers over many years. In years gone by most apprentices went through BlueScope, trained up and were then be distributed throughout the State to meet the needs of industry in our community. I arrived in Australia as a migrant with four young children at a time when BHP was making huge reductions to its workforce and the Australian dollar was stronger than it is today. BHP was cutting thousands of positions. Many of the laid-off workers were migrants who had come to Australia on a two-year contract.

This caused a massive bottleneck in employment in the Illawarra and it took the region some time to recover and to move on. BlueScope Steel employs approximately 3,800 people. The loss of 800 positions represents close to 25 per cent of the direct workforce. This further loss of jobs moved me to call upon the Government to help the people of the Illawarra so that an employment bottleneck was not created again. I suggested that a government department could be relocated to Wollongong to help to provide job opportunities for displaced workers. True to form, my call has fallen on deaf ears. In an urgency debate that took place on 23 August 2012 regarding the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund, the member for Heathcote stated on behalf of the Government:

We did not engineer this crisis but we will stand and face it alongside the people of the Illawarra.

I am yet to see anyone from this Government delivering any good news to the people of the Illawarra. I amended the motion to include paragraph (3). The member for Kiama speaks nothing but rhetoric when he makes promises of a bipartisan approach to help provide assistance to those who will be severely disadvantaged by the decision of BlueScope. There is nothing real or tangible in what he says, "But wait—there was the offer of a relocation fee for people to move out of Wollongong to Shellharbour or from Wollongong to Dapto." I am affronted by the suggestion that people will have to relocate to obtain work. I have lived in the Illawarra since the day I arrived from overseas and I would be offended if the only hope I had to obtain work involved relocating. I would not want to relocate. Wollongong is God's own country.

Wollongong is the best electorate in this country. The Government has to consider seriously its commitments to workers. It was not long ago that I had to call on the Government and the Minister for the Illawarra publicly to rule out categorically any proposal to sell off the State-owned Pillar Administration based in Wollongong. I had my eye off the ball while I was getting commitments on that and those opposite sold off Port Kembla behind our backs. We wait with bated breath to see what the Government will do. Pillar Administration has been a great success story for the Illawarra, creating somewhere in the region of 700 jobs. It would be a travesty if the Premier and Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra allowed this successful entity to be sold off. The Illawarra has a wonderful environment and a magnificent industrial base that enables the establishment of new manufacturing industries.

The establishment of those industries will occur with sufficient monetary investment and lateral thinking by all levels of government. Wollongong would be perfect for the relocation of a government department. I say to the Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra: Rather than close offices, open them. Bring real opportunity to the community, real investment and real jobs. Stop ignoring the people of the Illawarra. In 16 years Labor grew jobs in the area. We invested in the port and created thousands of jobs. The member for Drummoyne does not care about the people of the Illawarra or even the people in Drummoyne. Why should I be surprised?

Mr John Sidoti: I love the people of Drummoyne and I work hard for them.

Ms NOREEN HAY: No he does not and they will never vote for him again. I call again on the Government to provide leadership and to develop a clear and positive plan outlining the direction the Government will take in the Illawarra. I am not prepared to sit back and watch while this Coalition Government lets businesses close—

Mr John Sidoti: The Federal Government has contributed to job losses in the Illawarra.

Ms NOREEN HAY: No, it is because he has no answer and he feels he has to blame someone—"The dog ate my homework". He should get over himself—grow up—man up. I am not prepared to sit and watch whilst the Liberal-Nationals Government lets businesses close and while people become displaced. The Government encourages them just to move—the old Maggie Thatcher attitude. There are no jobs? We have closed down your jobs? Move. Those opposite have a very poor attitude towards communities. We need investment, we need job creation, and we need it and want it now. We do not need any more rubbish from those opposite.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [12.45 p.m.]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) and (3).

I thank the member for Wollongong—my colleague and great friend. She has a fascination with the member for Heathcote. I am not too sure how far that fascination goes but I am getting nervous. I support the Illawarra. In the first round of the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund the Government has created more than 470 new jobs and created \$46.5 million of investment in the Illawarra. The member for Wollongong has a problem with hearing and reading. This will generate tens of millions of extra dollars that will flow through local businesses. It will boost confidence and further investment. The member for Wollongong has a fascination with public sector jobs. The way of creating business in the Illawarra is not necessarily the creation of more Government jobs. We need to make it easier for small business to employ more people. Some \$16.2 million has gone directly into 13 regional businesses, including those in engineering, tourism and boutique manufacturing.

The Government's decision to build its new state-of-the-art data centre in Unanderra will generate ongoing sustainable employment opportunities in more than 250 construction jobs. To support the Illawarra

effectively we must invest in the people and not throw money into a black hole by relocating a government department. The member for Wollongong always calls for more public sector jobs. She says we need to employ more people, but Government cannot employ everybody in New South Wales. Government is an instrument of the people. We cannot have every person in New South Wales employed as a public servant. The member for Wollongong does not understand that. The Government has played, and will continue to play, an enormous role in supporting and stimulating the Illawarra economy, but local businesses must fill the void.

We should not create non-essential government jobs for their own sake, without any benefit to anyone but those receiving taxpayer-funded salaries. The member for Kiama and I have looked into this in the Illawarra. There were several offices in the Illawarra where people were shuffling papers for no reason. They were earning \$130,000, but they had no real job to do. When the Government came to office, it found offices full of Government employees who could not explain exactly what they did or why they were there. This is the way the former Labor Government dealt with the public sector. Hire a building at a cost of millions of dollars, stack it full of public servants, give them a report to write or a job to do, pay them \$130,000 each and everything will be A-OK. We need local people to run local businesses and create local jobs. That is exactly what the Government is focused on. Local business is where employment will come from. Like the member for Wollongong, I am concerned about unemployment in the Illawarra area. It is abysmal.

Ms Noreen Hay: Why are you seeking to remove it from the motion?

Mr Andrew Gee: Listen to this, Noreen. They are wise words.

Ms Noreen Hay: Who are you?

Mr LEE EVANS: The member for Wollongong has changed enormously.

Mr Gareth Ward: And not for the better either.

Mr LEE EVANS: That is right. It is my worst nightmare. The member for Wollongong said the Government needed to give people in the Illawarra more help. The Government has given them a lot of help and we have a lot more help to give. The last swipe she took at me was about Port Kembla. The \$100 million that is going to be invested in the Illawarra will create more jobs in the area. I know the member for Wollongong will be upset, but it will not create public sector jobs. It will create jobs in the Illawarra. That it is what it is all about—generating more job opportunities for small business in the Illawarra. That is where the jobs will come from. That is where the future is in the Illawarra; it is not in creating more paper shufflers. I am a small business owner. I understand where the real—

Ms Noreen Hay: Ah, now we're getting to the truth.

Mr LEE EVANS: Of course, now we are back to the socialist bent of the member for Wollongong.

Ms Noreen Hay: Feathering your own bed.

Mr LEE EVANS: Yes, of course. My ethos in life is: the harder you work the luckier you get. I believe people in small business in the Illawarra appreciate what the Government is trying to do by decreasing red tape and reducing payroll tax. There are fantastic opportunities for more employment, and I encourage all small businesses in the Illawarra to consider taking on another employee or an apprentice in their business.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.52 p.m.]: I join the member for Wollongong in supporting this motion and congratulate her on bringing it to this special place. This is very important because the Illawarra region has nearly double the rate of youth unemployment and a significantly higher overall rate of unemployment than both the State and national levels. Those figures have applied for some time under governments of all persuasions and colours. No-one is arguing with that. However, what we are debating today is the way in which to stimulate that local economy. I refer to the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund because the member for Heathcote raised it. That fund totals \$5 million. On the surface that sounds like a reasonable deal. The problem with the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund is that it very conveniently replaced a different fund called the Illawarra Advantage Fund, which was established in 2000 on the cusp of a significant downturn in the manufacturing sector in the Hunter. At the same time the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund was established.

Since that time in excess of \$10 million has been invested. I remind members opposite of the success of the fund that those opposite scrapped. I refer to the Government's own figures from the annual report of the Department of Trade and Investment. I am giving members the heads-up in anticipation of their interjections asking where I got the figures from. When I looked through the Government's reports, data and statistics I found that more than 4,000 jobs were created in a 10-year period. That fund has gone. This Government decided that fund was not worthwhile. What are we getting in its place? Funds change and governments change and they look at enhancing things and doing them better. Fine, but we did not get that. What we now have is a \$5 million fund, which is a one-off fund with no top-ups. There is no track record to show whether that will be enough or even a significant amount of money, given the downturn in the economy. The member for Heathcote raised a very good point: it is important that jobs be created by the private sector. We do not have any argument with that. The member for Wollongong and I do not have arguments about that.

Ms Noreen Hay: You're kidding.

Mr RYAN PARK: Wait for it. What would members opposite do so that the private sector created jobs in a region? Would they encourage more people to go to the area so there is what is called a larger market? That is a phrase members opposite are familiar with. No, members opposite would ask people to leave the Wollongong local government area. Even worse, they are encouraging them to leave and to go a couple of hundred metres across a bridge and for that the Government will pay them \$7,000. That is a fantastic way of encouraging the private sector. [*Time expired.*]

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [12.56 p.m.]: With the indulgence of the Opposition, before I begin I would like to report to the House that during the previous debate I was verbally assaulted by Mr Paul Matters who was in the public gallery. I acknowledge that he is not a Labor Party member. I know my friends on the other side would not countenance that sort of behaviour nor would the vast majority of decent union people in New South Wales. I say to Mr Matters that he has shown himself to be the person we all know him to be. I hope that we never see in this House again a threat like that to any member's right to participate. I respond to some of the comments we have heard in this debate by saying that this is a Government that knows how to generate jobs. We have established a Jobs Action Plan that aims to generate 100,000 jobs in New South Wales, 40,000 of which will be in regional New South Wales.

I am very proud of the Government's focus on regional New South Wales because when I look around the Chamber I see great regional members of Parliament like my friends the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Orange, and my good friends the member for Maitland, the member for The Entrance and the member for Gosford. All of them are from regional New South Wales and all of them are keen to generate jobs in regional areas. Let us talk about the figures because in this place we do not necessarily always trade in facts. Let us look at the unemployment statistics. In June 2012 the unemployment rate in the Illawarra was 6.5 per cent. By July 2012 it had fallen to 6.2 per cent. That means it is going down, which is good news for the Illawarra.

What we have seen come out of the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund, as my friend the member for Heathcote mentioned earlier, is 470 jobs generated in the Illawarra across small business, which is driving the local economy. In addition there is the \$500 million commitment to the Princes Highway, which I am very proud of, \$100 million for Wollongong Hospital and money invested as part of the Easy Access Program on local transport services. When we debated this matter in the Chamber some time ago there was a bipartisan approach to the issue of jobs in regional New South Wales. I am sorry that we have seen a somewhat divisive approach today. All members should be working together to attract business to New South Wales, liberate our economy and throw off the shackles of the iron curtain that was imposed for 16 years by those opposite—the socialist, scatter cushion, lefty, latte sipping, coffee shop literati—during their time in government.

We need policies such as the Jobs Action Plan that seek to target infrastructure investment and businesses outside the State. I am glad my friend the member for Keira mentioned the Regional Relocation Grant program. I agree with him on many issues. I am happy that my electorate and the electorate of the member for Shellharbour will benefit from attracting businesses to this State, particularly to regional New South Wales. I call on the Government to continue to invest in the university sector. When my mum and dad met at the Illawarra steelworks in 1973, 28,000 people worked there. Sadly, the Illawarra has seen huge job losses from that business as a result of international competition and changes in the international market. We need to look at other options to attract business to the Illawarra. I know all members of this House, Opposition and Government, will join with me in wanting to develop the reputation of the University of Wollongong in order to enhance job expectations and grow the economy in the region.

Ms Noreen Hay: Are you on the board?

Mr GARETH WARD: Yes, I am on the board. I am glad the member for Wollongong asked me that question. I am a member of the council and a proud graduate of the university. The University of Wollongong is producing more information and technology [IT] graduates than any other university in the country. The University of Wollongong is producing quality graduates. I would have thought that the member for Wollongong would not have attacked the University of Wollongong. I would have thought she would be a supporter of it. I want to see more jobs.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: I did not attack the university. I attacked the member for Kiama. I am very proud of the University of Wollongong. The member for Kiama hates Wollongong and everybody in it.

Mr GARETH WARD: I am quite happy to carry the load, but I will not have the university marred. *[Time expired.]*

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

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 23/55

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

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.01 p.m.]: As chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I comment on the Legislation Review Digest No. 23/55 which was tabled on 4 September 2012. This is the twenty-third digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. This committee fulfils its obligations as set out in sections 8A and 9 of the Legislation Review Act to identify issues in proposed legislation and regulations. The Legislation Review Committee is the hardest working parliamentary committee. I know that the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services takes his digest home with him every week and pores over the pages.

Mr Andrew Constance: I read it online.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The Minister points out that he reads it online. The twenty-third digest examined the five bills introduced in the sitting week commencing 20 August 2012. The member for Orange commented to me that it is a great digest. It is probably one of the most exciting digests that has come before the House. The bills considered were the Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2012, the Crimes Amendment (Cheating at Gambling) Bill 2012, the Emergency Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, the Retail Leases Amendment (Mediation) Bill 2012, and the Small Business Commissioner and Small Business Protection Bill 2012. The Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2012 prohibits advertising and other promotional activities in relation to the sale of alcoholic beverages and establishes the Alcohol Advertising Prohibition Committee. The committee identified issues relating to onus of proof, right to property, ill and widely defined powers, dependency on non-elected persons, a Henry VIII clause, and the inclusion of matters in the regulations that might be more appropriately included in legislation.

The Crimes Amendment (Cheating at Gambling) Bill 2012 amends the Crimes Act 1900 to prohibit certain conduct that may corrupt the betting outcomes of events on which it is lawful to place bets. The committee did not raise any concerns in relation to this bill. The purpose of the Emergency Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 is to amend a number of pieces of legislation that relate to emergency services to allow the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW and police officers better access to land to investigate fires. The committee commented on the effect of the search and enter powers of the bill, concluding that these powers were reasonable in the circumstances. The Retail Leases Amendment (Mediation) Bill 2012 seeks to amend the principal Act to make it clear that court proceedings should not be commenced in relation to a retail tenancy dispute if the parties have not first attempted mediation. The committee also considered access to justice issues and that the Act would commence by proclamation if passed.

The object of the Small Business Commissioner and Small Business Protection Bill 2012 is to create the position of a Small Business Commissioner in order to better ensure that small businesses are treated fairly and are better able to seek relief under the Contract Review Act 1980. The committee commented on a strict liability clause in the bill. The committee also reported on its correspondence with the Attorney General in relation to the James Hardie Former Subsidiaries (Winding up and Administration) Amendment (Statutory

Recovery Claims) Regulation 2012. The committee made no adverse comment in relation to this regulation. In preparing the digest, the committee reviewed 51 regulations and did not make an adverse comment in relation to those regulations.

The committee prepares the digest to assist members of this place and the other place in their consideration of bills. I thank the members of the committee, namely, the member for Swansea, the member for Rockdale, the member for Bankstown, the member for Parramatta and our colleagues in the other place the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and Mr David Shoebridge, who considered the bills and issues relevant to the committee as required by the Legislation Review Act during the committee's deliberations. I thank the committee staff for the preparation of the draft report. I commend Legislation Review Digest No. 23/55 to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.06 p.m.]: I speak to the twenty-third Legislation Review Digest of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. I too acknowledge my fellow members of the committee: the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Parramatta, the member for Rockdale and the member for Swansea, and our colleagues in the other place Mr David Shoebridge, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. As always, I acknowledge the hardworking committee staff. I was unable to attend this week's committee meeting—I should call it the men's only committee meeting on Tuesday mornings. I look forward to next week's meeting, which will be held during the lunch adjournment. After last week's marathon 30-minute meeting, this week's meeting went for only three minutes.

This week's digest reviewed five bills. In relation to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile's private member's bill, the Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2012, the committee related a number of issues to Parliament. The committee was concerned that clauses 6 and 7 of part 2 contain the assumption that an individual who breaks the prohibition on advertising alcohol products by definition receives a direct or indirect benefit from the advertisement unless the contrary is proved. This committee proposed that this might constitute a reversal of the traditional onus of the burden of proof. However, the committee noted the explicit criteria within the legislation and made no adverse comments.

The committee also referred to Parliament whether the legislation trespasses on personal property rights insofar as a person convicted of offences relating to buying, selling or delivering alcohol beverages is required to forfeit the beverage and its container. The committee raised issues concerning the distribution of power within the legislation. The legislation also allows the Minister to provide exemptions from the general prohibition, the director general to determine whether to prosecute offences, and the Minister to amend the operation of the Act via regulation. These are important issues and I look forward to the Government addressing these matters in the second reading debate on this legislation.

The committee reviewed the Emergency Legislation Amendment Bill. The committee noted that the legislation extends police powers for entering premises without owners or occupiers present in the instance of bushfires. However, given the circumstances of a State emergency, the committee concluded that these were not unreasonable amendments. The committee reviewed the Retail Leases Amendment (Mediation) Bill 2012, a private member's bill of the member for Liverpool and shadow Attorney General. The committee referred to Parliament issues relating to access to justice. The bill seeks to require that court proceedings covered by the legislation can only proceed once mediation has concluded. The committee referred to Parliament "whether providing an obstacle to pursuing a matter in courts constitutes a trespass on the right of access to justice".

The committee also reviewed the Small Business Commissioner and Small Business Protection Bill, a private member's bill of the Hon. Adam Searle in the other place. The committee referred to Parliament whether the bill trespasses on personal rights and liberties insofar as it requires individuals to provide personal information relating to their business dealings. The committee noted that this requirement was in force even if the information is commercial in confidence. The committee referred to Parliament whether this might trespass on personal rights. I note that of the five bills contained in this week's digest three came from non-Government members. The Government's track record on legislation is not improving. The Government seems to suffer from legislative inertia. It is time for the O'Farrell Government to do better. I commend Legislation Review Digest No. 23/55 to the House.

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

Report noted.

[Acting-Speaker (Ms Melanie Gibbons) left the chair at 1.10 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

PARLIAMENT HOUSE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

The SPEAKER: Today has been a very busy day for members. I congratulate the members who have been out and about attending the many fundraising events around Parliament House, including the Bow Tie Friday event, the Legacy event, the Australian Transplant Games launch and the Bravehearts barbeque in the rooftop garden. Members have given their time willingly to support these events. I also thank the member for Menai for arranging the Miracle Babies Foundation function this morning. The Bravehearts barbeque raised almost \$600. I thank the member for Coogee, the member for Menai, and Luke and Joe from my office for helping with the barbeque. It has been a great day and I hope we finish it on a good note.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Mr Ian Causley, the former member for Clarence and former Minister for Natural Resources.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I advise members that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services will answer questions directed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts, who is absent from question time today.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.24 p.m.]

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Will the rail tunnels for the proposed north-west shuttle service be large enough to fit double-decker trains?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I love getting questions from the Opposition about the North West Rail Link. I know that it has been the off and on policy of the caucus of those opposite since 1998 to support the North West Rail Link. Until this morning it was on; they said they supported it. But this morning the Leader of the Opposition had the hide to call the project a dud. He has kicked in the guts not just the hundreds of thousands of people who live in the north-west today but also the hundreds and thousands of people who will live in the north-west in the next 10 and 20 years. The Opposition has said it does not support public transport for the north-west; it does not support the North West Rail Link.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation coming from Government members.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the Opposition has officially changed its policy on supporting the North West Rail Link, it needs to come clean today and tell the people of New South Wales. This Government has done more in the past 16 months than the former Government did in the past 16 years. The Opposition is embarrassed.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: Only by your performance. My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. The question specifically asked about the size of the tunnel. Will it be seven metres in diameter? It is very straightforward.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Opposition should be ashamed of its failed record on the North West Rail Link. In response to the member's stupid question, I will address exactly what this Government has done in relation to the North West Rail Link. Opposition members cannot handle how much we have done in 16 months compared to their failed record in 16 years. From day one we established a dedicated team for the North West Rail Link. We opened the Community Information Centre, which 4,000 people have either attended in person or contacted by phone.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 52, tedious repetition. It was a very simple question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have already begun physical work on the North West Rail Link within six months of the election. As north-west residents have noticed, geotechnical drilling began in September last year. I take this opportunity to thank the Treasurer for his \$3.3 billion funding for that project. I will specifically speak about the process we began in mid—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We have heard this before.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Minister has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They do not like to hear the truth. Mid last year we began the multibillion dollar tender process, with expressions of interest received for the tunnel. I was pleased that six international consortia, including 60 companies—the best in Australia and around the world—signalled their intention to bid.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. When the Minister sought tenders, how big did she ask for the tunnels to be?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields should not ask questions of the Chair.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When it comes to the size of tunnels and the type of rolling stock, I will listen to the experts around Australia and the world, not to that lot. Why on earth would I listen to them?

JOBS GROWTH

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL: My question is addressed to the Premier. What are the latest job figures for New South Wales?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Charlestown for his interest in a matter that should be of concern to every member of this House. Every new job created in New South Wales is great news—great news for the person who gets the job, great news for his or her family, great news for the growing business which has created the job and great news for our economy. Today's jobs figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveal that the New South Wales unemployment rate fell from 5.2 per cent in July to 4.8 per cent last month.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier does not need the assistance of Government members.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: In August 3,200 new jobs were created across New South Wales, and every one of those jobs is important to every member in this Chamber because they occurred in electorates across this State. These were jobs created last month—as opposed to the lack of jobs growth on the other side of the Chamber: 20 members before the by-election and 20 members after the by-election. Since the O'Farrell Government has been in office 30,600 jobs have been created across New South Wales in the face of terrible national and international economic conditions.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Those figures, whether it be the 32,000 jobs created last month or the 30,600 jobs created since the last election—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —fly in the face of Labor's claims about this Government's job creation. The member for Maroubra was talking down the State again today. Not only am I reminded by the bow tie wearing Treasurer that the member for Maroubra never gets his numbers right, but I always know what day the unemployment figures come out. At about 11.30 a.m. on that day every month I hear this enormous groan from two floors above, as good news for the State produces misery on level 10.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Regrettably, today's figures show that unemployment rose in every other State.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Has the member been taking police orders again? The New South Wales unemployment rate fell by 0.4 per cent but the national drop was 0.1 per cent. It is important to note that New South Wales has the second lowest unemployment rate in the nation. That is a credit to the Treasurer and the work he is doing. But the Government will never be complacent about job creation. The O'Farrell Government is determined—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Maroubra only wants one job created: the Leader of the Opposition's job.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Monaro and the member for Murray-Darling will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Apparently the youthful member for Heffron was recruited by those opposite because he will be the next Leader of the Opposition. Ron Hoenig is the future of the Labor Party. No-one is worried about the member for Canterbury becoming Leader of the Opposition. If ever we had an example of a reversal of gravity it is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—we have people failing upwards.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Government is determined to create a strong economy where businesses can flourish so demands for their services will increase and those businesses can employ more people—that is the key to job growth. The public sector cannot employ everyone in New South Wales who wants a job. The key to a stronger economy, to job growth, to wealth creation and to increased living standards is support and conditions that allow the private sector to grow and prosper. That is what the Government is getting on with. I had a fantastic week last week. In this job one has some good weeks, some lousy weeks and some fantastic weeks. Last week was a fantastic week. A week ago I was— [*Extension of time granted.*]

The Minister for Resources and Energy is trying to taunt me by saying I had a good week because I went to the footy. No, that is not correct; my team lost. I had a good week last week because I was with the member for Charlestown at the new WesTrac facility in the Hunter. This important \$160 million distribution, maintenance and, importantly, training institute will employ an additional 500 people to support the transport, construction and mining industries not only in New South Wales but also across the country. It was a fantastic event. Last week I was also at Prestons. The member for Menai and I seem to be regular visitors to Prestons. One week we were there for a new distribution facility for Woolworths; last week it was for the opening of the new \$40 million headquarters of HPM Legrand, which will see 40 new jobs created. This facility was located in New South Wales at the expense of States on either side of our border. So we are managing to win investment from other States. My favourite visit last week, because I am such a great fan of the milk industry—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Fairfield will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: A new A2 milk processing facility was opened at Smeaton Grange. This facility cost of the order of \$16 million and will create 25 new jobs. I know Ian Causley will be interested in this. I have been told that for the past five years they have maintained the milk price at farm gate prices, which is in stark contrast to some other milk producers in this State who have been driving down the prices—that is the better way to put it—of those dairy farmers. These jobs are important to this State; they help economic growth. It is a tribute to a government that understands the future of this State is connected to the private sector prospering.

NORTH-WESTERN SYDNEY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I direct my question to the Minister for Transport. In light of the Minister's previous answer that she listens to experts and the experts say it will be 20 minutes faster to catch the bus into the city than the north-west shuttle service, will the Minister guarantee that there will be no cuts to direct bus services from the north-west to the Sydney central business district?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Before I turn directly to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition may I remind him—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! It is a little early to take a point of order. What is the member's point of order?

Mr John Robertson: My point of order is relevance. The Minister said, "Before I turn directly to the question". I ask that the Minister be directed to go straight to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is usual practice for Ministers to make some kind of introductory comment. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Leader of the Opposition asked me about bus services. I remind the House that when those opposite were in government they cut 1,500 regular bus services. I want to put that on the record before I commence my answer. As I said in my previous answer, the Government will not take advice from those opposite on how to build the North West Rail Link, which was first promised in 1998 and was to be finished in 2010. Who was supposed to cut the ribbon? But those opposite never delivered it. They cannot even tell the people of New South Wales whether they support it. The Government has commenced land acquisitions and geotechnical drilling—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Importantly, today I place on record the travel time savings that will be delivered by this project. The North West Rail Link will offer faster and more reliable journey times to many destinations.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 52—tedious repetition. The question was about direct bus services.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Macquarie Fields will resume his seat. If Opposition members intend to take spurious points of order I will rule them out of order and the members who take such points of order will be sent from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The problem is that those opposite do not want their lies revealed in the House today. There will be huge travel-time savings achieved for commuters travelling from the north-west to a range of key centres, whether it is Epping, Macquarie Park, Chatswood or St Leonards.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am very pleased once again to place on record those travel savings. Huge travel-time savings will be achieved for commuters. For example, commuters travelling from Bella Vista to Macquarie Park will save 33 minutes each trip; commuters travelling from Cherrybrook to Macquarie Park will save 25 minutes each trip; commuters travelling from Castle Hill to Chatswood will save 34 minutes; and commuters travelling from Rouse Hill to St Leonards will save 37 minutes. I do not know what those opposite regard as savings, but these are significant savings. The problem is that those opposite cannot handle the truth. They failed in government and they cannot handle the fact that the O'Farrell Government is getting on with the job of delivering this vital project.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We make no apologies for delivering faster travel times, for keeping our election commitments and for spending the money, because the people of north-west and western Sydney deserve this rail line.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In addition to these travel savings, commuters in the north-west will have more transport options. And why should they not? Anyone who travels on a bus or drives along that corridor knows that it is terrible. Unfortunately, members opposite are too out of touch to realise that.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: I have resisted, but after four minutes I still have not heard the Minister answer whether there will be cuts to direct services from the north-west to the central business district.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked. I cannot direct the Minister to give a specific answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have always said that, in addition to providing the North West Rail Link, we will maintain bus services. The Labor Government cut 1,500 weekly bus services.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the past six months we have introduced more than 600 bus services in south-west, north-west and western Sydney. That is what this Government is about. Not only are we delivering the North West Rail Link but we recognise that people need transport options. Members opposite should be embarrassed by the question. I have outlined the savings that commuters will receive, the options and what we have done. Every time the Leader of the Opposition bobs his head up I will remind him what a failure he was as transport Minister.

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

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. How important is it for Sydney that the North West Rail Link is built?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Hawkesbury for his question. I know that he supports his constituents in relation to the North West Rail Link. It is a pity that members opposite do not do so. All of us, except for an irrelevant few, know how important the North West Rail Link is to the future of our city. Some 200,000 people will move into the north-west growth centre over the coming decades. Their livelihood and quality of life will depend on us delivering the North West Rail Link. As more people move to the north-west there will be more demand on key transport and road corridors. That is why building a world-class rail line to attract more people to public transport is so critical.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Absolutely, so why don't you do it?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is a pity that after 16 years of failure members opposite still cannot see that. This Government is about providing vital infrastructure that has been neglected for so long. It is about providing for our public transport future and meeting our election commitments. An important fact to remember is that more than 30 million trips a year are expected on the rail link between Cudgegong Road and Chatswood within seven years of the rail line opening. That is 30 million trips we are taking off the roads. The North West Rail Link will deliver faster travel times, compared with cars and buses in the peak. I have outlined those faster travel times but I will do it again. Only those who have not caught a bus or sat in traffic and suffered the horrific congestion do not realise the importance of this rail line. Frankly, members opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For example, the trip by rail from Rouse Hill to Macquarie Park will take about 26 minutes, compared with about 82 minutes predicted for the car in 2031. What would members rather do—spend 82 minutes in a car or 26 minutes on a train? Members opposite are not good at maths. The only maths they do is counting numbers in caucus. That totals an extraordinary time difference; it is a saving of almost two hours a day, or 10 hours each working week.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The trip to the city by rail from the north-west will take about an hour initially, and about 47 minutes after the second harbour crossing is opened. Again, that is much faster than a car or a bus in unpredictable traffic in both instances. As well as the massive time incentive to use public transport, there is a cost incentive, which is important. Public transport customers avoid any tolls that motorists pay, as well as the cost of petrol and the cost of a car. People of the north-west can be assured of this Government's unwavering commitment to this important project. We will stand up for the 600,000 people who will live in the north-west growth centre. We will also stand up for the people of western Sydney, whom Labor abandoned.

We all know the enormous benefits of this project to western Sydney. Western Sydney will benefit from reduced congestion on the Western line when the North West Rail Link opens. Members opposite do not get this because they do not understand how to deliver public transport. Freeing up the Western line will mean less crowded trains for people in Penrith, Blacktown and Parramatta. It is welcome news for customers, commuters and residents in western Sydney. Western Sydney, north-west Sydney and south-west Sydney have been forgotten by members opposite and they still do not get it. Every time members opposite say anything about the North West Rail Link they remind us again of their abysmal record. I certainly will not be taking advice from them on how to build public transport infrastructure.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We will take advice from experts in Australia and around the world.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Again, I call on the Leader of the Opposition to indicate his position. Since 1998 Labor has supported the project, one and off. Most recently members opposite said they supported the project. This morning the Leader of the Opposition called the project a "dud".

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Does the Leader of the Opposition support north-west and western Sydney or does he not? [*Time expired.*]

MINISTER FOR FAIR TRADING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. I call the member for Monaro to order.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Property developer Vittorio Cavasinni said that he purchased an exclusive lunch with the Minister on behalf of a friend who wanted to "talk about concerns over hidden building costs". Who was that friend?

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: That question is outside ministerial responsibilities. It contains an inference and imputations. It contains facts that cannot be authenticated. I ask you to rule the question out of order. It is getting a bit silly.

Mr Michael Daley: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I was about to make similar comments. The question certainly contained imputations and facts that could not be authenticated. I would normally rule such a question out of order, but I will hear what the member for Maroubra has to say.

Mr Michael Daley: Standing Order 126 (1) allows the Minister to be asked a question on public affairs. This issue has been canvassed widely in the media. Heath Aston reported it in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 September. There is no imputation directed towards the Minister. All it says is that someone has stated something. Who was the person who was the subject of that statement? It is clearly a matter of public affairs.

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of members to the rules for questions. Ministers can be asked questions about matters that relate to public affairs. However, as the Leader of the House has alluded to, the question contravenes Standing Order 128 (3) (a), (c) and (d). The Minister has indicated that he is prepared to answer the question, which he is entitled to do. However, I remind members to be careful about the phrasing of their questions and to adhere to the standing orders.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I was hoping that the question would be, "How much do you love your mother?" to which the correct response would be—unconditionally—Mum, I love you. My parents instilled in me a love of education and of books. Having a young child, I know that education is important—particularly counting numbers. There is a great book called "Counting Numbers" by Mr R. Hoenig. It starts off, of course, with "1" and then it goes to "2", then to "3".

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: There are any number of standing orders that have been breached—apart from commonsense and decency. The Minister should have taken the advice of the Leader of the House and not answered the question. If he cannot answer it, he should sit down and stop making a goose of himself.

The SPEAKER: Order! The point of order is upheld. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The Leader of the Opposition is going to *Amazon.com* as we speak to buy half a dozen copies. He does appear in the book. It is worthwhile and I am happy to share it with him. I congratulate the Opposition on another stupid question. Those opposite could have asked a question about strata home building, protecting consumers or strengthening industry. But, no, after 18 months members opposite still refuse to take an interest in reforms that are helping the people of New South Wales. In 18 months they still have not asked a single question on policy. This is why the people of New South Wales despised them. That is why they threw them out in March last year.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: That is why they were thrown out onto the street so they could roll around in the dirt—

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will cease heckling the member for Shellharbour.

Ms Anna Watson: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We spoke in this House yesterday about dummies. Just have a crack at answering the question, Minister—have a crack at it. You only need a name—one name.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. When members take a point of order they should be prepared to articulate that point of order. There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for Shellharbour. She speaks about dummies and, surprisingly, I also have this book, "Opposition for Dummies". It is by Anonymous but if you are going to be anonymous, you cannot put your photo on the cover.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Minister has gone nowhere near answering the question.

The SPEAKER: I have asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

Ms Linda Burney: I also add that, he might think he is funny, but his integrity is on the line and he might want to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am treating the question as it deserves to be treated. Those opposite still have not changed, despite the fact that the people of New South Wales punted them from here to the back of

beyond. The people of this State still despise those opposite because they refuse to add anything of value to this State. They refuse to contribute to anything that does not benefit their developer mates and their mates in Sussex Street. [*Extension of time granted.*]

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am proud to serve in a government that is making the tough decisions for New South Wales and for the people of New South Wales and we will not turn away from our job to fix this State and make it number one again.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr PAUL TOOLE: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government supporting continuing economic growth for New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW STONER: What a very good—if not completely unexpected—question from the hardworking member for Bathurst. We know that the member for Canterbury took the loss of ministerial leather harder than most but she should not get bitter. She should not bring her bitterness into this place. We have good news about the New South Wales economy and she should listen to it.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: Our economy faces challenges. There is global uncertainty—

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: —not to mention a decade and a half of underperformance from the former Labor Government. Despite all this, our State economy is performing well. In the area of economic growth, New South Wales is the strongest of the non-mining states. As the mining States' economies begin to stutter, our State remains well positioned—

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: —as the nation's most diverse and strongest economy.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: As has been confirmed today, our State has the second lowest unemployment in the nation. In fact, more than 30,000 jobs have been created in New South Wales.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: Those opposite think this is a laughing matter.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: If members opposite want to look at a joke, they should look no further than themselves.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: The mentor of the middle manager, the mediocre member for Maroubra.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. I warn the member for Maroubra that if I have to call him to order again, the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms will remove him from the Chamber, not for an hour or two or three but for the rest of the day.

Mr ANDREW STONER: The member opposite hates to hear good news about the New South Wales economy after a decade of malaise under the rule of Labor. This Government has created 30,000 jobs.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: Under those opposite we had the lowest business confidence in the nation but now I am happy to report that our State has the second highest business confidence in Australia, despite the challenges I mentioned earlier. There is always more we can do to ensure continued economic growth for New South Wales. In March this year I launched a new State migration strategy, focused on boosting migrant intake, to better support our State's economic needs. Collectively, business and investor migrants sponsored by New South Wales in 2012 have injected an estimated \$112 million into our economy and created more than 800 jobs throughout the State. As outlined in our strategy, this Government has been working with the Federal Government to broaden the range of recognised investment options and to explore options for a new investor visa. Our efforts have placed us in pole position to leverage the opportunity of the new significant investor visa pathway announced last week and due to commence on 24 November.

This new visa pathway requires applicants to submit an expression of interest in SkillSelect, be nominated by a State or Territory Government and make investments of at least \$A5 million into complying investments. Offering a range of investments in New South Wales as an option for those considering this new visa pathway will make our State a more attractive investor migration destination and support our efforts to fund better infrastructure. New South Wales-sponsored significant investor visa applicants will be required to invest a minimum of 30 per cent of that \$5 million, or around \$1.5 million, in New South Wales-based investments. Unlike a number of other States, our Government can leverage its triple-A credit rating from both Moody's and Standard and Poor's to offer low-risk stable income for investors looking to lock in long-term regular returns and to diversify their portfolios.

Opening up options for overseas investors will support our Government's work in meeting future economic needs and getting on with the job of rebuilding our State's critical infrastructure. These investments will help grow jobs as well as stimulate key infrastructure investments like public transport, road improvements to reduce congestion, water utilities, and freight and hospital upgrades. In short, our migration reforms and the Commonwealth's changes will indeed benefit communities throughout New South Wales. Our State economy will continue to face challenges, as will the national economy, but this Government will continue to pursue proactive reform to make the New South Wales economy number one again.

HURSTVILLE COUNCIL CANDIDATE MIRAY HINDI

Mr RYAN PARK: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. Liberal candidate for Hurstville Council, Miray Hindi, was referred to the Department of Fair Trading for investigation last year after it was revealed she had been working as a real estate agent without a valid licence. Has that investigation been completed and, if so, what was the outcome?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I do not intend to do the dirty work for the Australian Labor Party, if there is any to be done. Ongoing investigations—or any investigation by my department—are carried out at arm's length. I am happy to seek further information, and should it be required or suitable I will refer it to the House. Whilst the question of local government has been raised I draw attention to a pamphlet that is doing the rounds of the North Ward of Bankstown—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: It is relevance under Standing Order 129. As you would have heard, the question was very specifically about an individual and an investigation. It referred to nothing else about local government other than that councillor and an investigation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order. The Minister has answered the question and is giving additional information. I will judge whether it is relevant.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am always happy to answer questions in this place, but members opposite have to understand—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I draw your attention to the use of props.

The SPEAKER: Order! The use of props is not permitted in the Chamber. The Minister will not use the pamphlet as a prop.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am referring to a document many of which we will see—

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Tell us more about—

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Tell you more about it? Yes I will. What I want to know about property developers, since the member raised it, is who is paying for this? It does not say here—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. I ask the Minister not to wave the brochure around. It is a prop.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: If members opposite are going to throw rocks they can expect to get a couple back. Why is the member for Bankstown concerned about this? It is because of her husband. Who is paying for this brochure? It does not say that it is the Labor Party. It says it is authorised by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association. Which developer is that? Is a developer paying for this? That is where the member should be careful. He is a developer, right?

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order is obviously relevance under Standing Order 129.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: No, it is not obvious.

Ms Linda Burney: You just don't know when you're ahead. Shut up and sit down.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury should address her point of order to me and articulate what it is about. This is not an opportunity for the member to yell, scream and argue with the Minister.

Ms Linda Burney: It is clearly relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister is nowhere near answering the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on that point of order. The Minister answered the question in the first 20 seconds. He is now straying into other material, which is relevant to the question asked. I have asked him not to wave the pamphlet around and use it as a prop, and I do not think he has done that in the past 30 seconds or so. The member's point of order is valid.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The question went to irregularities in local government. I have a public duty and obligation to inform the House of what appears to be—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. I direct the member for Bankstown to remove herself from the Chamber for the remainder of question time. Her behaviour is unacceptable.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Bankstown left the Chamber at 3.05 p.m.]

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. It appears the Minister is well and truly transgressing that provision. It is entirely clear from what he is saying that he is making allegations. If he wants to do that he should do so by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. I caution the Minister about making allegations and ask him to conclude his answer.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am saying that those opposite should be very careful because we know which developers have been donating money and some of those opposite better make sure that they have told their leader. I say to my father: you asked me where I got my arguing skills from—thanks, mum.

Ms Cherie Burton: Point of order: The Minister was asked about an ongoing investigation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on that point of order. The Minister has answered the question.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr TIM OWEN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. Will the Minister tell the House what the Government is doing to make a difference to organ donations in this great State?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Newcastle for his strong interest in organ donation, particularly today because we had the pleasure of joining with Transplant Australia in launching the Transplant Games, which will be held in Newcastle. I thank the member for Newcastle and all members, particularly those from the Hunter, who were present at the launch. This will be the thirteenth Australian Transplant Games, and the wonderful thing is that when the Games are held every couple of years the rate of organ donation increases dramatically. I was pleased to be at the launch and with so many of my parliamentary colleagues. The Games will be held from 29 September to 6 October.

The Transplant Games provide an opportunity for people who are recipients of organs to participate, along with the families of those who have been donors. It is not only a great sporting event but also a great celebration of life. It is a celebration of extended life because of the wonderful contribution of families when confronted by a tragic situation. It was fantastic to be at the launch with Samantha George, a young woman of 30 who, when she was six, was told she had only 12 months to live. Within one month of her predicted death she had a liver transplant. She was at the launch today to be the face of these Games. The launch was followed by a sign-up to the national register, which is part of the New South Wales Government's new organ policy that is intended to double the transplant rate.

I was pleased to see the number of my colleagues who turned up in the forecourt today: the member for Cronulla, the member for Swansea, the member for Wyong, the member for Camden, the member for Londonderry, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Willoughby, the member for East Hills, the member for Mulgoa, the member for Heathcote, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Lismore, the member for Menai, the member for Dubbo, the member for South Coast, the member for Burrinjuck, the member for Gosford, the member for Parramatta, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Coogee, the member for Ballina, the member for Maitland, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Marrickville, and the member for Port Macquarie. From the Upper House we had the Hon. Niall Blair, the Hon. Marie Ficarra and the Hon. Jennifer Gardiner. If members turned up and I have not named them, I am sorry. It was wonderful to see so many people there for this important occasion.

The need to have conversations with one's family about being an organ donor has been publicised. Last year in New South Wales only 77 of the 215 people who were in a position to have their organs donated had them donated. Families said no because they were unaware of the wishes of their loved ones. We are hoping to achieve a national register, but individuals are encouraged to have conversations with their families to let them know that in the event of their death they are willing to be organ donors. People can also make living donations. I was pleased that a number of recipients of a living tissue donation who will compete in the Australian Transplant Games also attended the launch today. One thing that is not well known is that we need skin donations.

A young woman who was tragically burned in a fire while participating in the Perth marathon was sent to the burns unit at Concord hospital where she was the recipient of skin imported from California—the skin bank in Australia had run out of tissue. The skin was imported under strict ethical and health controls. Nevertheless, it is a worry that we have to look overseas for skin which, as everyone would now, is an important tissue when it comes to treating burns. The policy we advocate is to switch to a single national register and put together a community campaign to encourage conversations. Such a policy will assist in employing more specialists in hospitals to assist families dealing with the difficult decision of consent; it will assist in providing guidelines to doctors; and it will assist in providing living donation promotion across the system. I commend everybody for being in attendance today. I hope the focus on this issue extends much further than just today in Parliament House.

CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Mr GREG PIPER: My question is directed to the Premier. Noting ongoing scandals and recent tragedies, including Mr John Pirrona's suicide after sexual abuse as a young man, and charges against Father Tom Brennan for alleged offences around sexual abuse, will he instigate a royal commission into sexual abuse within the Catholic Church and other organisations?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. I understand his concern and the concern of the whole community regarding ongoing revelations about paedophilia activities that have been highlighted more recently in relation to the Catholic Church, but which by no means are restricted to that organisation, either today or in the past. I am delighted that the NSW Police Force has a number of active

investigations underway. The level of activity last week, as the member for Lake Macquarie knows, resulted in the proffering of charges against a priest in the diocese of Maitland-Newcastle on the basis that he did not reveal to police that he knew information about alleged paedophilia activity. When the *Four Corners* program aired in July, I was on leave. I saw the program when I came back from leave. I was concerned about what I saw. I wrote to the Commissioner of Police, drawing his attention to the program. I am delighted that an active investigation, Operation Glencoe, was put in place.

I have communicated with the member for Northern Tablelands about the matter because I was concerned about the practices in the Catholic Church that have been brought to light. What is happening in New South Wales is different to what is happening in Victoria, which has set up a royal commission. There are ongoing police investigations in Victoria. As I said in Newcastle last Thursday, I intend to do nothing to get in the way of police bringing to justice those who prey upon children. I am not interested in a made-for-TV moment that announces a royal commission. I am interested in offenders paying the penalty for the abuse of children, for taking young people's future from them. I have spoken to the Commissioner of Police and he is of the same opinion. He has made the point that we should do nothing to get in the way of active police investigations that are underway in New South Wales. The entire community hopes these investigations will bring these people to justice.

Former Federal Judge Anthony Whitlam has been appointed to undertake an investigation in relation to the Catholic Church and it is welcomed by the Catholic Church. However, I say this to the Catholic Church in this State: Investigations have happened in the past. What has not occurred is a link between the NSW Police Force and those investigations, and the reports that were generated internally. What I say to the Catholic Church today in response to the question from the member for Lake Macquarie is that the Whitlam report should be handed to police when it is complete so that police and active police operations have the benefit of Justice Whitlam's report into alleged paedophilia activities in the Catholic Church. I make one other point for the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge that his question made the obvious point: alleged paedophilia activity did not occur just in one faith-based organisation. Regrettably, it has been reported in a number. It has also been a matter of public record that it has occurred in non-government organisations as well as in government organisations. It is important that the NSW Police Force take these allegations seriously and that it is allowed to investigate them so that people can be brought to justice for these terrible crimes.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. How is the Government helping vulnerable children and young people who are at risk of abuse and neglect in New South Wales?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I thank the member for Vaucluse for her support and thoughtful policy contribution to help this Government deliver better services that will improve lives throughout New South Wales. As the question implies, child protection is everyone's business and the O'Farrell Government is working to improve the lives and services of vulnerable children and young people who are exposed to or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Child Protection Week is a good time to reflect on why only real reform can improve the lives of our most vulnerable young people and their families. In March 2011 almost 18,000 children and young people were in out-of-home care. The transfer of out-of-home care to the non-government sector, as recommended by Justice Wood, is now well underway. Yesterday I was delighted to celebrate the accreditation of the Salvation Army—one of our new out-of-home care providers.

This highly respected non-government organisation has joined us to be involved in this long-sought, groundbreaking reform to transfer out-of-home care. The Salvation Army, as only it can, has named its new out-of-home care service Young Hope. Like other non-government providers, the Salvation Army will help over time to free up community case workers to focus on our core business, which is the provision of statutory child protection services. The O'Farrell Government is keenly focused on improving work practices to unleash the full potential of Community Services caseworkers and staff to work with children and families who need them most. I am working to harness the whole community's resources and skills, including our valued non-government partners, including better integrated services for adolescents and our complex clients, to improve lives.

Parents are responsible for their children and parents are responsible for their choices. We all know that supportive parents make good choices for their families and that is the best defence against child abuse and neglect. This Government will help parents to be responsible for reducing risks to their children by working closely with families to assist them through challenging times. If necessary, we will require parents to commit to

parenting education and skills development programs. We must work better and smarter. We must streamline our processes to enable caseworkers to get back to the job they are trained for; that is, to work with the families that need them.

Better work practices, including focused, stronger skills, will mean that our caseworkers will spend more time with children and families. Yes, that does mean working to do better for kids because that is what it is all about. Kids must come first, not the requirements of union bosses. Children and young people who cannot live safely with their parents need and deserve a home for life. When restoration is not an option, permanent alternative care arrangements should be considered as early as possible to stop children drifting through the out-of-home care system and out the other end. Only real reform can improve services, and the lives of vulnerable children and young people and their families. During Child Protection Week 2012, as in every other week, this Government is getting on with the job of making a difference for kids.

HURSTVILLE COUNCIL CANDIDATE MIRAY HINDI

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I have additional information in response to a question asked by the member for Keira about the Miray Hindi investigation. I am advised that an investigation was conducted by NSW Fair Trading, that no adverse findings were made against Ms Hindi and that the matter was consequently finalised.

Question time concluded at 3.20 p.m.

PETITIONS

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

Randwick Education and Health Specialisation Centre

Petition requesting the rejection of the proposed development of Randwick Education and Health Specialisation Centre by Randwick City Council, received from **Mr Barry O'Farrell**.

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:

Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport

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

Pets on Public Transport

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

Eastern Suburbs Bus Service 311

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

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

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

Pet Bans in Accommodation By-laws and Tenancy Agreements

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

Container Deposit Levy

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

Cooks River Sewage Flows

Petition requesting the limitation of sewage flows into the 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**.

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

Pet Shops

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

FINES AMENDMENT BILL 2012**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 5 August 2012.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer) [3.23 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Fines Amendment Bill 2012. I acknowledge and appreciate the Opposition's support for the bill. The Fines Amendment Bill is a sensible measure designed to facilitate the administration of fines collection in this State. The bill makes amendments designed to ensure that the system is fair and more efficient. The State Debt Recovery Office is responsible for the collection of fines in this State. I acknowledge the work of the office in assisting members to come to grips with the number of fines issued and any anomalies and injustices that may occur, and in providing advice when members make representations on behalf of their constituents. The personnel always approach the task with professionalism, notwithstanding the fact that the final determination is not always what our constituents would prefer. We are given a fair hearing and extenuating circumstances are always considered.

The bill also makes a series of amendments designed to refine the penalty notice review regime and the court appeal provisions when the fine has been paid in a timely manner. Offenders currently are not able to go to court if they have applied for a review of their penalty notice and the review has been delayed. This bill removes that anomaly. Further amendments are designed to improve the rate of recovery of unpaid fines, to extend the power of the State Debt Recovery Office to obtain information about fine defaulters from credit reference agencies, to enable a refund to be made to the person who paid the fine rather than the offender, and to allow orders to be served electronically on corporations rather than by mail. The bill also makes minor consequential or ancillary amendments. Consultation was undertaken with Privacy NSW to ensure that the additional powers provided to the State Debt Recovery Office do not infringe on a fine defaulter's privacy. As I said, this is a sensible bill that will improve the efficiency of fines administration and enable the State Debt Recovery Office to recover additional unpaid fines more efficiently. Once again I thank the Opposition for its support for the legislation and commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Mike Baird agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Council without amendment.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Order of Business**

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.26 p.m.]: I draw the attention of members to a petition lodged by the Deputy Premier from certain citizens requesting new road safety legislation to implement AustRoad standards and to improve safety at vehicle breakdowns. In the normal course of business the petition would be dealt with next Thursday, and that will still happen. However, to ensure that the community has an opportunity to hear the debate on petitions, just prior to the debate on the Deputy Premier's petition the House will deal with a petition that would otherwise have been dealt with the following week. That petition, which was lodged by the member for Wollongong, is from certain citizens requesting the installation of lifts at Unanderra railway station as a matter of urgency. I may also seek to have other petitions debated the following week during the time set down for Government business. Members who have the carriage of the relevant petitions should approach me so that we can make arrangements to give people appropriate notice.

**TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY FUND) BILL
2012**

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Gladys Berejiklian, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [3.27 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am very pleased to introduce this money bill on behalf of my colleague the Minister for Roads and Ports in the other place. The main purpose of this bill is to establish a dedicated fund—the Community Road Safety Fund—that will receive fine revenue from camera recorded speeding and traffic light offences. The bill provides that the fund will be used to meet the cost of delivering road safety initiatives in New South Wales. Last November a petition signed by 13,500 NRMA Motoring and Services in support of the hypothecation of fine revenue from driving offences to fund road safety measures was tabled in the Parliament. This Government has listened to NRMA Motoring and Services members and the wider community. The petition requested the New South Wales Government to commit revenue from traffic fines to improve road safety, and that is exactly what it is doing.

Importantly, and as recommended by the NRMA, the Government will spend the money on road safety engineering works, enhanced high-visibility policing and road safety education. The Road Safety Advisory Council, which represents key industry stakeholders such as the NRMA and government agencies such as the NSW Police Force, will advise the Government on the important road safety initiatives that should be funded. Today I have the privilege of introducing this bill knowing that it reflects broad community sentiment and that it will be yet another measure designed to strengthen the integrity of speed camera programs in New South Wales.

Responsibility for the strategic direction and funding of the road safety program in New South Wales rests with the Centre for Road Safety within Transport for NSW. Road safety programs are delivered by the Centre for Road Safety in partnership with operating agencies such as Roads and Maritime Services and other partners including the NSW Police Force, the Department of Education and Communities and local government. For this reason, the bill provides that the Community Road Safety Fund will be administered by Transport for NSW. These financial provisions are being introduced as an initiative of the NSW Speed Camera Strategy, announced on 1 June 2012, and have come about following feedback from the New South Wales community. It is important to understand the context of and reason for this new funding arrangement.

The cost of road trauma in New South Wales is high. Each year approximately 400 people are killed and more than 26,000 people are injured on our roads. While much has been done to reduce the road toll since the 1970s, ongoing commitment and funding are vital to reducing the cost of road trauma to the community. The New South Wales Government is currently finalising the development of a comprehensive NSW Road Safety Strategy which will highlight its road safety priorities for the next 10 years. This strategy has been developed in consultation with community groups and stakeholders to ensure it reflects best practice road safety and

community priorities. As the single biggest contributing factor to the road toll, speeding is a key area for action. On average, about 40 per cent of road fatalities, or approximately 170 deaths each year, can be attributed to speed. Speed-related crashes also cost the community approximately \$1.7 billion annually.

Addressing this challenge will include, together with other measures, the implementation of the overarching NSW Speed Camera Strategy. The NSW Speed Camera Strategy was developed following the Auditor-General's review of speed cameras, which found that the right speed camera in the right location can save lives. The strategy outlines how speed and red light speed traffic cameras are used in New South Wales to supplement traditional enforcement conducted by the NSW Police Force to reduce speeding and improve safety on our roads. Camera programs are delivered in a partnership between Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services. There is also close collaboration with the NSW Police Force to ensure cameras are used strategically in locations where there is a known road safety issue.

This targeted enforcement is part of the broader strategy to improve road safety and is delivered alongside other measures in the road safety program, which include engineering works, public education campaigns, education programs and enhanced police enforcement. Together these road safety initiatives are critical to achieving the NSW 2021 State plan commitment to reduce deaths on our roads. The Auditor-General's review of speed cameras, which was completed in July last year, also made a number of recommendations to strengthen transparency and improve public confidence in the road safety benefits of camera programs. The Government accepted all the audit recommendations and the NSW Speed Camera Strategy outlines the range of measures introduced in New South Wales to ensure that camera programs deliver road safety benefits and meet community expectations.

The goal of our camera programs is very simple: to slow down drivers to reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes. For that reason, we have changed the name of these cameras to reflect the fact that they enforce both red light running and speeding; we have implemented enhanced warning signage on the approach to red light speed cameras; and we have enhanced the warning signage on the approach to mobile speed camera sites to ensure drivers are aware of enforcement locations. This is about achieving a balance between fairness and ensuring drivers who do the wrong thing are called to account. Importantly, while the mobile speed camera program is being expanded to 7,000 enforcement hours per month, this is 40 per cent less than the 12,200 hours of mobile speed camera operation that the former Labor Government intended to implement.

We also want the community to be confident that we are enforcing in the right place. We are determined not only to say that cameras are effective at improving road safety but also to provide the evidence. Transport for NSW recently published the first annual speed camera review, which evaluated all speed cameras in New South Wales to ensure they were actually delivering the promised road safety benefit. All this information has been made available online. This review highlighted how effective our fixed speed camera program has been, delivering an 87 per cent reduction in fatalities, 38 per cent reduction in crashes and 37 per cent reduction in injuries in the past five years. This is a saving of 53 lives. This bill is the next step in delivering on the Auditor-General's recommendations and increasing the transparency of speed camera enforcement in New South Wales.

This bill will ensure that revenue from speed cameras is directly assigned to the vital road safety program in New South Wales that is overseen by the Centre for Road Safety in close consultation with key stakeholders and the community. Motorists who are detected speeding or running red lights face both a fine and demerit points on their licence. This provides a strong deterrence to drivers who would otherwise jeopardise the safety of our roads. To date, revenue collected from automated speed and traffic light enforcement has been paid into the Consolidated Fund. These funds have been directed to the delivery of all government programs, including, but not limited to, road safety. We know that there is broad community support for penalising drivers who do the wrong thing. However, the community also wants assurance that revenue generated in the name of road safety is being used in a targeted way to improve our roads, educate road users and reduce the road toll.

Hypothecation of fine revenue is common practice in most Australian jurisdictions, including Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia. It also has been used in a different context in New South Wales. The Marine Rescue NSW contribution from boaters in New South Wales is used in its entirety to fund Marine Rescue NSW, a volunteer-based organisation whose aim is to improve safety on waterways in New South Wales. As noted, this bill will establish a special fund to be administered by Transport for NSW and dedicated to meeting the costs of delivering road safety in New South Wales. The bill defines the type of fine revenue to be paid into the fund with reference to the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999. This is the key piece of legislation that defines and provides authority to conduct camera-based speed and traffic light enforcement in New South Wales.

All revenue generated from speeding offences detected by an approved speed-measuring device and recorded by an approved camera recording device and traffic light offences detected by an approved camera detection device will be paid into the fund. This includes offences detected by fixed devices, including school zone fixed, mobile and red light speed cameras. The provisions also specifically allow for revenue from heavy vehicle speeding offences detected by an approved average speed detection device used in point-to-point speed enforcement to be paid into the fund. This means that all revenue generated by the four types of cameras used in New South Wales will be directed into the fund. It includes fines paid by individuals and the higher penalty amounts paid by companies who refuse to nominate the driver responsible for a camera-detected driving offence. The effect is simple: Drivers who ignore the law and put other road users at risk will be paying for road safety in New South Wales.

The bill also includes a regulation-making power to allow for revenue from other speeding and red light offences to be paid into the fund. Any regulation of this kind requires the concurrence of Treasury. This is a measure to ensure efficiency and to futureproof the fund in the event of changes to speed or traffic light enforcement practices or adoption of new technologies. This is consistent with the intent of the bill and will enable a more flexible and timely process for minor changes. At this time revenue from speeding, red light or other traffic offences that are detected by the NSW Police Force while on patrol will not be directed into the fund. As noted, the fund will be used to meet the cost to government of delivering road safety initiatives.

This bill includes a broad definition of the road safety functions of Transport for NSW. This definition reflects the diverse work delivered by the Centre for Road Safety and its implementation partners. Key functions include developing programs, projects, strategies and campaigns to promote or improve road safety, providing advice and assistance to public and local authorities to improve road safety and conducting road safety research and testing. In 2011-12 the cost to the State Government of delivering these road safety functions was \$231 million. This figure excludes additional funds provided by the Federal Government to deliver road safety improvements under the Federal Black Spot Program. This represents a record investment by the State Government in road safety in New South Wales and is money well spent.

The intent of the establishment of the Community Road Safety Fund is to maintain State road safety funding to at least this level of \$231 million, indexed for consumer price index increases. Each and every year the broad range of initiatives delivered within the road safety program are prioritised by Transport for NSW by considering evidence-based analysis of issues and risks that lead to crashes in New South Wales. The initiatives combine engineering solutions with proven enforcement and education programs. Community and stakeholder input is sought on an ongoing basis through the Road Safety Advisory Council and consultation in the development of road safety strategies.

Ensuring kids are safe near and on the road is always raised as a priority for the community. The Government shares this concern. Initiatives in the road safety budget to ensure the safety of children include the Government's \$17 million commitment to install flashing lights in school zones over the next four years. This commitment includes both the original funding of \$13 million plus a further \$4 million to install flashing lights in country and regional school zones. This is in addition to the ongoing funding for school crossing supervisors and other safety initiatives around schools. These measures are combined with school education programs delivered in partnership with the Department of Education and Communities.

Road safety messages also reach local communities through the Centre for Road Safety's partnership and funding support for council road safety officers. The local government program operates in regional and remote areas, as well as towns and cities. This enables us to address different road safety concerns at a grassroots level. All these initiatives contribute to keeping children and local communities safe and will be funded by the Community Road Safety Fund. As the Government has consistently maintained, speed cameras are in place to supplement, not replace, hands-on police enforcement. In a practical way, this fund will strengthen and ensure increased police presence on our roads. The road safety budget includes an allocation to fund additional high visibility enforcement by the NSW Police Force, such as random breath testing and roadside drug testing operations. This cost will be met by the fund, ensuring an even greater police presence on our roads in high-risk periods.

The budget also includes ongoing delivery of the targeted road safety engineering projects that have been established under the Road Toll Response Package. This program of works was developed to address the spike in the road toll in 2009. It has provided ongoing funding for high priority engineering and review works delivered by Roads and Maritime Services and local governments. Works include the installation of roadside

safety barriers, route safety reviews of State highways, the installation of pedestrian fencing, targeted motorcycle safety works and the development of pedestrian and motorcycle safety strategies. Under the proposed arrangement, money to deliver this and other road safety engineering works will continue to be provided by the fund. The Centre for Road Safety is also funding the newly established central business district motorcycle squad to address congestion and road safety issues in the Sydney central business district. This will continue to be resourced through the Community Road Safety Fund.

Last but not least, Transport for NSW develops targeted public education campaigns to raise awareness of unsafe driver behaviours, including speeding, drink-driving, fatigue and the non-use of seatbelts. These campaigns are high profile and effective. Most recently, Transport for NSW launched the Plan B campaign, targeting drink-driving. This campaign was launched with the full support of the NSW Police Force and is yet another example of the type of initiative that the fund will support. The road safety program is a priority of the Government and is delivering real benefits for the community. The introduction of this fund will enable State funding of the road safety program to be maintained into the future at the record high 2011-12 level of \$231 million, indexed for consumer price index increases.

The bill also provides for funds other than fine revenue to be directed into the Community Road Safety Fund to ensure that the road safety budget is maintained at current levels. In the 2013-14 financial year speed camera programs in New South Wales are expected to generate \$137 million. This money will be paid into the fund but is less than the current road safety budget. It is important to note that projected revenue is based on current speeding behaviour. Speed and red light cameras in New South Wales are designed and have been proven to change driver behaviour through increased compliance. As outlined in the NSW Speed Camera Strategy, the mobile speed and red light speed camera programs will expand over the next two years. In the short term, greater enforcement will result in a higher number of infringements and higher revenue. Over time we will see the number of infringements issued at camera locations decrease and associated revenue decrease. The recent annual review of speed cameras clearly shows this downward trend at most fixed speed camera locations. This is consistent with international research and infringement trends in other jurisdictions.

It is a good outcome for road safety. We neither expect nor desire the initial increase in revenue to be ongoing. For this reason, the bill enables additional funds to be directed from Transport for NSW to the Community Road Safety Fund. This will ensure that there will be enough in the fund to maintain State Government road safety expenditure at least at current levels. The bill also includes a provision for money in excess of that required to deliver road safety programs to be paid from the fund into consolidated revenue. I make it clear that the purpose of this fund is to finance road safety. The community can be confident that no payment will be made out of the fund without an assurance from Transport for NSW and the concurrence of Treasury that all State road safety programs are funded. If that assurance is provided, this provision will allow excess revenue to be directed to the Consolidated Fund where it will contribute to the delivery of other priority government programs such as health and education.

Consistent with the financial duties of Transport for NSW under the Transport Administration Act, a full account of income and expenditure of the Community Road Safety Fund will be produced each financial year. This will be publicly available through the annual report of Transport for NSW and will provide the community with a transparent account of how much revenue is generated by camera enforcement and how it is being spent. This will be in addition to the up-to-date infringement rates and revenue information for each and every camera site that is already made publicly available on the State Debt Recovery Office website. The Centre for Road Safety also will continue to annually report on speed camera performance.

The measures I have proposed today, which were put forward by my very capable colleague in the other place, will provide a direct funding source for road safety initiatives in New South Wales. They send a clear message that road safety is a high priority for the Government. The public will receive a transparent account of how funds generated from cameras are being used and can have confidence in the road safety goals of New South Wales speed camera programs. If drivers are concerned about having to pay fines they just need to slow down and observe the road rules. If they do, it is a win for the community because fewer lives will be lost on our roads. I congratulate my colleague in the upper House on putting this bill forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Robert Furolo 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 5 September 2012.**

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [3.44 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to speak about the 2012-13 budget, in particular, the funding that benefits those living on the Central Coast. This budget will deliver more infrastructure and better services across the State. Transport is one of the key projects in this budget. In relation to the Transport portfolio, I will not refer to the funding for the South West Rail Link or the North West Rail Link. Funding of \$148 million has been allocated to improve access to railway stations, ferry wharves and transport interchanges. The Central Coast has a commuter population. In the electorate of Gosford alone there are five railway stations. The opportunity to improve access at railway stations is essential. The Government is focused on the creation of jobs and is striving hard to find more jobs for the Central Coast. No matter what happens, people will still need to commute to Sydney to work and our railway services should meet those needs.

Police and emergency services is another key project. Funding of \$96 million has been allocated to the five-year Strategic Disaster Readiness Package of the State Emergency Service. This important package will help us prepare for and respond to floods and storms. My 21-year involvement with local government began with flooding on the Central Coast. Unfortunately, we cannot control nature. Floods, like drought, weigh heavily upon us and cost communities many millions of dollars. In addition, funding of \$1 million has been allocated to clean up and prevent graffiti. In the electorate of Gosford tagging is done by stupid individuals who feel the need to leave their mark like a rabid dog on every business shopfront and fence they can find. Graffiti is a blight on the community. My electorate office in Woy Woy is located near a pathway that commuters in their hundreds traverse every morning and afternoon. It runs beside a great little butcher shop—

Mr Chris Patterson: What is it called?

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN: Peninsula Budget Meats. It is a great little business—in for your chop. That business is constantly tagged. It is a disgrace. The Government has implemented a program that sees young artists from Brisbane Water Secondary College and elsewhere painting murals and artworks on the walls in town centres. If members get the chance to visit Woy Woy I urge them to have a look at the fantastic mural work that is being done. The murals depict people within the community. The murals do not contain just faces of famous people—although I think Spike Milligan appears in one of the murals. The faces of the average Joe in the street are now reflected on a massive wall as one walks towards the station. Interestingly, the recurrence of tagging and graffiti falls away with the painting of these murals. In fact, it has been proved within my electorate that five to six years pass without anyone touching these works of public art. I encourage members to look at these murals as a way to combat graffiti. People would much rather look at a mural painted by an artist than at a tag done by a halfwit. It is a good business initiative.

I have been involved in small business for more than 30 years and I am pleased to see some great business programs included in this budget. For example, I refer to the WorkCover programs to reduce fatalities, injuries and workers compensation claims and costs; payroll tax rebates through the Jobs Action Plan to support business in creating new jobs; funding of \$44 million in 2012-13 in the Regional Industries Investment Fund to attract and develop regional employment opportunities; and the establishment of the office of the Small Business Commissioner, which will provide experts and resources to help ease the regulatory burden on small business and cut red tape. As a small business man, I know that small business is the basis of a good economy in this country. We have to look after small business people, and the Government is committed to doing so.

Local government is something that is close to my heart. Some \$30 million has already been put into the \$70 million Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme. The city of Gosford is represented by three State electorates. Gosford City Council applied for \$10 million under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme. The Gosford local government area has more than 1,000 kilometres of roads. The council, through the scheme, has applied for a low-interest loan for a \$10 million initiative, which will provide \$7 million over the next three years to address issues with 120 roads in Gosford city that do not normally attract State or Federal funding. People in the Gosford local government area appreciate that for the first time in 16 years a government has provided an initiative to assist them.

Members who have never been involved in local government may not know that everyone asks, "What value do I get for my rates?" For every \$1 that a council spends about 33¢ comes from rates; the other 67¢ is

provided by State and Federal funding. The Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme is a great State initiative. There is never enough money from rates—we will not get into a discussion about rate pegging—to service roads, particularly in a substantial council area such as Gosford. The Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme will see Gosford council receive \$7 million over the next three years. Gosford City Council will put up its hand for further funding made available by our good Treasurer in order to address some of the issues with minor roads that do not normally attract through traffic or great numbers of vehicles but are in desperate need of attention.

These roads need bitumen resealing, rehabilitation or asphalt resurfacing. I have a list of those roads. I am pleased that in the current month Gosford City Council is spending \$500,000 on resurfacing roads in Springfield, Umina Beach, Terrigal and North Avoca. In the coming months the council will do works on roads in Holgate, Pearl Beach, Copacabana, Killcare, Horsfield Bay, Woy Woy, Peats Ridge, Phegans Bay—roads that the council could never afford to fix. The Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme is one of the best State Government programs I have seen since I have been in local government. The Government is mindful of the importance of local government and the need for local government to address the needs of their communities. I commend the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme and the Minister for Local Government for the work he has done in implementing that initiative. We must continue to support it.

I will refer to other budgetary aspects relating to roads. As I said, my electorate has a high commuter population and a vast majority of commuters drive to Sydney. I welcome the budget allocation of \$8.5 million for improvements to Wisemans Ferry Road and the Central Coast highway at the Kariong intersection. A project in West Gosford that is valued at more than \$170 million needs to be completed. This project has been on the agenda for about 14 years. What did we get from the Labor Government? Not a sausage, absolutely nothing, zero. However, our Government has put in train what I hope will result in the commencement of major construction works at the intersection of Brisbane Water Drive, Manns Roads and the Central Coast Highway in West Gosford in the second half of next year. These major works will affect not only my electorate but also the electorates of The Entrance and Terrigal. That intersection has more than 75,000 vehicle movements every day, and it is the main section of highway leading to the F3. My community will welcome this project.

Options are being looked at for the other main feeder road into Woy Woy peninsula, that is, Woy Woy Road. In relation to a proposed project worth \$30 million-plus that will remove a dangerous railway crossing, this budget includes an allocation of \$1 million for the initial planning phase. Just before the last State election an elderly gentleman driving across the intersection got halfway across and became distracted by the sound of the bells and lights and the barriers coming down. Rather than continuing across in his car, for some unusual reason he decided to make a U-turn and parked his vehicle on the railway tracks. A couple of quick-thinking locals assisted the gentleman out of his car when it was evident that it could not be moved. Within a matter of moments the vehicle was hit by a train, but no life was lost. Many motorists experience difficulties at this railway crossing. It is a secondary access to the freeway and has 15,000 to 20,000 vehicle movements per day. We welcome the funding for Woy Woy Road, the Woy Woy underpass and the elimination of this railway crossing.

My electorate extends to the beautiful Hawkesbury River. People can travel through Mangrove Mountain to places such as Gunderman and Spencer. The area is beautiful. A drive to Wisemans Ferry on a weekend is a lovely trip, but the road was neglected for many years by the Labor Government. It was pleasing to get a commitment from the Minister for Roads and Ports for a \$5 million program to upgrade Wisemans Ferry Road, and this budget has allocated an additional \$500,000 to start improving the road. That funding has been welcomed by the local council. Wisemans Ferry is a tourist destination and many people travel on Wisemans Ferry Road on weekends. Now it will be brought up to a reasonable and acceptable standard as a result of this budget. I turn now to health issues. About \$20.6 million has been allocated for the Central Coast Cancer Centre. I acknowledge the support of the Federal Government in making that centre a reality.

Dr Andrew McDonald: They paid for it.

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN: And this Government has allocated \$20.6 million towards the centre. People in my community need this service. Previously they were disadvantaged because they had to travel to Sydney or Newcastle for treatment. I believe the facility will be opened before long. It will be a welcome addition not only for the people of my electorate of Gosford but also for the people of the Central Coast. Another important issue is the Woy Woy Hospital rehabilitation unit. In October 2008 a public uproar was heard loud and clear when the rehabilitation unit at Woy Woy Hospital was relocated to Wyong.

I have mentioned many times before the demographics in my area. Woy Woy has always been a retirement spot for people. It was lampooned by the likes of Spike Milligan who called it "the world's only

above-ground cemetery". Many people choose to retire in Woy Woy. That is why the average age, more than 10,000 of the population on the Woy Woy peninsula, is 11 years above the national average in the 70-year-old plus category. That demographic group is forecast to increase by 38.5 per cent over the next decade. Those people need the rehabilitation unit. Aged people who have hips and knees that need to be attended to were vocal when the rehabilitation unit was relocated to Wyong. I give credit to our fine Minister for Health for honouring the commitment to bring back the rehabilitation unit to Woy Woy Hospital. The unit is currently under construction on the peninsula, and, on completion, it will be well received by my constituents. The unit should never have been taken away in the first place.

I move to some other aspects of the budget that have been of great benefit to my community. Through the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries the Government is directing \$64 million to the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program. That affects my electorate on the Central Coast. We have isolated communities in places that members have probably never heard of—Mooney Mooney, Bar Point, Little Wobby and Mullet Creek. These are areas around the Hawkesbury that many people do not know of but they require environmental protection. The beautiful township of Patonga is an area under consideration. Patonga might not be too famous but Steve Waugh thinks it is good enough to build a house there—and I will take Steve Waugh's word for it any time. He knows how good the place is.

The Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program will benefit my community and its environment. The budget contains an allocation for Tourism and the Arts. The Central Coast is a tourism destination. It is a step away from people in Sydney and from the international visitors who fly into Sydney. We welcome tourists to the Central Coast with open arms. It is a beautiful, natural area with plenty to see and do. Any funding to tourism brings benefits to my community. The \$125 million a year for Destination NSW will help to grow our economy through the tourism and events industry. The \$45 million to support major events is also most welcome. There is a substantial increase in the Education budget. That increase will benefit my community. I spoke about the age demographics in my electorate. We miss out in the 20- to 40-year age group but younger families with children need access to educational facilities.

Education is essential to any community. Under Labor, schools did not receive necessary maintenance. The budget allocates \$318 billion to school maintenance—a rise of more than \$20 million on last year and a 22 per cent increase compared with the previous Government's last budget. Money for school maintenance and education is well and truly welcome on the Central Coast. The budget will make a significant contribution to the State of New South Wales. However, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to highlight some of the ways in which those budget decisions will benefit my community. They are welcome, and I thank the Treasurer and the Premier for preparing a budget that will help to make the Central Coast and the electorate of Gosford even better places to live.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [4.03 p.m.]: This afternoon I touch on the state of the State and how the dynamic region of the Tamworth electorate fared in the State budget. When it comes to good financial management by a State government there are some fundamental issues to be considered. We need to live within our means and employ sound financial management strategies. We need to be a government that acts in the best interests of our communities and delivers for them by spending taxpayers' dollars wisely. In 2011 the Liberal-Nationals Government inherited a budget that was out of control, with the gap between income and expenses widening by the day. Much work has been done and we are reining in expenses, and will continue to do so. The Government is making the tough decisions to turn this State around. We need to return the budget to surplus and slow the growth in State net debt. The Treasury team—headed by the Treasurer, Mike Baird—is focusing on restoring strength to the State's finances so that we have the capacity to invest in the future.

We started work on fixing the budget deficit in 2011-12, with an estimated deficit of \$337 million. This compares with the 2010-11 budget forecast of a \$718 million deficit. The forecast deficit in 2012-13 of \$824 million is a result of expenditure reduction, with budget surpluses forecast for the next three years averaging \$674 million. Over the four years to 2015-16 there is a forecast expense growth of 3.3 per cent, which is lower than the expected average. New South Wales is not immune to the effects of international economic uncertainty. There is diminished confidence and a downturn in retail conditions resulting in more household savings and less consumption and a subsequent downturn in GST revenues.

There was a \$936 million loss in GST revenue for 2011-12. That reduction has continued in the 2012-13 fiscal year, with forecasts of a reduction of \$5.2 billion over the next four years. In addition, the Federal Government has reduced the 2012-13 revenue to the State by \$690 million and infrastructure funding by \$234 million in an accounting shuffle aimed at enabling the Federal Government to achieve a surplus. The

impact of these reductions in revenue has weakened our financial position. However, our focus needs to be on taking the action required to meet those challenges, as well as on building our capacity to manage growth and to work towards a sustainable surplus. How do we do that?

Mr Paul Toole: Tell us—how do we do it?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I welcome the interjection from the member for Bathurst—a great member of The Nationals who is working hard in this government towards a reform agenda, based on a clear direction and strong leadership. Key priorities include maintaining the State's triple-A credit rating and introducing a wages policy of 2.5 per cent, in line with other States. State-owned corporations at that level will deliver \$100 million a year. A labour expense cap will be introduced, with a target of 1.2 per cent per annum reduction in labour costs growth, with nurses, police officers and schoolteachers quarantined from this measure. Directors general have been given the opportunity to look at the way they run their departments and to identify savings and efficiencies. That equates to approximately 10,000 jobs and will save \$2.2 billion. In addition, there is the voluntary redundancy program with a goal of 5,000 positions.

Public sector leave balances will be managed properly. We reformed the police death and disability scheme, to make it sustainable while supporting injured officers returning to work. We will reform WorkCover to provide greater return-to-work pathways for injured workers and to ease the bottom line of businesses. A great deal of work is being done on broadening tax reform, on tax harmonisation and on providing a single portal for tax lodgement. A review is underway of the funding arrangements for fire and emergency services because the current levy has long been criticised for being one of the most inefficient in the State.

There will be a major focus on revitalising the housing and construction sector. In 1995 more than 55,000 new homes were approved; however, in the past five years housing approvals averaged just 30,000. That trend is reflected in my region. Of development approvals lodged with the Tamworth Regional Council in the fiscal year 2010-11, the total number of new dwellings was 276. In 2011-12 that number dropped to 237. Gunnedah—on the back of the resources sector—is a stand-out performer. Gunnedah Shire Council's 2010-11 annual report shows that it processed 226 development applications during the past 12 months—an increase of 37 per cent on last year. New South Wales needs to aspire to be more like Gunnedah.

We need to turn new housing figures around. To achieve that there is assistance in the form of more than half a billion dollars of new infrastructure funding and the most generous first home buyers scheme in Australia, to kickstart housing development and boost supply. From 1 October the First Home Owner Grant will more than double to \$15,000 and will then continue at \$10,000 from 2014 for first-time homebuyers of new properties. Existing first home buyer stamp duty concessions will apply to new properties valued at up to \$650,000. Also, the new home grant will provide \$5,000 to all non first home buyers of new properties. Overall, some first home buyers will be \$19,000 better off than under the old scheme. That is a deposit to obtain the great Australian dream.

The existing Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme will be expanded to facilitate up to \$1 billion in local infrastructure. We have reformed the New South Wales electricity distribution networks to put downward pressure on prices and paved the way for the sale of electricity generators with a potential return to the State of \$3 billion, of which \$1 billion will be quarantined for regional projects. We are reforming Corrective Services and making prisons more efficient in line with community needs and locations. Long-term leasing of Port Botany, Port Kembla and Sydney's desalination plant is planned, with funds going into Infrastructure NSW flowing on to Restart NSW and then through to us in regional New South Wales through Resources for Regions. When it comes to service delivery in our communities there has long been a call for local control.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Tamworth does not need any help from the member for Myall Lakes.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: People do not want to be told from afar how to run their businesses, but they still want assistance when needed. It is a partnership, not a dictatorship. We have localised public health services to give more say to those on the ground in running local hospitals. In education, Local Schools, Local Decisions has been introduced, which empowers local principals and communities to implement the education resources they need in improving the opportunities for our kids. We have started reforming the State transport network and operators. It is also about getting government out of programs and services where providers can do it much better, with real outcomes. As chair of the parliamentary community services committee, I am heading an inquiry into the devolution of services to non-government organisations.

Small business is the engine room of the economy and we know it deserves the full support of government. We need to focus on creating regional job opportunities and making it easier to do business. We have established the office of the Small Business Commissioner to reduce red tape and regulatory burdens. We have created the small business helpline Smallbiz Connect to provide front-line support when small businesses need it. We have raised the threshold for payroll tax to \$689,000. I know margins are getting skinnier; buying online continues to be a challenge for the retail sector, which finds it increasingly difficult to make ends meet competing against those who do not have the day-to-day operating overheads that come with opening the front door and turning on the lights. We have thrown our support behind those most vulnerable. There is an increased push into the disability sector, homelessness, refuge and crisis accommodation, and in mental health services with a new Mental Health Commission and emergency services.

With the economic backdrop, in the lead-up to the budget all members of Parliament were told to expect the worst. However, for those in the Tamworth electorate our region did exceptionally well given the tough conditions. Our region plays a major role in the economic growth of New South Wales, and that has been acknowledged with the Tamworth electorate receiving a significant increase in funding in the 2012-13 State budget. The New South Wales Government invested \$148 million in our region, which was an increase of over \$49 million from last year's budget. The big winners were Tamworth Hospital, which will receive \$100 million coupled with \$110 million from the Federal Government. The Manilla Road upgrade will get \$3 million after an original election commitment of \$2 million—an extra \$1 million.

There is \$6.75 million for the Split Rock Dam to Barraba pipeline to provide clean and fresh running water to the town of Barraba for the first time. They have been calling for this for a long time. Coupled with local and Federal government funding, the total comes to \$20 million. TAFE New England Institute Tamworth Campus will get approximately \$12 million in new work. Education is a key focus. Recently a multimillion-dollar project was announced for Gunnedah. There will be a brand-new special purpose school, the G. S. Kidd Memorial School, on a greenfield site in Gunnedah for kids who need assisted learning. It will be most welcome. The Gunnedah railway bridge planning project will get \$600,000 to look at a second railway overpass and the heavy mass limit pinch point in Gunnedah, which was identified in the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan announced recently by Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Transport.

The Department of Community Services will receive \$4 million, and increasing the size of Chaffey Dam from 62,000 to 100,000 megalitres will cost \$12 million. That will ensure we have a secure water supply into the future. There is further funding for Keepit Dam fishways and Split Rock and Keepit Dam upgrades. It proves that this Government is listening to our community. That has been backed up with solid cases for funding and by building relationships with Ministers. I know because I have knocked on their doors. Tomorrow I will welcome to the Tamworth electorate the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, Andrew Constance, to open a carers conference in Tamworth. We look forward to that. Recently, the Attorney General was in our electorate to discuss law and order issues. Ministers have listened, and we are seeing the benefits of that hard work paying off. They have shown faith in the Tamworth electorate and it is my job to work with them to get our fair share and to keep us firmly on the radar when it comes to funding projects and growing jobs in our region.

We have a strong history of growth and will continue to push hard for regional development by working hard together with all sectors. But we can always get smarter about the way we do things to ensure we attract long-term sustainable projects that will develop jobs and economic growth. We often talk about decentralisation—bringing large government departments to regional New South Wales. However, in my view we are best served by having smaller units of those larger departments rather than the whole department relocated because it leaves us less exposed and less vulnerable to the vagaries of governments making economic decisions. That perfect case has just been highlighted. We must think about where we need to be over the next five, seven or nine years and beyond. Some key priorities include transport by road, rail and air. Tamworth airport has recently had a security upgrade, which now positions us for growth in that sector.

We have a very strong trucking industry, being perfectly situated between Sydney and Brisbane for overnight runs. An intermodal transport hub certainly needs consideration. We have the rail freight centre in Tamworth, but is it big enough? Have we outgrown that site already? Is it positioned well enough to manage infrastructure upgrades with road and rail movements? Coal trains are fast becoming a regular feature on the landscape in the Gunnedah Basin. We need to be ready to meet the increase in movements—for example, 1.5 kilometre trains every 23 minutes through Gunnedah, cutting the town in half. Our rail passenger service needs to be examined. Tamworth to Sydney once a day is not sufficient for our growing communities and we need to explore our links into Newcastle. However, any proposed service needs to be viable and ultimately sustainable.

I see enormous potential for growth in our poultry industry in chicken meat and eggs. At present the industry employs upwards of 800 people—not to mention the logistic support—but this industry needs to be encouraged and our region is perfectly positioned geographically to increase the industry's capacity. Our two main abattoirs and the saleyards are performing well and there are plans for expansion in that area. Gunnedah saleyards—as you will know, Mr Deputy-Speaker, as a former stock and station agent and auctioneer of renown—holds the title of the second-largest cattle-selling centre in New South Wales behind Dubbo. Look out, Dubbo, we are coming for you.

We are heading in the right direction for being a centre of excellence in health, with the redevelopment of Tamworth Hospital due to start later this year—in a matter of weeks. It is due to be completed by 2017. The new cancer care centre is almost completed. The expansion in the university's department of rural health for training and research in the local health sector is an excellent example of where the Federal and State governments are working well together to get outcomes for our communities. In education, TAFE plays a major role in our region and provides high-quality training. Our recent investment backs up the push to offer relevant vocational and educational training programs for our people.

Links with universities must also be included in the equation. Those training opportunities must dovetail with the needs of industry, particularly the aviation, trades, automotive and mining sectors. We welcome the investment in our region from the mining industry but there is an impact in terms of providing personnel. We are seeing a drain of local skilled workers, including apprentices to mining, and we need to make sure that businesses that invest in people are not disadvantaged. We are working towards providing a solution to that challenge with a proposed mining trades training centre in our region, which will offer courses that serve the needs of all those who operate in our communities. One example of the need for this facility and the need for us to get on the front foot is the Whitehaven mine in the Gunnedah region—232, or 42 per cent, of Whitehaven's 556 employees reside in the Gunnedah shire, which means local jobs, local people, and local opportunities.

Agriculture plays an important role in the region and contributed \$14.486 million, or 3.4 per cent, to the New South Wales economy in the 2010-2011 financial year. Wheat is the most important crop commodity to New South Wales. The strategic land use plan is currently being developed to protect prime agricultural land while providing the mining and gas sectors with the opportunity to invest and meet the growing demands of the State's energy needs. It is interesting to note that the resources sector in Western Australia makes up the lion's share of the nation's economic numbers. New South Wales has that potential and needs to be part of the resources sector. Tamworth Regional Council is securing a future water supply by increasing the capacity of Chaffey Dam. That water security plays a role in attracting new business—but it needs to be affordable. Tamworth currently pays the highest water rates in the State.

A lot of work is being done impressing upon the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal that the Peel Valley is disadvantaged. In addition, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority plans to further restrict water use, which has resulted in angry landholders. Tamworth Regional Council is in that mix with industry. That is a snapshot of the state of the State and how the Tamworth electorate benefited from the State budget under the wonderful hand of the Treasurer, Mike Baird. I firmly believe in working together. This is about the community working with a State Government that is listening. The Tamworth electorate is working with the State Government to ensure that it stays strong, vibrant, and an attractive region to invest in. The Tamworth electorate is making sure that it has the resources it needs to make New South Wales number one again. And in making New South Wales number one again the State needs strong, vibrant, progressive regional communities. For far too long regional communities were ignored. That has changed. Regional communities are starting to see investment and interest in the important role they play. The Tamworth electorate is seeing changes and its representatives need to make the right decisions in difficult economic times. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I thank the House for its indulgence. Another way that this Government is assisting our regional areas is the Community Building Partnership program. It gives community organisations the opportunity to get further involved in their community and provide the assets that make up the social fabric of our communities. Rural communities need smaller areas and organisations such as the showgrounds, ladies auxiliaries, pony clubs and shooting clubs, and those organisations need capital investment to provide the infrastructure for community events. The Community Building Partnership program is being rolled out across this great State of ours and is a critical part of making sure that capital investment occurs. The community is seeing those changes.

The community is seeing decisions made in the best interests of the people, and the Government is delivering on those decisions. Regional areas were ignored for far too long and had decisions imposed upon them from the twenty-fourth floor of Macquarie Tower. Regional people were asking why they were not being

listened to. The residents of New South Wales are starting to see public sector reform, which includes voluntary redundancies for back-office jobs that have no relevance to the front line. In the past getting the job done and doing business in regional New South Wales has proved difficult. The Government is ensuring that the savings made from public sector reforms go into front-line positions in the form of doctors, nurses, teachers, paramedics, firefighters and police.

Mr Paul Toole: More police, and you got more in Tamworth?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I acknowledge the interjection by the former mayor of, and now member for, Bathurst. Our region worked hard to get more police. The Oxley Local Area Command has received 25 probationary constables since December 2011—record numbers. The authorised strength of the Oxley Local Area Command is 134 police officers: currently it has 150 police officers on the books. I believe in building the resources and giving the police the numbers they need to do their work. For far too long regional police were left wanting and were not supported. Police numbers were built up in the city but regional areas were left behind. I am pleased to say that finally there is a balance, with common sense being brought to bear in the way police numbers are distributed. The police Minister has ensured distribution is fair and equitable and there is balance in relation to the numbers.

At a recent law and order meeting in Tamworth the Oxley Local Area Commander said that of the 150 police officers under his command the number of general duties police officers had jumped from 42 to 60. In terms of resourcing within the region, I will not be resting on my laurels and assuming there are enough teachers, police and nurses. I will continue to knock on doors and pressure Ministers to remind them that in regional New South Wales, as they are aware, we can do more. The Government can do more for regional seats such as Bathurst, Taree, Orange, Dubbo and on the North Coast such as Myall Lakes. My electorate's focus is to stay strong locally, to be versatile with industry options, and to push for prosperity and resilience. The Tamworth electorate should aim to punch above its weight in support of this great State of ours—and Tamworth is a major part of this great State of ours.

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

COAL AND COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [4.30 p.m.]: I am pleased to be able to speak to the petition today as the electorate representative of my community and, in particular, the people of the Southern Highlands who have in very large numbers supported this petition. The petition has been signed by more than 11,000 people who want to voice their concern about the prospect of uncontrolled mining and coal seam gas production in the Goulburn electorate. I know their concerns are shared with other communities and members in this place. The Southern Highlands Coal Action Group, led by Kim and Peter Martin, who I am delighted to say are with us today, became active in 2010 when the possibility of further mining in the Southern Highlands first became public. Indeed, it was they who picked up in investment journals the possibility of local mining and first brought it to my attention. The petitioners have also requested a moratorium be placed on any current or proposed mining or production-related activity in the Southern Highlands, both above and below the surface.

While the New South Wales Government does not support a moratorium on current and potential activities, we also do not support uncontrolled mining and coal seam gas extraction. It is essential that the proper protections are put in place if the industry proceeds. Indeed, we have not granted a single coal seam gas exploration licence since the election because the Government worked to implement new controls to regulate the industry. The Government is continuing to work hard to finalise its strategic regional land use policy, which is a ground-breaking approach to resolve conflicts over competing land uses and to find the right balance. There has been extensive, comprehensive and exhaustive consultation on the policy and I am confident that the Government will deliver on its commitment to protect what must be protected through a robust and transparent process.

In 2010, during the time of the former Labor Government, when the possibility of mining in the Southern Highlands first became public, the community mobilised immediately to voice its opposition to the possible future presence of an uncontrolled resources industry in the local area and some would say any resources

industry at all. I was committed to ensure that the views of my electorate were heard by the former Labor Government and, more recently, heard by my own Government. Tourism is an important component of our local economy. Visitors come to enjoy the seasonal changes, and go sightseeing, walking or wine tasting. They take pleasure in the green, rural landscape. It is crucial that these attractions and qualities are maintained. Tourism must not and cannot be the only consideration. Water security and water quality, land subsidence and preserving the integrity of the aquifers must also be in our minds. The highlands are reputedly blessed with some of the best aquifers in New South Wales.

The challenge for both miners and farmers is that these wonderful aquifers sit above the Sydney coal basin, a huge coal seam extending from Wollongong out to sea, and north to the Hunter Valley and the Liverpool Plains. It is the view of these petitioners, and undoubtedly many others who did not sign the petition, that the aquifers must be preserved as a first priority. The protection of the State's aquifers is also the Government's priority, and I am very pleased that the Minister for Primary Industries has joined us in the Chamber this afternoon. The Aquifer Interference Policy will be released as part of a strategic lands package that will provide clear messages to assess and protect our valuable aquifers and underground water resources across the State. Our area is to be mapped under the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy before the end of the year. I thank the Southern Highlands Coal Action Group for its significant contributions made during the consultation process.

I assure those present in the gallery today that my colleague the Minister for Resources and Energy, who attended NSW 2021, a forum held in Mittagong earlier this year, is aware of the concerns raised by the community and also by me. The Minister continues to implement stringent new controls regulating the coal and coal seam gas industries for the protection of our environment, our water and our agricultural land. The people of New South Wales who voted for change so overwhelmingly in March 2011 should know that the Government they elected on that historic day has done a great deal since. Under the former Labor Government, coal and coal seam gas exploration licences were approved and renewed with no community awareness or input, and with no concern for agricultural or environmental impacts. The O'Farrell Government has worked hard to ensure that our policies do reflect community concerns, and balance the interests of competing stakeholders while recognising the importance of both maintaining investor confidence in New South Wales and minimising sovereign risk. That means the implementation of a clear and comprehensive policy.

The finalisation of the Government's Strategic Regional Land Use Policy has seen enormous effort from the Government, the community, farmer organisations and industry. In the meantime, the coal seam gas industry in New South Wales is now subject to the toughest controls anywhere in Australia. Since the election, the O'Farrell Government has implemented a number of measures, including imposing a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing, banning the use of evaporation ponds, banning the use of BTEX chemicals as additives, releasing a draft code of practice for coal seam gas explorers, completing a statewide audit of coal and coal seam gas exploration licences, and a number of other important measures. In addition, the Government has announced that the royalty holiday for coal seam gas producers will end and that a new Land and Water Commissioner will be appointed to oversee the regulation of exploration activities on strategic agricultural land.

A standardised land access agreement will be developed and new regional community funds established to ensure that local communities receive a share of their region's assets if mining is ever allowed to proceed. Nobody can deny that this is a challenging issue and uncertainty is a terrible affliction for a community both socially and economically. I remain confident, as always, that the Government's policy will protect our valuable agricultural land, our water, our aquifers, and the environment of the Southern Highlands. After 16 years of a Government that paid political lip-service to the environment while allowing coal and gas exploration and extraction to proceed without the proper protections in place, it is time to do the right thing by the people of this great State.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [4.35 p.m.]: This is a very important issue. I acknowledge the member for Goulburn who has a seat to the west of mine, but certainly within the area that we broadly call the Illawarra and the Southern Highlands. I am sure people from the Southern Highlands are in the gallery today. I know you would have made a significant trip from that beautiful part of the world. I thank you for joining us to hear the discussion on this important issue. Coal seam gas is an issue that we need to get right. The Leader of the Opposition has made it perfectly clear in many speeches and many public forums over the past 12 months that mistakes were made in the past. It is now time to put science before action in relation to coal seam gas. It is time that we put water before gas. Members who are fortunate enough to live in the beautiful part of the Illawarra and the Southern Highlands know that we are in a precious part of the world. We have a unique environment.

We hold a significant portion of Sydney's water supply in our catchment areas. We are a large agricultural area, particularly in the Southern Highlands and the regions to the south. We have an intense tourism industry; it is a place that people come to visit. All these issues cannot be put aside and regarded as second rate to an emerging industry. They cannot get in the road of investment and development in this industry. They must be considered carefully and scientifically, and evidence must come before action. When it comes to coal seam gas, we on this side of the House have made it very clear that we are supportive of an evidence-based approach. We support the Commonwealth's \$100 million investment in research into this industry. We are clear that agricultural, water and other precious areas must come first. We know that if these precious areas are lost, they simply cannot be retrieved quickly, if at all.

It is important that the communities of the Illawarra and the Southern Highlands understand that both sides of this House want an approach where the science comes first, and where production and exploration come second. My community has a long history of mining. My community is not anti-mining. However, the community is extremely cautious about an industry that is looking to explore in and around our water catchment areas and the obviously sensitive areas within the Goulburn and Southern Highlands regions. The community wants to get this right and is extremely concerned that decisions made in haste will be decisions for which we have to pay for generations to come.

It is critical that we take the time to get this right; that we use the evidence and the science before any action is taken. That is critical when it comes to coal seam gas extraction and exploration. This afternoon people from the Illawarra and the broader region will be talking to Ministers and other parliamentarians about investing in this region. We must make sure that we are open for business, but we cannot be selective about those businesses. We have very important tourism, wine, food and agricultural industries in the area. We must ensure that those industries are given the same priority as the coal seam gas extraction industry when it comes to emerging industries for the region.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [4.40 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak in support of the petition and in support of my colleague the Minister for Family and Community Services, the member for Goulburn. The hypocrisy of the member for Keira knows no bounds. It was the former Labor Government that issued every lease and licence, with no thought or consultation and it is this Government that has been left to do the science, despite the rhetoric of the member for Keira. If Labor had done it years ago, we would not be in this position today. My electorate of Camden is close to the Goulburn electorate, so I am very familiar with the beauty of the countryside that attracts tourists in their droves on the weekends and during school holidays. The transparent commitment of the O'Farrell Government is reflected today because it was this Government that decided any petition with more than 10,000 signatures should be debated in the House. That is democracy in action.

This procedure gave the Southern Highlands Coal Action Group an opportunity to let members in this place know their opposition to the prospect of uncontrolled mining and coal seam gas production in the Southern Highlands—something experienced under Labor. Members of the Southern Highlands Coal Action Group became active from the moment the possibility of further mining in the Southern Highlands became public knowledge. They have been very vocal in their opposition to uncontrolled activities and they are also calling for a moratorium to be placed on any current or proposed mining or production-related activity within the Southern Highlands. Minister Goward consistently represented the views of her electorate to the former Labor Government and continues to make them known to the O'Farrell Government. However, the former Labor Government showed little regard for environmental concerns, ignored communities, and approved coal and coal seam gas exploration licences with no consultation.

The O'Farrell Government has said consistently that the coal seam gas industry must proceed only if the proper protections for our water, agricultural land and environment are in place. I understand the Minister for Resources and Energy attended the NSW 2021 forum held in Mittagong earlier this year; locals did not hold back in making very clear their feelings about coal, and coal seam gas exploration and extraction. The Minister also attended Cawdor Public School in my area to hear the concerns of my constituents and the concerns of people in the neighbouring electorate of Wollondilly. Minister Hartcher, Minister Hazzard and Minister Hodgkinson have been working hard to finalise the Government's Strategic Regional Land Use Policy. The Government's Aquifer Interference Policy, which will be released as part of the strategic land package, will provide clear measures to assess and protect our valuable aquifers and underground water resources across the State. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [4.43 p.m.]: I commend the people of the Southern Highlands for bringing this petition to the House. I reiterate the comments of the member for Keira that there is no doubt the former Labor Government made a mistake in giving these licences away.

Ms Pru Goward: Say sorry.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I will say sorry. There you go: I said sorry. It needs to be fixed; we need to do something about it. I do not have a problem with that, nor does our leader, and we have said that many times. However, it is up to the Government to make decisions, implement the changes and impose the rules. We have sat in this Chamber and heard repeated comments that the Government is going to do A, B, C and X, Y and Z to change what the former Labor Government had done. However, in this case the Government does not seem to be doing much at all. That is why the people of Southern Highlands have brought their petition to the Chamber. I was fortunate enough to sit in the Jubilee Room several months ago and hear Professor Pells and another person speak. It gave me a fascinating insight and I appreciated that those scientists managed to impart the information at a level I could understand. They found there were problems with the Aquifer Interference Policy and unknown impacts of the science of coal seam gas. I accept that that is fact and so does the scientific community.

However, the question is: What is the Government going to do about it? The petition was signed by 13,000 people, some of whom have come all the way from the Southern Highlands, yet what they heard from their local member today was quite a bland statement. They are asking for something more and they deserve more. We must get the science on this right. Minister Goward acknowledged that there would no longer be a holiday window with royalties not coming to the Government. That gives us an important insight: royalties will come to the Government, which means there will be an expansion of coal seam gas. I live in the Hunter Valley—the mines, the wines and tourism sector. We have a coal seam gas problem on our doorstep. That is why I emphatically support the current position of the Labor Opposition—and I ask the Government to support it also—again saying sorry for the problem that was created. However, only the Government can fix it; the Opposition cannot. In order to fix the problem the Government must halt any action, do the science and make sure it is right. It is the Government's responsibility and it must fix the problem. [*Time expired.*]

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.46 p.m.], by leave: I thank the Leader of the House for allowing me to make a contribution to this discussion. As a member of The Greens in this Parliament I wanted to make a contribution to this discussion because it is one of the most important issues that strikes at the very heart of the huge challenge facing so many communities across New South Wales, Australia and internationally—how do we safeguard our land and water for the people and for agricultural uses, and how do we generate energy for our State? First, I grant the apology and admission by the member for Cessnock that Labor has a horrific record on coal seam gas. The disgraceful approach of handing out licences and the royalty holiday in gifting these licences with the most lax consultation and involvement has led to so much stress and heartache for communities. It has been a burden on so many people.

I also acknowledge the supporters from the Southern Highlands community who are in the public gallery. They have rallied with respect to this issue, seeking to protect their homes and farms. The Southern Highlands is an area of great beauty and of great value economically to New South Wales. The Government had to deal with the mess left behind by the Labor Government and to protect these lands. The strategic land use policy has been at the heart of dealing with this issue, but the jury is still out about the policy's effectiveness. Stage 1 of the draft Aquifer Interference Policy has a huge loophole that exempts mining and gas projects. It states:

General exemptions from the need to hold an aquifer interference approval in water sources that underlie Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land will be specified in the Aquifer Interference Regulation and are as follows:

- State significant mining and coal seam gas development proposals that have been granted either a gateway certificate or development consent (where the gateway does not apply) under the EP&A Act ...

That leaves the door open for these State-significant mining and coal seam gas developments. It is important that the Government take strong steps to ensure that this issue is addressed. The Greens will introduce the Responsible Mining (Protecting Land, Water and Communities) Bill, which will deliver what this Government has not yet delivered and what the Labor Government failed to deliver—that is, a clear no-go zone for mineral and gas exploration and mining and gas production. It is important that we achieve a paradigm shift with regard to the exploitation of these non-renewable resources. We must focus on renewable energy. This Government has still not produced its renewable energy action plan. It is taking some steps, but the jury is still out on them. It is important that we pursue this campaign and ensure that the Government does the right thing and protects our precious water.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL**

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.50 p.m.]: I am proud of my history in local government, which is the tier of government closest to the people. Last week I concluded my term after having served eight years as a councillor on Bankstown City Council, and for five of those years I was the mayor. During my time on council I was pleased to have the opportunity to deliver for my community. I oversaw the upgrade of Bankstown central business district and the construction of the underpass. I am particularly proud of the Bankstown Arts Centre, the Library and Knowledge Centre, the Women's and Children's Health Centre, town centre upgrades and the record number of community infrastructure projects undertaken throughout the area.

Unlike representatives in other tiers of government, councillors must be accessible and are the direct point of contact with the people. This Saturday a new council will be elected. As all members are aware, emotions are frayed and nerves are tight during election campaigns. My experience of council elections is that they have been cordial and professional. Sadly, this year members of the local branch of the Liberal Party have decided to try a different strategy. I have witnessed some of the most despicable political tactics in the last few weeks that I have ever seen in all my time in politics. The Liberal Party campaign in Bankstown has been spearheaded by Geoffrey Grasso. Mr Grasso has overseen a new, aggressive strategy and is responsible for a recent political advertisement in our local newspaper that mirrored the letters to the editor section.

Mr Daryl Maguire: Point of order: It is unparliamentary to launch an attack on people outside this place. I understand that council elections will be held on Saturday and that that has made people emotional. However, attacking a person who cannot defend himself is inappropriate and unparliamentary. If the member wishes to make a statement about council elections, she should do so without attacking any individuals.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I advise the member for Bankstown to tread carefully as she concludes her private member's statement.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: A political advertisement in the local newspaper mirrors the letters to the editor section. The advertisement featured letters written by Liberal Party campaigners and had the word "advertisement" in the smallest possible type at the top. The advertisement included a claim that the Labor Party would introduce a congestion tax. That is a complete fabrication. It is surprising that that gentleman has found the time to run such an extensive campaign given he works as a full-time staffer for the member for East Hills. However, I will leave that topic for another day. I have had numerous reports from constituents that posters and other campaign material has been delivered to the office of the member for East Hills. I am sure it was delivered by accident. However, I am equally sure that there is no truth to the claims that various Liberal Party candidates have been seen running in and out of Mr Brooke's office during working hours.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: Attacks on members must be made by way of substantive motion, not in private members' statements. Mr Acting-Speaker, I ask you to direct the member to return to matters concerning her electorate.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Kiama is correct: Reflections on members of either House should be made by way of substantive motion. The member for Bankstown should refrain from attacking members of either House. If the member for Bankstown breaches the standing orders in this regard, I will have no hesitation in directing her to resume her seat.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Bankstown Liberal Party members who have made desperate claims trying to link Labor Party members with property developers should be careful when it comes to accusations about developers. I know that Najji Najjar and Michael Tadros, who are operatives for Liberal Party hard Right, are both known to be friendly with developers. Council Najji Najjar has benefited from—

Mr Daryl Maguire: Mr Acting-Speaker, I once again draw your attention to an attack on people outside this place. It is unparliamentary. I ask that you direct the member for Bankstown to restrict her comments to matters that are relevant to her electorate rather than cast aspersions on people who cannot defend themselves.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I have twice cautioned the member for Bankstown. If she continues in this vein I will have no hesitation in directing her to resume her seat. This is her final warning.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Local Liberal Party members have also made the ridiculous claim that the Labor Party plans to introduce parking metres—

Mr Daryl Maguire: I believe that the member for Bankstown should declare an interest. A very close relative of hers is a candidate in the Bankstown local government election. Mr Acting-Speaker, I again draw your attention to the fact that the member is attacking people who cannot defend themselves and that she has not disclosed that relationship to a candidate.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Bankstown will be judged outside this Chamber. She should tread carefully. However, her time for speaking has now expired.

ROSE BAY MARINA

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.55 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to an important issue for many people in the community that I represent; that is, the proposed further development of the Rose Bay Marina. I am strongly opposed to the proposed expansion of the marina. The development application will be considered by the Sydney East Joint Regional Planning Panel at a meeting on 13 September 2012 following receipt of an assessment report from Woollahra council. The council at its meeting on 27 August 2012 decided that it would make a submission to the panel strongly supporting the recommendation in the staff assessment report that the development application should be refused.

For those less familiar with Rose Bay, it is a special part of the eastern suburbs and residents most appropriately want to see it protected and preserved for future generations. The area has always attracted visitors and tourists from across the State and beyond who enjoy the views of Sydney Harbour from its unique position. Indeed, it has been a treasured part of the local community for its beauty, heritage and amenity since 1926. The Rose Bay promenade and seawall physically define the harbour-side edge of Rose Bay. They are historically significant, being two of the most important beautification and road construction schemes undertaken by Woollahra council in the 1920s and the largest and most prominent of their type in New South Wales. Both structures have already been recognised by the National Trust of Australia and the promenade is listed on the Woollahra council local environmental plan as a heritage item.

The proposed new development seeks to extend the existing marina at Rose Bay with the addition of a third eastern arm catering for 37 new berths and nine more berths on an existing arm. The development application was lodged with Woollahra council on 2 April 2012. It comes after two previous development applications to redevelop the existing marina in 2006 and 2008, both of which were refused by the council and which faced strong opposition from the community. An appeal against the second refusal was upheld by the Land and Environment Court in August 2009, but importantly with the exclusion of the eastern arm and a number of other berths. Conditions were also imposed to limit the height of boats. On Tuesday 29 May 2012 I joined about 100 residents at a community meeting to discuss the proposal and to listen to their concerns. Like me, the community is specifically concerned about the bulk and scale of the proposal, the visual impact of the marina and loss of views, the diminished amenity of the promenade, the negative impact on parking and traffic congestion, noise pollution, and the possible harmful impact on marine life.

These concerns have been raised by many residents in correspondence to my office. Following this meeting, and because of the level of correspondence I have received from residents opposed to the development, I wrote to the Minister for Roads and Ports to inform him of the level of community opposition, and of my own opposition, to the development application. However, the Minister is not the consent authority for this development application; he does not assess or make a decision about its planning merits. The consent authority for the development authority is the joint regional planning panel. On 1 June 2012 I submitted my formal objection to the development application in submissions to both Woollahra council and the joint regional planning panel. I then began assisting residents in their petition against the marina development, seeking long-term State heritage protection for the Rose Bay promenade and seawall. More than 800 signatures were collected by a small group of residents in a matter of weeks, which shows the level of opposition to this development.

I lodged the petition on 16 July 2012 and it was tabled in this House on 14 August 2012. I have also written a letter of support to assist my local residents in their application for an interim State heritage order for the Rose Bay promenade, seawall and adjacent waters. Rose Bay is an expanse of great natural harbour-side beauty—a vista that opens up to exquisite visual expanses of water and views out to Shark Island. Children canoe there; people jog and walk on the promenade; people have coffee by the waterside; and people fish, sail

and relax there. It is a precious gem and it must be protected. On that basis I strongly object to the development application that is before the joint regional planning panel. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

SHOALHAVEN REGIONAL CANCER CARE CENTRE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [5.00 p.m.]: This afternoon I speak about an important piece of health infrastructure currently under construction in the South Coast electorate. I am sure this will be of particular interest to my colleague the member for Kiama. The Shoalhaven Regional Cancer Care Centre will significantly improve access to quality cancer services for patients and their families who currently have to travel considerable distances to other centres in Wollongong and Sydney. The project will establish a new purpose-built regional cancer centre at Nowra adjacent to Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital.

I acknowledge the late Dr Ray Cleary, OAM, whose vision and determination ensured this project commenced. Dr Cleary was a former senior teacher at Bomaderry High School and was integral in the establishment of the Shoalhaven campus of the University of Wollongong. Following his passing in 2005, his wife, Zita, ensured that his work continued and that his vision became a reality. The \$34.8 million Shoalhaven Regional Cancer Care Centre is a joint project by the Federal Government's Health and Hospital Fund and the New South Wales State Government. It will respond to the growing demand for cancer services and it will provide a quality networked service.

The new centre will deliver one linear accelerator, two radiotherapy bunkers, a range of associated specialist medical equipment, 14 chemotherapy treatment spaces, patient consultation areas, clinical trial facilities, patient information and support services, a 10-bedroom patient and care accommodation facility, visitor parking for seven cars, and dedicated parking with boom gate access for 55 cars for patients, carers and staff. It is worth noting that the New South Wales Government recently delivered on its commitment to provide an additional 124 formalised car spaces at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital—an issue I have spoken about many times in this place over the past eight years. The additional car spaces will assist patients, carers and staff to access both the hospital and the cancer centre.

Recently I had the pleasure of joining my colleague the member for Kiama and the Mayor of Shoalhaven, Councillor Paul Green, at the Shoalhaven Regional Cancer Care Centre to witness the pouring of the ground slab of the bunker that will house the linear accelerator. It was a wonderful day and it was exciting to see all the activity occurring around the area. I was also delighted to be informed by the contractor, Lipman Constructions, that progress in some areas of construction is slightly ahead of schedule. I congratulate Lipman Constructions on investing in our local community through the employment of local subcontractors and a strong Indigenous employment program. Lipman has seen the benefit in employing locals and investing in the Shoalhaven economy. Since commencement of construction, the following key milestones have been completed. The carer accommodation in-ground services have been roughed in and the retaining wall has been waterproofed and backfilled in preparation for the ground slabs to be formed.

The lift wall to level one has been poured and stripped to expose the sample timber grain finish, which will be visible from the ground floor up. All basement ground slabs have been completed, all gabion walls are complete and all retaining walls have been erected. The formwork to level two oncology has been stripped to allow the commencement of services on level one. Structural steel has been delivered and erected on site. In-ground services have been completed in external areas. Level one suspended slabs to form the CT simulation and orthovoltage room has been formed. The edge boards, in-ground services and ground preparation works have been carried out for the bunker ground slab. The local community is fully behind this project and has been for some time. Together the community has raised an extraordinary amount of \$1.6 million to improve and expand the patients' and carers' accommodation facilities at the site, and this has come from a community that is not particularly wealthy but a community that has banded together to contribute significantly to this project.

I acknowledge the Bay and Basin Cancer Support Group, spearheaded by Mr Dick Manwarring, who each year hosts a benefit night at the St Georges Basin Country Club to raise important funds. Often themed, the event is attended by hundreds of people and many contribute significant prizes to be auctioned. I do not think I have missed one year. It is a fantastic event and very often amounts of \$28,000 or \$35,000 are raised. The Bay and Basin Cancer Support Group plan on using the funds that it has raised to equip a room in the Shoalhaven Regional Cancer Care Centre, which will be used by patients and their families when they need somewhere to relax and to find solace and support. This project has been driven by the community for the community and I am pleased that the New South Wales Government is getting on with the job of delivering such an important facility for the Shoalhaven community.

BANK TRANSFER FEES

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.05 p.m.]: Tonight I draw to the attention of the House the justifiable concerns of one of my constituents concerning the predatory behaviour of banks, particularly one bank. My constituent is Gary Dargan, who is a longstanding resident of my electorate. I have known him for at least 20 years, during which time he has resided in the suburb Hinchinbrook. Having had to cease work as a result of ill health, he now spends a significant amount of time in Malaysia studying Islam and Islamic studies at university. He spoke to me in June about some of the behaviour of banks to which he has been exposed.

Mr Dargan banks with the ANZ bank. He receives regular superannuation payments that are paid into his ANZ bank account. Part of that money naturally finds its way to Mr Dargan's Malaysian bank account. Obviously, he needs some of those funds to live on in Malaysia. However, recent changes by the ANZ bank effectively punish him for choosing to transfer money in Australian dollars rather than in another currency. The bank charges him a greater fee for that than it would, say, for a transfer in United States dollars. One of the politer terms used for this behaviour is money grubbing. Mr Dargan explained that he received this message from his bank:

Please be advised, effective 23 June 2012, sending an ANZ international money transfer ("ANZ IMT") denominated in Australian dollars via ANZ internet banking will incur a fee of AUD 32. The cost to send an ANZ IMT in a foreign currency via ANZ internet banking has not changed and remains AUD 24.

Mr Dargan explained the position and the problem in an email that he subsequently sent to me. He stated:

My superannuation pension is paid fortnightly into my ANZ Bank account and I transfer a portion of it every fortnight to my bank in Malaysia to meet my living expenses while I am studying there. Each transfer costs me \$24.00. I have just received the email copied below to advise that from 23 June 2012 this charge will increase to \$32.00 if I continue to transfer money in Australian dollars. This amounts to a 33% increase in charges. The interesting thing about this is that if I choose to transfer in a foreign currency such as US dollars the \$24.00 fee will still apply. Of course the bank still makes a windfall profit by giving less than the official rate for exchanging \$Australian to \$US. Either way they are increasing the cost of transferring my pension. In fact the difference between sending \$US vs \$Australian will work out roughly the same so the charges are still effectively increased by 33%. In addition the Australian dollar has a higher exchange rate than the \$US in Malaysia so I would be penalised even more.

He continued:

What gets to me is that surely sending straight Australian dollars takes less computing time and therefore should cost less than converting to \$US then sending it. Methinks I smell another big bank rip-off. Certainly, I think they should be made to justify such a usurious increase in charges before they apply them.

Having completed his first transfer he subsequently made this point to me:

First transfer under the increased charges regime. The bank website didn't allow me to cut and paste the weasel excuse that appeared for not selecting Australian dollars when I defied the banks multiple default to \$US and selected Australian dollars. It basically said that by selecting another currency I would lessen the chances of the transfer being unsuccessful and would be able to control the exchange rate.

It seems to me that transferring Australian dollars should be less error prone than first converting to \$US then transferring since all \$US transfers have to first be routed through a bank in the US. As for controlling the exchange rate, that is a blatant lie. The final exchange rate is determined by the receiving bank. The receiving bank gives a more generous exchange rate for a direct transfer of Australian dollars than does the ANZ bank, which takes extra profit by giving a lower than market standard exchange rate to convert Australian dollars to United States dollars. A rip-off is a rip-off, no matter how the bank tries to explain it.

One has considerable sympathy for Mr Dargan in his confrontation with what seems to be a blatant rip-off by a bank that makes a great deal of profit without having to resort to exercises such as this. The ANZ bank should stop punishing, by way of extra fees, Australians who choose to use Australian dollars. It is worth noting in this context that on 2 May 2012 the ANZ bank reported a first half underlying profit of just under \$3 billion. The cash result, which strips out one-offs and investment losses or gains, rose 5 per cent to a record \$2.973 billion. On 2 May 2012 the ANZ bank also announced its net profit for the half rose 10 per cent from the year earlier, to \$2.92 billion. That profit comes on the back of more than 400 ANZ staff losing their jobs in the same period. In January the ANZ bank announced that 1,000 jobs would be cut from its Australian business by September 2012. This leaves 600 ANZ staff walking around with a target on their back. In this regard, the behaviour of the ANZ bank is a disgrace. It is particularly inexcusable given the amount of money it is already making.

WILCANNIA LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [5.10 p.m.]: Last Friday I, together with an encouraging number of people, attended the Wilcannia Literacy Campaign graduation ceremony. This campaign originated

in UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation—and was developed in Cuba. The Cuban Government sent an educator to run the course at Wilcannia. Their assistance has been instrumental in the great success of the campaign, which was funded by the Federal Government in partnership with the University of New England. Providing adults with the opportunity to learn to read and write is a step in the right direction, and I have no doubt that the future of Wilcannia will be determined by the literacy of its population.

I acknowledge the great work done by Mr Pedro Monzon, the Cuban Ambassador in Australia. Mr Monzon attended the event and also in attendance was Sharon Bird, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education and Skills, who travelled from the Illawarra. Ms Bird was encouraged by what she saw at the event. There was a buzz in the air. The adults who participated in this literacy course were delighted with the results. Their ability to read will provide them with many benefits in the future. There is now talk of cooking classes, which will involve the participants reading recipes—something they were not able to do before. This first step to reading has enlightened these people and opened up another world to them. Those who graduated and were in attendance at this event included: Ashley Wilson, Robert Hunter, Sapphire Hall, Tomas Dutton, Helen Dutton, Glenys Dutton, Freda Bugmy, Shirley Williams, Valda Bates and Kevin Bates.

The second intake of this program is: Erica Rae Mitchell, Patricia Ann Whyman, Leslie James Williams, Leah Ann Ebsworth, Bronwyn Louise Kerwin and Valma Ann Harris. A certificate of participation was awarded to Thomas Percy Kennedy, who has Down syndrome. The program is called "Yes I Can". The Cuban equivalent in Spanish is "Yo Si Puedo". Unfortunately, not enough credit has been given to the Cubans, who became involved in this community. Jack Beetson, from the Aboriginal Land Council that funded this program, is an amazing man. His arrival in Wilcannia is like a breath of fresh air. He is a person who does not just talk about issues; he gets the job done. He recognised the needs in the Wilcannia community and got this program up and running. For the people of Wilcannia, I have no doubt that learning to read is their first step to a better future. In my time in politics I have not seen another program that will deliver more benefit to the community of Wilcannia than this literacy program.

ARNCLIFFE WEST INFANTS SCHOOL CENTENARY

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [5.15 p.m.]: It is my pleasure today to recognise Arncliffe West Infants School as it celebrates its centenary of education. On Friday 31 August I had the pleasure of joining parents, teachers, students and the broader school community as they celebrated the school's proud 100-year history. This was not just an event for the school but for the entire Arncliffe community. One hundred years of public education is a significant achievement. Everyone who has been associated with the success of Arncliffe West Infants School during the past 10 decades has contributed in his or her own unique way to one of Rockdale's finest schools. This was proudly on display on Friday with the attendance of families who had seen generations of students passing through the school gates. I had the pleasure of meeting some of the parents and grandparents who had so many fond memories of Arncliffe West.

The journey of Arncliffe West Infants School began in 1907 when a petition was presented to the deputy mayor of Rockdale containing 214 signatures from local Arncliffe residents calling for another local public school to be built. Although it was not to be at that time, September 1908 saw the green light for the establishment of Arncliffe West to ease the burden on Arncliffe Central School. Arncliffe West opened in July 1912 with an initial enrolment of 150 students and it has never looked back, continuing its growth and opening a dedicated preschool in 1978 catering for approximately 50 four-year old children. Today the preschool has one teacher and one school learning support officer. It even has its own vegetable patch and flower garden bed.

For as long as I have lived in the St George region, Arncliffe West Infants School has held a longstanding and proud reputation within the local community. This is testament to the past and present teachers who, over the years, have prepared hundreds of young students for primary school. Notably, it is also because the school community has instilled key values into the students, which are enshrined in the school's motto of "Grow in Friendship". Those ingredients make for a healthy school environment, which was on display for all to see on Friday afternoon. Many young families who move into our area are quick to discover that Arncliffe West is a family-oriented school community. Parents who value their children's educational and personal growth and teachers who are committed to nurturing the needs of their younger students have made this school all that it is today.

In many ways a healthy, local community is born from a healthy school environment, and that is exactly what we witnessed on Friday afternoon. Cultural diversity is something that is both respected and

celebrated at Arncliffe West and continues to make this school a shining example of the success of our public school system. I also acknowledge all that principal Maria Lambos does for the students of Arncliffe West Infants School. Her firm commitment to providing the best opportunities for the students is evident. Maria's energy and passion are particularly important while children are young and in their formative years. Their faces show that the students admire their principal and hold her in high esteem. I also acknowledge the teachers of Arncliffe West Infants School, who play such a vital role in the development of the children. There is no doubt that the students look up to their teachers and learn from their enthusiasm and passion for teaching.

I also thank Tracey Carney who was in contact with my office in the lead-up to last week's celebration, as well as the entire staff at the school who made the day such a huge success. I also acknowledge the president of the school's parents and citizens association, Vanda Quinn. She and the entire parents and citizens association played an integral part in organising the Arncliffe West Infants School fete, which occurred on the following day. Arncliffe West Infants School is a truly remarkable school. From the youngest student to the oldest grandparent, everyone is included. It is a happy school. It is schools such as Arncliffe West Infants School that make Rockdale one of the closest and richest communities. I look forward to working closely with the school community in the years ahead.

HILLS COMMUNITY MEDICAL EQUIPMENT POOL

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [5.20 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to the fantastic work of Mr John Goulding and all the volunteers at the Hills Community Medical Equipment Pool. I acknowledge the member for Hawkesbury and Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney, who not only is familiar with this voluntary organisation but also has been one of its avid supporters. The Hills Community Medical Equipment Pool provides a valuable service in collecting and purchasing excess medical equipment for those who cannot afford their own. It is an invaluable service for the elderly in The Hills community whose lives are made just that little bit easier by the wonderful volunteer ethic that is alive in The Hills.

In the 2011-12 financial year the pool achieved a small surplus in its budget. That will allow for a much greater return to our community as the pool reinvests its surpluses in term deposits that allow it to generate its own operating revenues. The Hills Community Medical Equipment Pool embodies the core values of The Hills district: philanthropy, economic responsibility and a sense of community. The pool does not only offer assistance and equipment to Hills residents. Last year surplus equipment was sent to our northern neighbour Papua New Guinea to assist those who live there in impoverished conditions. Special mention must be made of the Hills Model Railway Society, which donated \$500, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is always happy to donate old equipment that it cannot take back.

In 1981, when the pool opened, there were just three pairs of crutches and four wheelchairs available for use. Today there are an incredible 1,120 pieces of medical equipment in use through the pool, including 58 pairs of crutches and 131 wheelchairs. The pool even donates the awards it receives for its charity work. Its Australia Day prize of a Dymocks gift card was donated to the Woodberry Retirement Village at Winston Hills. The efforts of the Hills Community Medical Pool demonstrate what we can achieve when a vibrant community with a strong set of values and a fierce entrepreneurial spirit works together. My Federal colleague the member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke, often recites the tale of how James Ruse established himself as Australia's first entrepreneur. I am delighted to see James Ruse's spirit alive and well in the Hills Community Medical Equipment Pool.

MUSIC 4 HEALTH DAY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.25 p.m.]: On Friday 31 August in my electorate of Cabramatta I attended the annual Music 4 Health Day at the Mount Pritchard Community Club, otherwise known as Mounties. Organised every year by the Autism Advisory and Support Service, this event brings together autistic children from several schools in south-west Sydney to take part in a performance by musicians from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. There was a wonderful atmosphere in the auditorium that day. The space was filled with the fun and enthusiasm felt by some 200 or more children and their carers and teachers. Each child in the auditorium was given a percussion instrument to play. Some had triangles and others had castanets. The conductor then got each side of the room to play to a different beating rhythm while the Sydney Symphony Orchestra players provided the melody. It was something to behold. The continual and audible cheering of the children showed how music can cut through their condition.

The music's enchanting qualities brought countless smiles to the faces of the children. Well-known nursery rhymes were the order of the day, with the members of the Sydney symphony enjoying it as much as

everyone else. The conductor then invited groups of children to come up on stage and either have a go at conducting or sing along to the tunes. It almost became an episode of *X Factor* or *Australian Idol*. I will never forget the sight of one little boy singing an impromptu performance of a modern song I had never heard, yet all the children around him instinctively started to clap along and sing with him. The cooperation of the kids in the event provided happiness and jubilation to children who have had a rough start to life. A young boy at the event even took the microphone and started singing a song that Barry O'Farrell and his Government know well. The lyrics were:

We're not gonna take it
No, we ain't gonna take it
We're not gonna take it anymore

The schools that attended the event were Cabramatta West Public School, Bonnyrigg Heights Public School, Liverpool West Public School, Cecil Hills High School, Condell Park High School and many others. I pay tribute to the group that organised the event and who have been fantastic advocates for children with autism for many years. Grace Fava established the Autism Advisory and Support Service [AASS] in 2007 with a group of fellow parents from south-western Sydney to fill the void in the healthcare sector encountered by families of children with autism. The service was established as a support and advisory service to empower children with autism and their families through knowledge and support, and to positively impact and influence their children's social and emotional development.

It is run by volunteers and relies on funding grants, donations and sponsorships to meet its operational costs. Despite these financial obstacles, the Autism Advisory and Support Service continues to grow and organise fantastic initiatives such as Music 4 Health day. Since its inception the service has opened a community house and drop-in centre located in Memorial Avenue, Liverpool, and has established, coordinated and hosted support groups and respite programs. It has run a parent library and toy library and has established, coordinated and facilitated Australia's only 24-hour autism hotline. These services continue to be provided free of charge to the parents, carers and service providers of children with autism. Starting in south-west Sydney, it has now grown as a support service to families in western Sydney and every State of Australia and handles approximately 200 inquiries or cases per month. Grace Fava and her team have done a tremendous job of supporting these children and the whole community by providing these services. Their contribution must be acknowledged and their passion for their cause is truly inspiring.

I also thank the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for its continued support of community organisations and programs such as Music 4 Health. I acknowledge its philanthropy executive, Ivana Jirasek, and the team of musicians who performed that day: conductor Stan W. Kornel, violinists Sophie Vole and Leone Ziegler, cellist Rowena Crouch and double bassist Richard Lynn. The Sydney symphony is Australia's flagship orchestra and celebrates its eightieth anniversary this year. Its goal is to educate, inspire and encourage people of all ages in the enjoyment and playing of music. The orchestra has a program of community engagement that aims to provide a transformative experience for those with health, disability and aged care needs and their carers. The Sydney symphony has performed for children aided by the Autism Advisory and Support Service several times in recent years and knows the benefits that music can bring to them and their carers. It was fantastic to see how their musical talents could bring smiles to so many children's faces. It was an inspiring day and I thank all those involved.

POLICE NUMBERS

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [5.30 p.m.]: Last week I had the pleasure of welcoming 14 new police officers to the Bankstown Local Area Command and I was surprised to learn that several of them live in my electorate. My community will benefit from having police officers patrolling the streets who know them and the area. Since May 2012 I have welcomed a total of 22 new police officers to the Bankstown Local Area Command. That means 22 more police officers now walk the streets of my electorate and the broader Bankstown local government area, 22 more police officers are available to Revesby police station when and if needed, and 22 more police officers are on hand to fight crime.

On 24 August 2012 an additional 117 new police officers were allocated to the South Western Metropolitan Region. That proves that Labor's claim of police numbers being cut by this Government is a lie. That allocation of police will also put to bed Labor's lie that the Bankstown and Campsie local area commands are to be merged. As at June 2010, under Labor there were 15,556 authorised police officers in the NSW Police

Force. I am pleased to boast that that number is now 16,016 police officers, which is a significant increase. While it may not be convenient to the Labor Opposition, the fact is that there are now more police officers on our streets than at any other time in the history of this State.

The 2012-13 budget included continuing funding of \$178 million over the next four years to bring the NSW Police Force to a record strength of 16,356 officers by June 2014. The Government is well on track not only to achieve that target but to exceed it. Perhaps now the Labor Opposition, especially those in the Bankstown area, will stop scaremongering and start acknowledging the good work being done by our Police Force. I congratulate the 14 new police officers who commenced duty at the Bankstown Local Area Command on Monday 27 August. I look forward to following their progress and meeting with them again in 12 months time to celebrate their first anniversary. I also congratulate the Hon. Michael Gallacher, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mr Andrew Scipione, Commissioner of Police, and Superintendent David Eardley, Commander of the Bankstown Local Area Command, for helping me to provide not only the electorate of East Hills and the Bankstown local government area but also the South Western Metropolitan Region with the police force they have so rightly deserved for so long.

PROJECT BLUEPRINT

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyong) [5.33 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about Project Blueprint—a risk-assessment project funded by the O'Farrell Government. It is being conducted by Surf Life Saving New South Wales and delivered using the resources of CoastSafe. The purpose of the project is to conduct a coastal public safety risk assessment for every beach and rock platform in New South Wales. This project will be fundamental in addressing the coastal drowning issue throughout New South Wales in the short, medium and long term. Tragically, New South Wales accounts for 50 per cent of the annual national coastal drowning toll. Since 2004 some 300 people have drowned in New South Wales—40 in the past 12 months. The vast majority of people who drown are caught in rip currents while swimming or are swept from rocks while fishing and almost all drownings occur at unpatrolled locations or outside patrol hours.

Importantly, Project Blueprint will provide a blueprint for New South Wales from which an effective strategy to prevent drowning can be developed in line with the national and State goal to reduce drowning deaths by 50 per cent by 2020. This goal is particularly close to me. I am a surf lifesaver during our summer months. Unfortunately, in the recent past we have seen a spike in drowning fatalities in my area. In June this year three young adults tragically perished after rock fishing near Lake Macquarie—just north of my electorate. This drowning occurred in an area notorious for its dangers. In 2010 the same spot claimed the lives of five people from two Sydney families. This evidence strongly illustrates the importance of promoting safety and awareness of the dangers associated with our coastline, with the aim of preventing such tragedies from occurring in the future.

People of all ages enjoy the numerous benefits of our pristine beaches and coastline. Whenever families, friends and broader community come to grieve over such needless deaths we often question what more could have been done to prevent such a tragedy. Project Blueprint is geared towards providing such guidance. Through education and awareness we hope to reduce, and ultimately prevent, such deaths occurring on our beaches. The launch of Project Blueprint at Lake Munmorah State Conservation Area, in the Wyong shire, was accelerated because of its identification as a drowning black spot. According to Surf Life Saving New South Wales statistics, since 2004 some 37 people have lost their lives in the Central Coast area and 15 of those have occurred in the Wyong Shire Council area, which is an alarming figure. In nine years 37 lives have been lost on our local beaches and coastline. Wyong Shire Council was one of the first local government areas in the State to launch Project Blueprint.

I joined Australian CoastSafe Manager Adam Weir and Surf Life Saving New South Wales Coastal Risk Officers Luke Stigter and Stuart Massey at Soldiers Beach to help launch this project. The overall aim of the project is to halve drowning in the next decade, so it is important to harness both scientific data and local knowledge. To date, Project Blueprint has covered a total of 127.9 kilometres of coastline, which represents 47 per cent of the total coastline scheduled for assessment in year one. The assessment process examines a range of factors that can impact on risk, including education and information, signage and beach access, lifesaving and lifeguard services and the skills of those taking to the water. The assessment of all coastal water access-ways and locations in New South Wales will provide a suite of assigned individual access and location numbers, which can be added to existing or future signage.

This statewide emergency service integrated emergency marker system will ensure the public reporting of emergency locations across all coastal areas in the State. This will be vital to all rescue and emergency

response agencies. It will enable them to identify and respond to locations more quickly and save more lives. Local councils, surf life saving clubs, beach safety liaison committees and communities will be consulted throughout the assessment process as the project team moves along the coast targeting the top 10 drowning black spots in New South Wales by local government area. Vital information such as this will be collated, assessed and presented to the New South Wales State Government. The Government is hopeful that through these steps it can put in place measures that will result in a real reduction in the number of drownings. This will ensure that our beaches remain a safe and enjoyable destination for locals and visitors alike. I commend Project Blueprint to the House.

VIETNAM VETERANS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [5.38 p.m.]: It is often said by many a veteran that politicians like to win wars but rarely fight in them. That is true, but 50 years ago Australian politicians made the decision to commit troops to Vietnam. It started with 30 troops in what was affectionately known as "the team". At its peak around 7,600 troops were on the ground and more than 60,000 personnel were involved in the Vietnam conflict. More than 521 Australian lives were lost in that conflict and 3,000 were wounded. The death this week of five Australian soldiers in Afghanistan brings those numbers into reality. Many veterans of the Vietnam War continue to live with mental health issues, and will do so for the rest of their lives.

Australia's contribution began at Biên Hòa and later moved to the Phú Thọ Province. During those times the Australian Navy was affectionately known as the *Vũng Tàu* ferry and carted endless supplies, personnel and equipment during numerous trips to Vietnam. The Air Force contributed significantly during operations, with No. 35 Squadron doing a lot of lifting work in Caribous, No. 9 Squadron flying helicopters in and out of combat zones, and No. 2 Squadron with its Canberra bombers participating in a lot of work. The Army fought in battles such as Binh Ba, Coral and Balmoral as well as Operation Bribie. However, the battle that is most recognised, but only because of the work of Vietnam veterans, is the battle of Long Tan, which took place on 18 and 19 August and in which 18 Australians lost their lives.

During the battle of Long Tan, Australian soldiers fought against what would be described as insurmountable odds. It is anticipated that D Company possibly faced 2,500 enemy soldiers that night in a rubber plantation not far from its home base at Nui Dat. It is important to recognise the contribution of Vietnam veterans, not just those involved in the battle of Long Tan but all veterans of the Vietnam War. It is fair to say that for far too long this country forgot those veterans. It took Australia until 1987 to welcome them home. The establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia played a critically important role in winning recognition, and still supports Vietnam veterans. St Marys, which is just outside the Penrith electorate, is home to the Vietnam veterans' outpost that supports many of the veterans from the Penrith electorate and surrounding areas. It is affectionately known as the train because its premises are an old train that is outside the St Marys RSL.

Like many other branches of the Vietnam Veterans Association, the St Marys branch conducted the Vietnam veterans' commemorative ceremony on 18 August. It was great to see a fantastic crowd at St Marys and to hear plenty of heartfelt speeches. Something that stands out in my memory of that day, apart from having the opportunity to attend with my own family, is the significance of music for this group. Songs like *Leaving on a Jet Plane* and *We've Gotta Get out of This Place* engender incredible camaraderie in this very special group of Australians. It is also critical for politicians to stand up and speak for these people. Without doubt, one of the great blights on Australian society is the quota system for awarding military service medals. To my mind, clearly that has led to many Australian participants in the Vietnam conflict not receiving appropriate awards since the Vietnam War ended. I encourage the Federal Government to continue its inquiries and to ensure that Vietnam veterans and their families, who still suffer to this day with veterans' mental illness and its consequences, receive the recognition that Vietnam veterans deserve.

It is critically important for parliaments across this country to recognise the very important work of Vietnam veterans in raising the profile of Australian troops overseas. We denied Vietnam veterans the welcome home that they deserved, and the price they have paid is a black armband on our society. We know that, and ever since we have welcomed home our troops, with gusto, every time. We never again want to create the situation that was created when Australian Vietnam veterans returned. They paid the price. It is up to politicians to stand in houses of Parliament all over this country and to ensure that we never do that again.

BONVILLE CREEK SILTATION

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [5.43 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House an issue that is a matter of great concern to residents of Bonville Waters estate on Bonville Creek

and Pine Creek. On one side of Bonville Creek is the Bongil Bongil National Park and on the other side there is Crown reserve land, which is under the control of the Coffs Harbour City Council. Unfortunately, several weeks ago owing to severe weather conditions and rough seas that were experienced along the eastern coast of Australia, the mouth of Bonville Creek closed. A large number of residents live in the Bonville Waters estate, which includes land at water level on the bank of the creek. Nearly every property in that area has a boatshed or a pier. In any part of the world except Australia, Bonville Creek would be described as a river.

As a consequence of the mouth of the creek becoming blocked, the water level rose quite significantly. Property such as lawns, jetties and decks was inundated by saltwater. While the situation is not life threatening or home threatening at this stage, it is a threat to property, such as decks, boat ramps and lawns. The inundation of saltwater is killing lawns as I speak. I discussed this issue with the Deputy Premier, who is considering ways of dealing with this issue. However, I firmly believe that the council, which is the organisation that looks after the State park and the reserve land, has a role to play. I appeal to the council to negotiate with the Office of Environment and Heritage as a matter of urgency with a view to opening the mouth of the creek. If a huge rain event were to occur, I have no doubt that the mouth of the creek would be forced open. However, earlier this year the creek's channel changed, which has resulted in a build-up of sand at the mouth of the creek; and that, combined with recent heavy seas, has led to closure of the mouth of Bonville Creek.

The council has a huge responsibility to take immediate action. I say that not because the damage to property could become worse but because it would be wise to organise excavation of the mouth of the creek sooner rather than later. I suggest that the council engage in negotiations with the Office of Environment and Heritage to investigate the possibility of obtaining assistance, but the reality is that the local council raises revenue from the Sawtell reserve caravan park and that revenue is directed to a general fund. It is my belief that the council should utilise some of that revenue to excavate the mouth of Bonville Creek. I am sure it would not be a huge cost to excavate over a short period to clear the mouth of the creek and ensure that no further damage is done to property. I commend that action to the House.

TRIBUTE TO BROTHER ROBERT SUTTON

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [5.46 p.m.]: It is a great pleasure to draw to the attention of the House the dedicated service rendered by Brother Robert Sutton, who for the past 10 years has been the Principal of St Patricks Marist College. Brother Sutton is a member of the Catholic religion's teaching order known as the Marist Brothers. Soon after coming to the college, Brother Sutton set about creating a quality environment in which staff and students could enjoy their teaching and learning. Brother Sutton challenged staff and students to raise the bar with regard to their educational goals and outcomes. Teachers became more involved in analysing best practice in teaching and introduced different learning approaches, such as the Challenge Base Learning Program. Brother Sutton always encouraged students to adopt a self-disciplined approach to their studies and to be lifelong learners.

Brother Sutton ensured that computers were readily accessible to all students and that technology became a natural part of the curriculum. During the time Brother Sutton has been the college principal, the academic results of the college have been outstanding. Higher School Certificate results frequently placed students of the college among the top 100 schools in the State. Surveys show that the college community consider St Patricks Marist College to be a safe and ordered environment. Student behaviour is of the highest standard. The college is seen to be characterised as warm and friendly yet ordered and disciplined, and a place where healthy, respectful relationships are fostered. During Brother Sutton's period as principal of the college, enrolment applications always greatly exceeded the number of available college places.

Brother Sutton has supported and fostered the arts and sporting involvement. The college has had biannual musical events and always competes strongly in debating and public speaking as well as in many sporting arenas. As principal of the college, Brother Sutton was responsible for overseeing major building programs in the college including the new multipurpose centre and music rooms and a new theatre. This year Brother Sutton commenced refurbishing the administration offices and college library and has been responsible for numerous upgrades to the college environment. Above all, Brother Sutton is a Marist Brother and so is personally inspired by God to dedicate his life to the education of young people. The spiritual welfare of each person under his care is his priority. Through the liturgies and religious culture of the college, Brother Sutton urges all students to become good Christians and good citizens. He challenges students to become informed, thinking people who act with compassion and a spirit of service to others to make a better world.

Brother Sutton welcomed me into his school shortly after I was elected. After attending numerous events at the college, I can say that he is educating well-behaved, disciplined, fine young people. The school is

large. Indeed, the reputation of the college goes further than the school. When I visit primary schools I ask the students where they would like to go in the future and many of them express an interest in attending St Patrick's Marist College. That is testament to the reputation that Brother Sutton has developed, not only in his school and its academic achievements but outside the school. Indeed, many people are on the waiting list every year because it has developed such a strong reputation in the community. Brother Sutton deserves the highest praise and commendations for his achievements and efforts over the past 10 years at St Patrick's Marist College. His presence in the community will be remembered and appreciated with great affection for many years. Best wishes go to Brother Sutton as he heads north to become the principal of St Francis Xavier's College, Hamilton.

TRIBUTE TO KIRRY AND BRIAR TOOSE

EXPERIENCE MAGAZINE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [5.51 p.m.]: It always delights me to recognise residents in my local community who achieve great feats on the world stage, and tonight is no different. In July this year Cowan mother and daughter, Kirry and Briar Toose, of the Hawkesbury River Dragons teamed up with the Newcastle Dragon Hunters to compete in the Long Beach Dragon Boat Festival in California. The member for Newcastle was in the Chamber earlier. I am sure that he is proud of the Newcastle Dragon Hunters. I am particularly proud of the Hawkesbury River Dragons and the work they are doing in the community. The efforts of Kirry and Briar resulted in their winning a silver medal in the masters' class of the dragon boat festival in California. This remarkable achievement deserves recognition; hence, I have raised it this afternoon.

As founding members of the Hawkesbury River Dragons in 2011, Kirry and Briar have developed and grown both the club and the sport in the local community for the betterment of all residents. The club has added to the community's character, enabling residents of all backgrounds to get fit, meet new people and, most importantly, have fun. In just 18 months Kirry and Briar have gone from beginners to international stars. I am sure that Kirry and Briar will reflect on the hours of pain and hard work they endured in preparing for the festival as a meaningful and positive chapter in their lives. They exceeded their personal expectations and have given others hope and optimism. In the words of Kirry, "Dragon boating is a sport that is non-ageist, non-sexist and you don't have to look good in a leotard." That sounds like the sport for me.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Bet you'd look good in a leotard.

Mr MATT KEAN: I acknowledge the comment by the member for Riverstone but I think he is grossly mistaken. He should turn his attention to other things. It is this positive attitude that has provided Kirry and Briar with the determination and energy to succeed at the international level. Kirry and Briar's achievement serves as an inspiration to both my local community and society as a whole. No doubt the member for Riverstone shares my appreciation of their achievement. The Dragons train on the Hawkesbury River, which is one of the most beautiful waterways in Sydney. This beautiful marine playground not only provides a great source of fun and recreation for thousands of my residents but also is home to many businesses and animals that make the area so special. I know my predecessor, Judy Hopwood, has been training with the Dragons for some time, and as we start coming into the warmer months I encourage other residents to visit the Hawkesbury and make the most of this natural wonderland.

Recently I had the privilege of launching the *Experience* magazine produced by Hills, Hawkesbury and Riverlands Tourism. The aim of the magazine is to talk to locals about what we have in our backyard so that they can share the information with visiting friends and relatives. A recent study has shown that friends and families of locals make up 57 per cent of our total visitation. Our locals are a key source of new visitors and play an important role in promoting our local economy. The magazine will be produced seasonally and will also be available online on the website www.hhart.com.au. The magazine serves as an important tool in marketing the Hawkesbury tourism industry and promoting our beautiful region.

I congratulate and thank all those who have been involved in producing the *Experience* magazine. In particular, I thank The Hills Shire Council and Hawkesbury City Council. I also thank Lori Modde, Chief Executive Officer of the Hills, Hawkesbury and Riverlands Tourism, for her efforts. Lori has been a passionate advocate for the region and we are all grateful for her significant contribution. Diana Paton from Adelphi Print and Design has compiled a first-class publication. I acknowledge the wonderful work she has done in pulling this publication together. I also thank all those people who have got behind this initiative, including the advertisers, businesses and members of the Hills, Hawkesbury and Riverlands Tourism group. I invite those members who have not visited the Hawkesbury River and the Hawkesbury region to do so. As we come into the summer months it is a particularly beautiful part of Sydney and a remarkable part of Australia.

SANDY POINT DRAGON BOAT CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [5.56 p.m.]: Following the private member's statement by the member for Hornsby, this will be a "my dragon boat club is better than your dragon boat club" speech because today I share with members some information about an active sports club in my electorate—based in one of the smallest communities, no less. The Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club was formed by the local community as a sporting and fitness activity that utilised the wonderful waterway on their doorstep, the Georges River. Recently I attended the club's annual general meeting, which was a good chance to catch up on some of its latest achievements. I know that some of my colleagues are dragon boaters but I should provide some background to the sport.

Its origins stem back 2,000 years ago to the rivers of southern China as a fertility rite to ensure plentiful crops. The race was traditionally held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month of the Chinese calendar to encourage rains for prosperity. The dragon, the symbol of water, was the object of worship. It is said to rule the waterways and dominate rain making. Today, the longstanding Chinese tradition has developed into a fast and furious water sport around the world. In Australia it is the fastest-growing water sport, with 22 people required to propel a boat from start to finish. The crew is made up of paddlers, who sit facing forward and use a specific type of paddle that is not attached to the boat. There is also a drummer, who produces the heartbeat of the dragon boat.

The drummer leads the paddlers throughout a race using the rhythmic drum beat to indicate the frequency and synchronicity of the paddlers' strokes. Finally, the sweep—known as the steersman—controls the boat with a sweep oar rigged at the rear of the boat. This is used both for ruddering and for sweeping the stern sideways. This year's annual general meeting marked eight years since a few Sandy Point residents put their heads together to form the Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club. When the club began it had no funds and no assets. It is going from strength to strength, and this year its membership swelled to 63 adults and 52 juniors.

I take this opportunity to officially congratulate the club on establishing what is now a hallmark of the Sandy Point community. After eight years at the helm, the club's president, Peter Arnold, has decided to stand down this year to let new blood lead the club. Peter will remain a dedicated member and supporter of the club. I thank him for his commitment to the club and he undoubtedly leaves big shoes to fill. Other members of the hardworking committee include Craig "Shine" Summerfield, Melodee White, Peter White, Melinda Dolling, Charlie, Mark Harley, Bev Arnold and Kerry Waters. They all deserve a mention for their variety of skills that have helped bring the club to its current level.

The Head Coach, Vic Kalgovas, is also standing down after six years, and I wish him all the best in his new endeavours. I am told that he has been a good source of encouragement to new paddlers and has shared his understanding of paddlers' psychology to give them an extra edge. I know that the paddlers are hoping that the use of the sea anchor declines with the new coach. Finally, I touch on the unmeasurable values of dragon boat racing. Not only is it an enjoyable fitness pursuit but also it helps to promote a healthy lifestyle through a fun activity. I know that members of the local community like going to lunch at the local Flower Power and trying to get a motor boat back. It works quite well for them. With a sport like dragon boat racing, teamwork is important. Each crew member must work together to get the boat over the line. I am impressed by their growing reputation as a training club—the New Paddlers.

In recent years Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club has partnered with Danebank girls school to train and coach students in dragon boat racing. Danebank is my former high school and the coach, Kerry Banfield, was my former sports teacher. This year, Dragon Boats NSW Inc. has asked the Danebank Flames dragon boat team to represent New South Wales at the Australian Titles in Canberra, with all their training coming directly from the Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club. From all reports, the girls keep getting better and better and take every opportunity to train, including throughout the cold winter months. The team also competed in the national championships in Melbourne followed by the 2012 World Club Crew Championships in Hong Kong in July this year. The girls put in the hard yards to prepare for Hong Kong with water- and land-based training sessions throughout the autumn and winter months. At their peak they were training up to six times a week with four sessions in the water.

Two teams competed in the under-16s 10s team and in the under-18s standard boat teams. The under-16s came home with a gold medal in the two kilometre, 500 metre and 200 metre races and the under-18s finished with a silver in the 500 metre and 200 metre races. That was a fantastic result for these young women who have spent countless hours training to bring home those medals. It is interesting to note that the team did

not exist in 2010 but are now the world champions. The Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club also started training and racing with Odyssey House members. Odyssey House runs residential and non-residential rehabilitation programs for men and women who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction. The program is proving to be a positive experience for both parties. I am proud of the members of the Sandy Point Dragon Boat Club and I wish them all the best for the future.

FAIRFIELD CABRAMATTA POLICE AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [6.01 p.m.]: On Friday 31 August 2012 the Fairfield Cabramatta Police and Community Youth Club celebrated 75 years of outstanding service to the youth of Fairfield. A formal dinner was held at the Cabra-Vale Diggers club to mark this significant milestone. Those present at the dinner included the President of the Fairfield Cabramatta Police and Community Youth Club, Father Pat McAuliffe; the Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Cabramatta; the police and community youth club manager, Tony Cincotta; the Cabramatta police crime manager, Darren Newman; Mr Nick Lalich, MP, State member for Cabramatta; and senior constables Nick Mougois and Chris Kay, the police and community youth club officers. There were also representatives from the local Rotary and Lions clubs as well as the Cabra-vale Diggers club board of directors.

Police and community youth clubs across New South Wales have a long and proud tradition of helping the youth of the nation during times of trouble. I will give a brief history of the police and community youth club. The City of Sydney Police and Community Youth Club is the original club, which was opened in Woolloomooloo in 1937 by police commissioner William John Mackay. The police and community youth club organisation offers a great range of activities for adults and many after-school activities for young people. It has 85,000 members in 57 centres across New South Wales, and is still growing.

On behalf of the electorate of Fairfield, I extend congratulations to police and community youth clubs for achieving 75 years of outstanding service to our youth in the Fairfield-Cabramatta community and throughout the State. As the member for Fairfield, I am honoured to have the opportunity to commend a service that has offered local kids not only a central meeting point but a chance to learn important life skills. On behalf of my constituents, I thank the police officers who play a vital role in helping troubled kids turn their lives around. I especially thank senior constables Nick Mougois and Chris Kay, who do a tremendous job providing a safe venue for our youth to participate in physical activities.

The Fairfield Cabramatta centre is well known for its boxing and weights gym but there is a range of different activities on offer for local kids. As well as giving kids the opportunity to participate in physical activities, senior constables Nick and Chris provide a mentoring role to local youths, to show them a positive side of the NSW Police Force that they may not have otherwise encountered. Senior constables Nick and Chris show kids firsthand the importance of working together as a team and they demonstrate effective team-building skills. Other important programs run at the centre include leadership development, anger management and social skills development. These are all vital for our youth, particularly those who would otherwise be heading towards a life of crime.

I also wish to thank the volunteers at the centre who devote their time and skills to the youth of Fairfield-Cabramatta, especially Mr Anthony Cincotta, the centre manager, who has done a wonderful job over the past eight months since his arrival. Mr Cincotta was the driving force behind the Fairfield Time for Kids campaign, which raised \$17,800 for the delivery of programs at the police and community youth club. Mr Cincotta was responsible for putting me in a makeshift cell, together with the member for Cabramatta, Nick Lalich, and the Mayor of Fairfield, Councillor Frank Carbone. I thank the Fairfield RSL Club, the Guildford Leagues Club and Club Marconi for their donations during my time in the cell at the Neeta City Shopping Centre. It was all for a good cause.

I would also like to acknowledge those who have supported the police and community youth club by way of donations or sponsorship. In particular, I thank the Rotary club, the Lions club and the many licensed clubs in the Fairfield local government area and the Fairfield electorate. The generosity of those clubs has gone a long way towards maintaining this great venue for our kids. Achieving the 75-year milestone is testament to the hard work and dedication of both the local community and the NSW Police Force, which has ensured the club has remained popular with young people for decades. I again congratulate everyone associated with the Fairfield Cabramatta Police and Community Youth Club and I extend my best wishes for a long and successful future.

INNER WEST LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [6.05 p.m.]: I speak today on the important issue of public transport in my community and throughout New South Wales. The Government this week released the draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan in which it outlines a direction for transport over the next 20 years. New South Wales needs a comprehensive approach to meeting our transport needs. I am pleased that the Government is taking a strategic approach but I am equally concerned about the focus on tollways and the lack of focus on light rail. I have been a long-time campaigner for light rail in my community and I acknowledge the role of councils in the wider community in winning the extension of the light rail to Dulwich Hill. I will continue to campaign for the inclusion of the important GreenWay corridor in the State's transport plans. Light rail has the potential to play a key role in our city's transport system, connecting with other transport options and providing fast, reliable and environmentally sustainable transport. Compared with alternatives, light rail is relatively cheap and fast to build.

Light rail has the capacity to carry up to 720 passengers in each set—even with a modest carriage configuration. This means that it has a carrying capacity of up to 20,000 passengers per hour in each direction. To put that in perspective, one tram carrying 200 passengers is equivalent to a single line of peak-period traffic two kilometres long. A tram line can carry 7,500 people an hour, compared with a general traffic lane that can carry fewer than 2,000 people per hour. Light rail is also more effective than buses in moving large numbers of commuters, without the noise impacts and pollution. It also reduces city bus congestion that impacts on the entire transport network. Anyone who has stood on Parramatta Road will tell you that the noise of buses is one of the factors that makes it so unliveable and so unworkable for businesses.

There are two viable and important opportunities for light rail in my electorate that will benefit all of Sydney—the Parramatta Road and White Bay extension. It is generally agreed that Parramatta Road is a classic traffic sewer. Congestion is a real issue but the way to solve this is not to invest \$8 billion or \$12 billion in some megaproject that Nick Greiner has thought up, such as the M4 East. A staged light rail plan would revitalise this important corridor, reduce traffic and eliminate the need for the M4 East. It is important to note that only around 6,000 cars pass through Taverners Hill during the two-hour peak period. Integrated light rail—linked to the Dulwich Hill extension—would create a loop that would significantly reduce that peak hour, along with dedicated park-and-ride stations.

The expansion of the light rail network in Sydney will significantly alleviate the pressures on our bus network and markedly reduce traffic congestion. Why would the Government consider spending \$8 billion to \$12 billion on the M4 East when, in the two-hour peak, the traffic is a mere 6,000 vehicles? It requires spending billions of dollars for the sake of 6,000 vehicles. Global experience demonstrates that having light rail on the doorstep encourages retail, commercial and residential development when a location becomes more liveable. I call on the Minister to consider this option as part of the review of the draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and also the Sydney Light Rail Strategic Plan.

The other critical light rail link is the retention, of course, of the existing goods line corridor to White Bay in Balmain in order to allow for future extension of light rail. I am pleased that the Minister for Transport stated in response to a question yesterday in Parliament that the development of the White Bay cruise terminal does not preclude the future development of light rail in that precinct, and can be examined in the future. This is an important link as it will run off the Rozelle goods yards, which have an existing line, and move along the Balmain waterfront, which is the subject of a major redevelopment, strengthening the economic viability and accessibility of the precinct. There is the potential also for a very short tunnel into Gladstone Park, Balmain, which already has a huge disused water reservoir underneath. This tunnel would provide a station in the middle of a highly populated area next to a hospital and local businesses that are linked in just minutes to the city. The light rail needs patronage and the Gladstone Park link would deliver that patronage in spades.

I also note that public transport lobby group EcoTransit has a proposal to extend the light rail to Barangaroo. This would integrate and enliven the north-west central business district, including Barangaroo and the Walsh Bay theatre precinct. I will be developing and consulting on these plans in the coming months and encourage the Government to consider this option as part of the draft document and the Sydney Light Rail Strategic Plan. I thank all the local residents who attended the range of public meetings I held in my electorate to ask the local and business communities for their views on the draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. I believe also that the Minister and the Government face a real challenge with this project, but the Minister and former Premier Greiner have the chance to change the transport paradigm in New South Wales for a cleaner,

vibrant, greener and liveable New South Wales. This plan is a chance to give the people of New South Wales the public transport options they demand and to promote the kind of cultural change that can help make New South Wales and Sydney much more liveable.

HURSTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [6.10 p.m.]: I applaud the Government for its investment in Hurstville Public School, which is one of the largest primary schools in the State, with over 1,000 students currently enrolled. It is also one of the State's most diverse schools, with 96 per cent of students speaking a language other than English at home. As a community-focused member of Parliament, I have been working hard to secure better education services for my electorate. Since being elected as the member for Oatley I have been determined to improve the quality of our schools and to better support our hardworking teachers. For this reason I am pleased to announce that the O'Farrell Government recently agreed to fund a new multimillion-dollar infrastructure project that will improve Hurstville Public School.

Hurstville Public School will receive a new two-storey classroom building with 11 new classrooms, toilet facilities and new special program rooms. In addition, seven classrooms will undergo extensive refurbishment and practical activity areas will be constructed. Such initiatives demonstrate the commitment of this Government to improving education and educational facilities across New South Wales. I note that in the 2012-13 State budget an additional \$383 million was added to education spending. This brings the State's total education spending to \$13.83 billion for this financial year alone. This highlights that our public education system is a key priority for the O'Farrell Government and that we are committed to ensuring that our children get the best education possible.

Education has always been a priority of mine and I have always supported this State's schoolteachers. My wife is a schoolteacher, so I know firsthand how difficult teaching can be. Our public schools contribute an enormous amount to the development of our local communities. Through good quality education children can grow into adults who are able to make a valued contribution to our society. Our local schools are the first point of call when it comes to promoting a sense of civic responsibility and the importance of having a well-rounded character. Hurstville Public School is an excellent example of a school that enriches the lives of school-age children within the St George region. The school is noted for its outstanding academic results and a significant portion of students successful in gaining admission to a selective high school.

As well as its strong academic record, Hurstville Public School also places a strong focus on a range of extracurricular activities. The school runs a range of activities from Chinese dance to debating to chess. The school is noted particularly for its choir and band groups. With this most recent injection of funding Hurstville Public School can continue to operate to its fullest capacity. This funding will go a long way to providing additional facilities to enable Hurstville Public School to meet the needs of its already large and expanding student body. Beyond this, the funding will help the school in its commitment to providing high-quality education that sees its students leave as responsible young citizens with the ability to make meaningful decisions in life. I thank the Government for its commitment to funding Hurstville Public School.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.14 p.m. until
Tuesday 11 September 2012 at 12 noon.**
