

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 13 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.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATION) BILL 2012

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

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

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.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [10.07 a.m.]: I speak in support of the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 and I commend the Leader of the Opposition for introducing this important legislation. The Government has said it will oppose this legislation because of the cost of establishing another government entity, yet freedom of information requests by the Opposition have revealed that \$100 million has been spent on private consultations and reviews in the first year of this Government. That is how this Government operates: slashing the public sector so it can outsource work to its mates in big business. The Treasury and Crown finance entities spent \$23.3 million, the Department of Family and Community Services spent \$7.1 million and Infrastructure NSW spent \$4.5 million on consultants last year. This Government has thrown away \$100 million while it slashes and burns jobs throughout the State.

Now we hear that there will be an additional 2,000 jobs lost from the education sector, including 800 jobs from the TAFE sector. As Opposition members have demonstrated, there is a need for the Government to take action to support job growth throughout New South Wales. Not only has this Government decimated public sector jobs throughout New South Wales, it has failed to provide much-needed support to the private sector. The Government promised to create 100,000 new jobs in the State, yet we have seen almost 6,000 job losses. This may not concern Government members, but members on this side of the House know that a fair and strong economy means employment opportunities for workers throughout New South Wales. Despite the Government's assurances, we are seeing lay-offs throughout the State. This is already having a huge impact on the community.

Manufacturing is the single largest industry in the greater Bankstown area and printing jobs make up a large part of industry in Bankstown. More than 200 printing jobs are set to be lost over the next two years as the Chullora Fairfax printing press is closed. Manufacturing throughout the Chullora industrial park is at risk because of this Government's negativity. The Chullora industrial park is a major economic hub in our region and is a source of employment for the greater Bankstown area. Bankstown is not the only community to be affected: 100 jobs were lost at Rio Tinto in the Port Stephens electorate, 70 jobs were lost at Kell and Rigby in the Strathfield electorate, 190 jobs were lost at Reckitt Benckiser in the Ryde electorate, 106 jobs were lost at Bonds in the Parramatta electorate, and 290 jobs were lost at Telstra, many of those in the Lismore electorate. The Government has chosen to wash its hands of these job losses by blaming economic circumstances, but as Chris Richardson, chief economist at Deloitte Access Economics, said:

The danger is that (the cuts) come at a time when lots of private companies are cutting back as well. It adds to an air of negative sentiment.

Once again we have seen the danger of the negativity of the conservative side of politics—whether it is Tony Abbott predicting doom and gloom or the O'Farrell Government claiming economic uncertainty as justification for sacking 15,000 public servants and now 2,000 more in the education sector alone. This baseless negativity is counterproductive and damaging to the economic certainty not only in this State but throughout Australia. The Government has reassured us that there is no danger in making these public sector worker cuts. The Government, of course, ignores the loss of skills and the harmful effect on the ability of the public sector to deliver services, which will be the result of these job cuts.

However, there is another aspect I wish to address. I refer to a piece written by Ross Gittins, economic editor at the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Ross Gittins is respected by both sides of politics: indeed, the Treasurer has quoted his opinions in this House. On 3 March 2012 an article by Mr Gittins entitled "Workers create wealth, even in the public sector" was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In the article Ross Gittins argues that, contrary to the views held by the Government, public sector workers contribute to the economy. The Government believes that the 15,000 public servants it intends to fire contribute nothing to the economy. These individuals do contribute to the economy, both directly through their work and indirectly through their personal lives. One would be hard pressed to find any Government member who would argue that nurses and other healthcare workers do not contribute to the economy through their work. Furthermore, nurses and other public servants are consumers and the money they spend on goods and services contributes to the economy.

As Ross Gittins argues, economics is by definition cyclical, both private and public sectors are important, and both contribute to the economy. The Government's war on the public sector and now on the education sector is having and will continue to have an impact on the private sector. State governments have a responsibility to support both the public and the private sector. When jobs were on the line successive Labor Premiers met with business leaders to try to keep jobs in New South Wales. This Government has chosen to sit on its hands. The Government now has the opportunity to rectify that situation by supporting this legislation. The bill proposes to create a new government authority called the NSW Jobs Commission. This is a responsible piece of legislation.

The commission will be directly under the responsibility of the Premier. The commission will comprise a commissioner and up to five other persons with experience in regional business, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, investment, research, development, economic growth or other areas relevant to job creation. Importantly, the commission cannot employ staff but can seek support from other departments. This will help to ensure that the cost of the commission to government remains minimal. The commission will conduct inquiries into communities and industries that have suffered job losses, identify issues affecting jobs growth, undertake research into any proposal to move or remove public sector jobs, and identify skills shortages in industry sectors and regional communities. This legislation is an opportunity for the Government to be proactive about ensuring sustainable jobs growth in New South Wales and reversing the disastrous rise of unemployment that we have so far seen under this Government. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [10.13 a.m.]: It is not surprising that I oppose the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. It is astonishing that the Leader of the Opposition would propose such legislation when his own party at State level—and now under Federal Labor—has singlehandedly destroyed more jobs in this State and in this country than any other administration in our history. I admit that a jobs commission would create more jobs—that is, for those involved in the day-to-day activities of the commission. But other than that it would fail to create one more job in this State. This bill is a classic example of what Labor excels at—spin. It is window-dressing at its most odious. It is purely aimed at giving the Leader of the Opposition some semblance of concern for the unemployed while clearly offering no concrete options for people to return to work.

If a jobs commission is such a great idea, why was it absent during the 16 years of a Labor government in New South Wales? Why was it not promoted as one of Labor's policies during the 2011 election? I will tell you why: because it will not work. Labor's credentials in job creation are nothing short of woeful. They destroyed jobs and they continue to do so via the carbon tax. A jobs commission will not solve the problem. Why do we need it when this Government has in place a plan to restore confidence to the jobs market and to create more jobs in this State? Since March 2011 this Government has created 24,400 jobs, has delivered its State Plan NSW 2021, and will soon release 19 regional action plans. It also has commenced developing industry action plans in six industries. These are all key measures for our future economic prosperity. We have launched the Jobs Action Plan, which will target 100,000 new jobs, including 40,000 in regional areas. We have appointed a Small Business Commissioner. We have shown that we are fair dinkum about creating jobs. Those opposite are sadly mistaken if they think they are the best friends of the workers. This Government does not need to create a jobs commission to tell us what we already know, and we certainly do not need to create another level of bureaucracy to duplicate what we are already doing.

I am pleased to speak on this bill because it gives me the opportunity to inform the House of this Government's achievements in creating jobs in this State. The Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services administers a number of programs for employment generation. There is a crucial need to create jobs in regional New South Wales, and this department is charged with implementing the programs to do that. It oversees programs for employment generation in regional New South Wales. Various investment projects, secured through the Regional Industries Investment Fund, are expected to create 2,800 new jobs. The Resources for the Regions program received an injection of \$9.9 million in the 2012-13 budget for projects in Muswellbrook and Singleton over the next two years. Under the \$30 million Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund, which is a joint fund with the Commonwealth and BlueScope Steel, the first round of grants, totalling \$16 million, has been released. Importantly, this will create 470 new jobs. I repeat, it will create 470 new jobs—not pretend jobs.

It is the O'Farrell Government's major objective to restore economic growth. The restoration of economic growth will automatically create jobs because it will give business the opportunity to make profits and invest in real jobs. The NSW 2021 plan includes initiatives that will guarantee this growth. Small business is the largest employer in the State, yet that sector was ignored by the Labor Government. It allowed small business to drown in a sea of red tape and overregulation. We came to government with the promise to stop this overregulation. In 2011 we appointed the Small Business Commissioner to advise the Government on how best to support the State's 650,000 small businesses. This includes looking at ways the Government can create a climate in which small business can prosper, providing low-cost dispute resolution services to small firms, and acting as an advocate across government for the interests of small business.

As the owner of a small business before I entered Parliament I know the challenges that the small business sector of the economy faces each and every day. A key initiative of this Government has been its development of the Smallbiz Connect program. This wonderful initiative is long overdue. This contemporary program provides quality small business advice, which results in accountability, accelerated growth and measureable outcomes for small businesses right across New South Wales, especially in regional areas. Experts from the Sydney Business Chamber will deliver to small business operators practical face-to-face support that is tailored to meet their local needs. This initiative, which is being rolled out across the State from September this year, complements the Commonwealth Government's Enterprise Connect initiatives.

These are strong initiatives. We are not reinventing the wheel. The community knows that we are not doing it just for the sake of showing that we are advocates for small business. This bill puts a sharp focus on the philosophical differences between the New South Wales Liberals-Nationals and those opposite. At a time when this Government is encouraging employment and business growth through lower taxes and the cutting of red tape Labor wants to expand the bureaucracy and create a \$188 million letter and report writing department. We saw enough of that over the 16 years of Labor governments. It is time to get serious. Labor should practise what it preaches. It obviously did not do so when it was in government. This Government is advocating employment and business growth through policies rather than through the introduction of a bill that will achieve absolutely nothing. I do not support this bill, and I will never support such a bill. The purpose of government is to deliver effective programs. The Opposition when in government failed to do so. This bill is all about rhetoric and I oppose it.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [10.20 a.m.]: The contribution of the previous speaker, the member for Drummoyne, demonstrates the need for a jobs commissioner. His speech clearly was written by a staffer and handed to him just before he delivered it. He probably would support this bill if he were not an elected member forced to follow party lines. The member for Drummoyne said that we do not need a jobs commissioner, that the Labor Government destroyed more jobs than any government, and that Labor continues to destroy jobs via the carbon tax. He read out statistics that were given to him by a staffer. But the actual numbers show otherwise. We need a jobs commissioner not only because the creation of jobs is the most important initiative that any government can facilitate for its citizens but because we need an independent umpire who is detached from the rhetoric.

In the same way that the Reserve Bank is disconnected from partisan politics, we need a body that focuses on jobs. It is as simple as that. The rubbish spoken by the member for Drummoyne in his contribution to this debate demonstrates the need for a jobs commissioner. The member's comments were not accurate. For example, he said that the Labor Government destroyed more jobs than any other government. The facts published by the New South Wales Parliamentary Research Service show otherwise. In the last term of the Labor Government the number of jobs increased by 304,000. From March 2007 to March 2008 employment increased by 132,000 jobs. From March 2008 to March 2009, during the global financial crisis, employment was

down by 12,000. It is an amazing achievement to lose only 12,000 jobs during a global financial crisis. From March 2009 to March 2010 employment increased by 51,000, and from March 2010 to March 2011 it increased by 138,000.

Mr John Barilaro: Was there a jobs commissioner at the time?

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I note the interjection of the member for Monaro. The answer is no. This Government, as part of its narrative, says that the previous Government destroyed more jobs than did any government in the history of the State. The facts prove otherwise. It is for that reason we must remove politics from jobs creation in New South Wales. The member for Drummoyne also said that the previous Government destroyed jobs via the carbon tax. Again, the numbers show otherwise. The carbon tax was not even introduced for the first 15 months of this Government. I refer to facts provided by the Parliamentary Research Service on jobs in New South Wales. In March 2011, 3,606,000 people were employed in New South Wales. As of 30 June this year—15 months after the election of this Government—3,606,000 people were employed in New South Wales. According to the Parliamentary Research Service, in 15 months not one job was created.

The member for Drummoyne said that 24,000 jobs were created. Where are they? They are not listed in the Parliamentary Research Service figures. Unless they were created in the last quarter and the Government has figures that are not available to the Parliamentary Research Service then the Government is fudging the books. In the past 15 months the participation rate went from 64.2 per cent to 63.3 per cent—that is a 1 per cent reduction—and the unemployment rate increased from 4.9 per cent to 5.0 per cent. The facts show an opposite position to that stated in the rhetoric of the Government. That is a cogent reason to have a jobs commissioner. The truth must be told and we need an officer whose main aim is to advocate for jobs, to facilitate jobs and to advise government on how best to create jobs. The State public service accounts for about one-seventh of the State's economy. It is a significant contributor but not the major contributor.

We need an officer who will facilitate the creation of jobs in the other six-sevenths of the community. The actions of governments determine employment. Western Sydney is seriously affected by employment issues. According to the Fitch Ratings, seven of the 20 worst areas of mortgage stress in Australia are located in western Sydney. For many, increasing unemployment and decreasing job security will be disastrous because they face the real prospect of missing a mortgage payment. People in western Sydney probably experience that more than others. I have been contacted by people who are in dire financial straits and literally exist from pay cheque to pay cheque. According to Daniel Montoya from the Parliamentary Research Service, the unemployment rate in western Sydney is higher by about 0.5 per cent than in the rest of the State.

Given those figures, one would think that the Premier and Minister for Western Sydney would want a jobs commissioner to examine whether western Sydney, which has one-tenth of the nation's population, should receive special consideration in relation to jobs creation. It is a matter of particular concern that from May 2011 to May 2012 the number of employed in Sydney's west decreased by 0.2 per cent. In western Sydney jobs are being disproportionately lost and there are 11,480 long-term unemployed, that is, those unemployed for more than 52 weeks. The youth unemployment rate in western Sydney is 17.9 per cent, almost 3 per cent higher than the New South Wales average of 15.3 per cent. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The youth participation rate of 46.6 per cent is lower than the State average of 50 per cent. It should be remembered that the real level of youth unemployment is relatively similar to unemployment in the older population, which is about 6 per cent. The overwhelming majority of youth are in ongoing education and are not counted in the unemployment figures. The very high youth unemployment rate of 18 per cent indicates those young people who are not involved in education. That means they will have few skills and will enter into and spend the next 50 years in a marginal employment group. A jobs commission would provide a base to train these individuals. TAFE is an important part of jobs training. This Government says one thing but does another. The Government is cutting 1,800 jobs from the education sector and TAFE will be one of the areas that is most affected.

TAFE is vital in order to reconfigure employment in western Sydney. Last year I gave a speech on the South West Sydney Institute of TAFE, together with Mr Peter Roberts. The south-west of Sydney is Australia's fastest-growing regional economy and the third largest economy after Sydney and Melbourne. The 12 local government areas from Parramatta to Camden covered by the South West Sydney Institute of TAFE have a population of 1.28 million. This will increase to 1.7 million in 2031 and the area includes eight of the 10 most disadvantaged local government areas in New South Wales. By 2031 the area will contain 30 per cent of the new jobs to be created in New South Wales but population growth will exceed jobs growth. That is why TAFE is absolutely vital and provides a first, second and third choice for education.

TAFE and a jobs commissioner are vital because the largest industries in western Sydney have traditionally been manufacturing and heavy industry. However, in future the employment areas will be retail trade at 10.9 per cent, manufacturing at 11.5 per cent, health care and social systems at 10.5 per cent and construction at 10.1 per cent. The growth jobs will be in construction at 23 per cent, health care and social systems at 22 per cent, sport and recreation at 19 per cent and administration at 17 per cent. These are the jobs that we need to create in western and south-west Sydney and the jobs commissioner will be responsible for facilitating them. Were there a jobs commissioner, the first thing he would say is, "Whatever you do, do not cut TAFE."

Over the next term of this Government 15,000 public service jobs will be cut. This is not the time to cut jobs, especially since during the last election campaign the Government promised to create 500,000 new jobs in this State. According to the Parliamentary Research Service, the Government has created no jobs in its first 15 months. It has a lot of catching up to do. I note that the Treasurer is at the table and I concede that the research service document says the jobs market is a strength; however, it also cited economic growth as a weakness. We are going in the right direction, but we are in second gear. The office of the jobs commissioner would be staffed by five individuals with experience in business, agriculture or trade. The Government has created roles for a number of commissioners such as the Mental Health Commissioner and the Small Business Commissioner to provide the Government with advice and research. These are good ideas. If the Government can create roles for commissioners of small business and mental health, why not do it for jobs, which are fundamental to every aspect of life?

Mr David Elliott: Why didn't you do it?

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I heard that interjection. That is why we need a jobs commissioner. I will repeat for the member of Baulkham Hills, who was not here at the start of the debate, that in the last term of the Labor Government 304,000 jobs were created in New South Wales. According to the Parliamentary Research Service, in the first 15 months of this Government not one job has been created.

Mr Mike Baird: There have been 30,000.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: The Treasurer must be using different figures from the Parliamentary Research Service.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Macquarie Fields will not engage in conversation across the table.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: The fact that not even the Treasurer can keep quiet says it all. That is why we need to depoliticise jobs and job creation and why we need a jobs commissioner. The Treasurer says it all with his interjections. The fact that we cannot even agree on simple things such as how many jobs there are in the State is precisely why we need a jobs commissioner. When we discuss the issue we get spin and bluster from those opposite rather than facts. It is not fair to the people who need jobs most and who are the most disadvantaged. As I said in my inaugural speech, the futures of far too many of our people are determined at the time of their results in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] in year 3.

We need a jobs commissioner to ensure that we have full employment. This is not a case for laissez faire or market economics. We need a jobs commissioner to ensure that everybody has a job, because people with a job live longer and happier lives. Employment is vital for everybody. Even members opposite would agree that we should aim for 100 per cent employment, especially because the participation rate has decreased by 1 per cent since the March 2011 election. The Treasurer, who is studiously reading his notes, is aware of the figures I have cited because he is literate and able to read the Parliamentary Research Service economic profile.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I do not think that observation was necessary.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: He is a fine reader: he reads well.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I draw the member back to the leave of the bill.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: He can read capital letters and small letters.

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

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: As I said, we need to depoliticise jobs. We need a jobs commissioner whose aim is to inject some truth into this debate. The people of the State expect their elected governments to have policies that allow them to know what is really going on. Without a jobs commissioner the politics of jobs will always trump the facts. Those opposite will continue to use spin and bluster when the facts say the contrary. I support the bill and call on the Government to introduce a jobs commissioner.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [10.35 a.m.]: The NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 lacks any true understanding of the importance of promoting and supporting the private business sector without adding more red tape and bureaucracy. This bill gets to the inherent philosophical differences between the Labor Party and the Liberal-Nationals Government. We believe the private sector is a driving force of industrial development in this great State and this country. It plays a crucial role in economic and industrial development and particularly in achieving real jobs growth. We also recognise the essential role of the private sector in promoting growth and individual financial security. Private enterprise drives economic growth and generates income by creating new jobs, real jobs, sustainable jobs that lead to sustained financial independence.

Of course, the obstacles to private sector development are well known and many of them are beyond the capabilities of individual firms and sectors. We know from history that weak governments that have not been able to create and maintain a favourable business climate and environment have reinforced the social benefits of creating jobs in the private sector. Our objective and the objective of all governments should be to promote the private sector and an environment that facilitates growth, including easy access to business-related information, technical support, tax reform, and funding in national and international markets. New policy alternatives are also needed to promote the private sector as a catalyst for sustainable growth, better living conditions and individual financial security.

Governments need to formulate industrial policies that improve the general business environment for private sector development, as well as build local productive capacities in a private sector led process. This includes activities aimed at promoting industrial enterprises that drive economic growth processes and foster entrepreneurship, technological dynamism and the associated productivity growth. These, in turn, create skilled jobs, contribute to achieving gender equality and female empowerment, and support integration into national and global value markets. That is why we are focused on rebuilding our economy through lower taxes and business growth. The hypocrisy of Labor's sudden focus on job creation—the one policy it managed to formulate over the past 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.

I have said before in this House that all the reform processes that the Government has put on the table in the past 18 months have been opposed by members opposite. An example is the WorkCover reforms. An unsustainable workers compensation scheme, with premiums set to rise by nearly 30 per cent, would have had another hard-hitting impact on the private sector and on small business. Labor opposed occupational health and safety reforms that would bring them into line with what the Labor Federal Government wanted, which is a national uniform scheme that will strip away some of the powers of their union hack mates, who continue to impede businesses and who tell business people what they can and cannot do.

Recently there have been some great examples of unfettered union power and growth in the influence of the union movement in this country. No better example is what happened in Victoria with Grocon, which will have flow-on effects in New South Wales, particularly Sydney. The union movement disregarded directions and worked outside the law to impede a business that was creating jobs in Victoria and across the country. I have a letter from employees expressing opposition to their union fees being used by union leaders who were impeding jobs growth and making Grocon's business unviable. Grocon was losing \$370,000 a day. The union members wrote that they had "no argument with our employer" and continued:

We have been unfairly singled out for abuse, threats and intimidation by the very organisation that we pay our union fees to, in an argument which is not of our doing.

We only ask that we be allowed the same basic rights as our union leadership enjoy, to be free to access our places of work without the lies, threats and abuse, and without fear of reprisals.

Mr Nathan Rees: How does this relate to the bill?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If Labor members were really interested in job creation, supporting the private sector and supporting businesses—small, medium and large—they would pick up the phone to their

union mates and stop them from doing something illegal. Outside the law, the unions are stopping a successful business from providing jobs for Victorian families. The unions' action has impacted adversely on the economy of this State. We have seen what is happening in Queensland with the union movement.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Opposition members will have an opportunity to participate in the debate.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The difference between the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and Labor is that the Government is interested in true job creation in the private sector. The bill before the House proposes to conduct inquiries, identify issues, evaluate studies, make recommendations, conduct more inquiries and prepare annual reports. It sounds like a talkfest that will not create a single job in the private sector real world. Members will know that I have a small business background in manufacturing. Almost 11 months ago during my inaugural speech I referred to what Labor does to successful small businesses.

When I announced my candidature for The Nationals the leader of the member for Toongabbie, the Leader of the Opposition, good old John Robbo—Captain Solar—came to Monaro and criticised my business. It is a successful business that has operated in the Queanbeyan region for 25 years. It has 20 to 25 employees, offers apprenticeships and traineeships—and, before the member for Canterbury interjects—employs people with disabilities. I believe my business is a good corporate citizen in our community. What did the Labor Leader of the Opposition do? He criticised my business. I was in a position to refute his claims because history backs me up.

Mr Nathan Rees: It's sort of not about you.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Nevertheless, I was able to refute him. His attack was really on the people who work in that business for me—the boys and girls, the men and women, and the apprentices. The leader of the Labor Party, which claims to stand for blue collar workers and to stand up for working families in this State, attacked me, but he was really attacking the men and women in that business who were happy in that environment and happy to be working for a local business. It is a successful local business of which I am very proud. I do not shy away from my business background. That business continues to operate because of my wife's good work.

The problem is that Labor members do not understand the private sector. When I spoke about the carbon tax I pointed out that Labor members have no private business experience or business experience generally. Labor does not enjoy the support of small business. Why? It is because everything Labor does presents obstacles to small business. I spoke about the imposition of the carbon tax. A Labor member said earlier that the carbon tax has not impacted adversely on jobs and business. I have pointed out that most businesses, due to market pressures from the big players and imports, are bearing the burden of the carbon tax, which cuts away at their profit margins and their financial viability. In turn, small business wears the cost of the carbon tax.

If Labor members want to support jobs in New South Wales, particularly in the private sector, they should pick up the phone, call the Prime Minister, and persuade her to reverse her carbon tax lie—reverse that damaging tax on private and small businesses. Statistics show that industrial disputes have undercut the nation's economic performance as other countries leap ahead of Australia on the global competitiveness survey, which is used to guide business investment. I advise the House that Australia's global ranking on labour cooperation slumped from thirty-ninth position to sixty-seventh out of 144 countries over the past year. Moreover, Australia's ranking on pay and productivity tumbled from fortieth position to eightieth. That series of findings has inflamed the union movement, yet Labor members are doing nothing about productivity and tax reforms. I know that the Coalition and Labor will never agree, but one thing is certain: a jobs commission will not create a single job in this State.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [10.45 a.m.]: I support the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 and in so doing I invite members of the House, particularly Government members, to consider closely what is actually in the bill. I understand that the concept of employing people in the public sector is an anathema to the Government. However, I ask members of this House to examine the bill, ignore political rhetoric and see how effective the proposed commission can be. Members should first examine clause 7 of the bill and the functions of the proposed commission, which in part states:

- (a) to conduct inquiries into communities and industries that have been affected by job losses and to make recommendations to the Government to enhance economic opportunities in these areas,
- (b) to identify issues affecting jobs growth and retention and to make recommendations to the Premier regarding such issues ...
- (g) to prepare an annual report for tabling in Parliament in relation to the results of its inquiries ...

One of the problems this State has, which exists particularly in regional and rural parts of New South Wales—and something The Nationals should consider carefully—is the ability to work through either private enterprises or local councils to maintain jobs growth in the regions. That also applies in areas of Sydney. The Government, through its departments, is like a blunt object. Over the years I have seen the Department of Planning think that zoning all land "industrial" creates jobs. I have been trying to get through to the planners of this State. For example, on land in Stephen Road, Botany, where Johnson & Johnson used to operate and employ three and a half thousand people the business is now a warehouse operated by robots. It employs seven people.

Through the introduction of technology, jobs move, jobs become centralised and jobs disappear, but there are ways that somebody with the functions of a jobs commission can give recommendations to government to get past this blunt instrument that governments often use. For example, the commissioner could assist in coordinating local government by giving advice on how that sector can generate jobs from its activities and by giving advice as to whether outsourcing particular functions to corporations who do not employ local people is the appropriate way to go economically or whether there is an equally effective way of doing things in-house in a particular local community.

Look at the way in which enterprises are functioning, particularly in remote regional areas of New South Wales, and see whether advice can be provided to those local communities. Many regional towns and communities are dying. People are struggling. Local authorities, which can be the centrepiece of those communities, do not necessarily receive the appropriate advice—perhaps because of the nature of the communities, a lack of resources or the grading of council officers. As I moved through regional communities in my past life I saw towns such as Bega push away major retail investment for 20 years on the basis that the community did not think it would be an advantage. That investment went to the neighbouring town. Regional communities need the benefit of those who know how to maintain these sorts of facilities. As the member for Macquarie Fields said, if children are not been equipped for life by year 3 they will struggle from then on.

I have seen the poverty in rural New South Wales. I have seen people who have not had a chance. At Bega West Public School primary school age children are enrolling in kindergarten. That is the level of dislocation that occurs when people cannot get jobs. Do we think it is by choice that people in western Sydney, but predominantly in regional New South Wales, do not work? When Australia's unemployment rate is allegedly the lowest since World War II how come regional and rural communities in most parts of New South Wales are struggling? They are struggling not just because of lack of government investment but because they do not have the necessary expertise to seek the appropriate advice to find ways to generate the local economy and local jobs. I urge Government members, rather than dismissing the Opposition's proposal as a political stunt, to examine the functions of the commission. The commission could do things such as conduct inquiries and find workable ways to provide sustainable employment for Aboriginal Australians who never have a chance in life. It would not just throw public funds at the problem and create jobs that are not sustainable; it would provide advice to enterprises that can employ—

Mr Stuart Ayres: If it was not a political stunt you would have done it in the last few years.

Mr RON HOENIG: Maybe nobody thought of it. Now that the member for Penrith is back in the Chamber he should pick up the bill and read clause 7. Then he might understand the purpose of this legislation. I know that in this place people like to take particular positions and attack each other over rubbery figures that are often published, but oppositions come up with the occasional good idea. Mr Acting-Speaker, you represent the electorate of Kiama, which is almost regarded as rural New South Wales. We have all seen people struggle and we have all seen rural communities with no idea how to generate local jobs. This commission would give them the vehicle to seek out the necessary expertise—not just in the public sector but in the private sector. I urge the Government to consider this legislation very carefully.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [10.54 a.m.]: Hypocrisy, thy name is Labor. I cannot believe that after 16 years—

[*Interruption*]

Members opposite can interject: it just highlights their ignorance on matters of employment. Not one person on the other side of the Chamber has ever created a job. They have forfeited the right to talk about unemployment. Before I turn to the stagflation this country endured under Gough Whitlam or the hyper unemployment we endured under Paul Keating let us talk about the fundamental belief of the Australian Labor Party: When there is a problem with employment fill the gap with the taxpayers' obligation to build the public

sector. That is the fundamental difference between those opposite and those on this side of the House. We believe government should get out of economic management. Government should facilitate strong levels of economic activity so that the private sector can provide the jobs and wealth for the people of Australia.

That great Labor leader Kevin Rudd—a man soon to be returned to the Lodge so we can beat him a second time—bases his whole notion of employment growth on the need for the Government to be the cornerstone. Some members opposite may have heard the rhetoric about government being the cornerstone of employment. That is called an organised economy. That is called a planned economy. That is called communism, socialism. That is the type of rhetoric we heard from the Labor Party in the 1960s when we were fighting against what were called "planned economies". The answer is not more government institutions or more taxpayers' money spent creating public service jobs. Members on this side of the House know we already have a jobs commissioner—his name is Barry O'Farrell.

Mr Nathan Rees: He hasn't given you a job.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Members opposite laugh but they know their record on employment. Under Labor we had the highest unemployment in Australian history. Unemployment under Paul Keating was at levels we had not seen since the Great Depression—one million people unemployed. I know about that. Unlike those opposite, who have always been able to draw a cheque from the union movement, from the public service or from politicians, I have worked in the private sector. When there were one million unemployed I had left university and was trying to get a job. But it was difficult because Paul Keating created the recession we had to have.

Mr Nathan Rees: You're a political hack: that's your job.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Paul Keating is well and truly on the record about his views on the Leader of the Opposition. I see the shadow Leader of the Opposition in the Chamber. Nathan, come back. I know you do not believe this rhetoric. We need to create an environment where the business community, the market, creates jobs. This is not something a jobs commissioner can do because he will simply be another member of the public service. To consider this bill we need to go back in history. It is important that we start with a man named Edward Gough Whitlam—somebody I know those on the other side, if you scratch the surface, secretly admire. If you go to their offices you will see pictures of Gough Whitlam, highlighting the need for change and the importance of government taking a central role in the economy.

But Gough Whitlam is remembered as being the second biggest failure as Prime Minister of this country—second only, of course, to Julia Gillard. Do not forget that whenever the Coalition gets its hands on the levers of the economy we find ourselves left with disaster—and nothing was more disastrous than the stagflation under Gough Whitlam. Gough Whitlam was the type of leader who would have created a jobs commissioner because he believed that government was the only institution smart enough to employ people. We need to move away from that 1970s rhetoric.

Mr Nathan Rees: Put the Queen back up on the wall.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: You leave her out of this, Mr Rees. The socialist dream is well and truly over. For those who cannot remember Gough Whitlam because, like me, they were too young, I remind them of Paul Keating's inflation that we had to have, which occurred 15 years later. Paul Keating, like the Leader of the Opposition, his great friend opposite, decided that he would control the government levers. Guess how he controlled the economy? Guess what lever he used to create jobs? He did it with what he called monetary policy. Unfortunately for the people of Australia and for western Sydney, his monetary policy meant that he had to increase interest rates because everything was happening too fast and he could not control it. If the economy cannot be controlled the Government has to create something to control it.

Paul Keating's solution was to use interest rates: people had to pay 17 per cent for their home loans and one million people were unemployed. I shall repeat that so those in this fair Chamber know exactly what we are talking about: The last time Labor had its hands on the levers of this economy one million people were unemployed. At that time I was a university student growing up in Bankstown. I can assure members that although Bankstown was in the electorate of the then Prime Minister, and a former Treasurer, Paul Keating, we were poorly served by that local member because he was too busy controlling the levers of the economy, making home ownership unaffordable and, of course, getting a job unattainable.

The Labor Party—the political party that created record growth in unemployment, and that gave us record high interest rates—now has the audacity to lecture us on this side with gusto on how to create a strong economic environment. As I said: Hypocrisy thy name is Labor. It is quite clear to anybody who has studied the history of economics in this country that a healthy private sector means a healthy economy. Only the private sector, which is driven by the need for profit, can create worthwhile jobs for individuals. Those on the other side who seem to think that "profit" is a dirty word need only look at their superannuation statements to realise its importance. Profit needs to be generated not by a false economy administered by the want-to-be Premier, Mr Rees, but by an economy stimulated by confidence, lack of government interference and, of course, an environment that creates the desire to spend, save and manufacture. The Labor Party should not have called this bill the NSW Jobs Commissioner Bill, it should have called it a review of the union movement.

Any perception of a desire of the Labor Party to create jobs has been well and truly forfeited. Any claim by Labor that it genuinely wants to create jobs can be put down easily by its approach to the Australian Building and Construction Commission [ABCC] by previous Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. The Australian Building and Construction Commission, which was created by a former Prime Minister, John Howard, created the most jobs in the construction industry. I recall that fact because at the time of his election I worked for the Civil Contractors Federation. The Australian Building and Construction Commission was part of the Liberal Party's plan to withdraw and weed out union thuggery and corruption. That created confidence. That is the type of lever this Opposition should consider introducing for the creation of jobs. We need to spend more energy on reforming unions because it is clear from those on that side of the House that they want to change the subject to jobs creation every time they realise that we will weed out the unions. [*Time expired.*]

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member's time has expired. The member for Wollongong and the member for Baulkham Hills will resume their seats.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr John Williams 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.

PICNIC POINT MEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Extends its thanks to the Picnic Point Men's Bowling Club for asking the member for East Hills to sponsor its tournament day held on Sunday 8 July 2012.
- (2) Commends Mr Geoff Tucker, the club's president, and all other members of staff for organising the day.
- (3) Recognises that the Picnic Point Men's Bowling Club is a leading bowling club within the East Hills electorate.
- (4) Wishes the Picnic Point Men's Bowling Club all the very best as it continues its excellent work.

RECREATION SPORTS AND AQUATICS CLUB

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club, Bankstown, on its excellent work in holding the twenty-fifth annual presentation day on Sunday 17 June 2012 at the Bankstown Sports Club.
- (2) Commends Mr John Gorrie, the club's president, and all other members of staff and volunteers for their tireless effort and work with the disabled.
- (3) Recognises that the Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club is a leading edge provider of services promoting quality of life and inclusion to people with disabilities, their carers and families.
- (4) Wishes the Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club all the very best as it continue its excellent work.

ST MARYS CATHEDRAL MASS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that on Sunday 9 September 2012 the annual mass for pregnant women will be held at St Mary's Cathedral.
- (2) Commends His Eminence George Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, for welcoming all pregnant women to St Mary's Cathedral to receive a special blessing.
- (3) Wishes all pregnant women and their unborn children every possible success and good fortune.

LONDON PARALYMPIC GAMES

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Sends best wishes to all athletes who will be competing in the London Paralympics Games 2012 from 29 August to 9 September 2012.
- (2) Congratulates all members of the Australian Paralympics Team.
- (3) Encourages everyone to get behind the London Paralympics Games and show support for the Australian team.

WN BULL FUNERALS 120TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates WN Bull Funerals on achieving 120 years of service to the people of New South Wales.
- (2) Recognises WN Bull Funerals as a truly Australian company that has played a significant part in the history of New South Wales.
- (3) Wishes the directors, management and staff of WN Bull Funerals all the best as they commemorate this significant milestone.

YOUNG SOCCEROO ANTHONY PROIA

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Anthony Proia on his selection in the Young Socceroos squad.
- (2) Notes that Anthony signed to play for Brisbane Roar in 2011.
- (3) Wishes Anthony and the Young Socceroos every success when they compete in the Asian Football Confederation under-22 years championships in Indonesia.
- (4) Acknowledges Anthony is a wonderful ambassador for his club and for his community.

EMILY HURTZ OLYMPIC GAMES SELECTION

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Emily Hurtz on her selection to the Australian Olympic Team as a reserve for the Hockeyroos.
- (2) Notes that Emily was a member of the Hockeyroos Gold medal winning team at the 2010 Commonwealth games.
- (4) Wishes Emily every success in her hockey career.

BODYBUILDER SUNG SENG LAY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Sung Seng Lay on winning the under 70 kilogram Australasian Natural Bodybuilding title at the ANB Asia Pacific International Physique and Figure Championships.
- (2) Notes that Sung Seng has been competing in bodybuilding for five years.
- (3) Acknowledges that Sung Seng has won numerous titles this year and has ambitions of competing in America.
- (4) Wishes Sung Seng Lay all the best for his bodybuilding career, and for success in the highly competitive American circuit.

CAMDEN JUNIOR SQUASH PLAYERS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jessica and Rachael Gibson and Vanessa Graham on their selection in the New South Wales squash team, to compete in the Australian Junior Squash Championships.
- (2) Acknowledges that Vanessa won the under-13 girls' division.
- (3) Acknowledges that Rachael won the under-15 girls' division.
- (4) Acknowledges that Jessica finished third in the under-17 girls' division.
- (5) Notes that Jessica and Rachael Gibson have been selected also for the New South Wales combined high schools squash team, to compete in a tri-series against Queensland and New Zealand.
- (6) Wishes Vanessa, Rachael and Jessica every success for the championships.
- (7) Acknowledges that Vanessa, Rachael and Jessica are wonderful role models for their schools, teams, clubs and community.

MOTORCYCLIST GLENN ALLERTON

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Glenn Allerton on reaching his goal of competing in the American Motorcyclist Association Superbike round at Laguna Seca, California.
- (2) Notes that Glenn is part of the HP BMW Racing Team.
- (3) Wishes Glenn all the best for the competition and his professional riding career.

NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS NOMINEE FRANCINE THOMSON

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Francine Thomson on her National Excellence in Teaching Awards nomination in the Foundation Inspirational Teaching Award category.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Thomson teaches at Currans Hill Public School.
- (3) Notes that Currans Hill is a great local school.
- (4) Acknowledges the importance of quality teachers like Mrs Thomson in our public schools.
- (5) Congratulates Mrs Thomson on inspiring and motivating her students.
- (6) Notes that Mrs Thomson is a wonderful representative for her school and community.

BOWLS CHAMPION BILL MATTHEW

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bill Matthew on winning the Camden Men's Bowling Club championship.
- (2) Acknowledges that Bill has achieved his goal of having his name on the honour board.
- (3) Notes that Bill has been playing lawn bowls for the past 13 years.

ELDER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT JOYCE MATE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Joyce Mate on receiving the Elder of the Year Award at the Macarthur Region Local Hero and Service Award ceremony.
- (2) Notes Ms Mate's support and involvement in the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee each year.
- (3) Acknowledges Ms Mate's contribution to Aboriginal youth.
- (4) Notes the importance of Aboriginal elders in our communities.
- (5) Notes the amount of respect that Ms Mate has within our community.

NARELLAN ROTARY CLUB FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Narellan Rotary on raising \$1.6 million for local charities at the Night to Remember Charity Ball.
- (2) Notes that the money will be donated to local charities such as the Ingham Institute, Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation, Youth Solutions and Lifeline.
- (3) Acknowledges the wonderful work that these charities do within our local community.
- (4) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the members of Narellan Rotary to our local community.

HOLROYD LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Commends Police Commander Brett McFadden from Holroyd local area command for his hard work on cracking down on local crime.
- (2) Notes that his efforts have brought a greater sense of safety to the local community.
- (3) Thanks the Holroyd local area command police for their commitment and skill in reducing crime in the area.

O'LOUGHLIN'S MEDICAL PHARMACY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the O'Loughlin's medical pharmacy on reaching the 2012 finals of the Australian Small Business Champion Awards and on being named the Australian Small Business National Pharmacy of the Year.
- (2) Notes the award recognises its outstanding service and patient care as well as staff mentoring and training programs.

ROBERT ELLIS BOOK LAUNCH

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the launch of two books by Robert Ellis of Molong: one on the history of the Boer War and another on pumpkins, which includes pumpkin recipes.
- (2) Acknowledges that the books were based on Mr Ellis' important and original research and were launched in Orange on 30 August 2012.
- (3) Congratulates Mr Ellis on preserving this Boer War history and donating part of the proceeds to the memorial to be built in Canberra and on enabling his book *All About Pumpkins* to be used by the Country Women's Association for fundraising purposes.

TRIBUTE TO PETER WEST

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the commitment by Orange resident Peter West as a member of Orange's Tidy Towns Committee.
- (2) Notes that Mr West has been involved with the Clean Up Australia campaign in Orange for 10 years and has been a member of the Tidy Towns Committee for four years.
- (3) Congratulates Mr West on his effort and thanks him for getting his hands dirty to make Orange a tidier city.

POLICE COMMENDATION AWARD RECIPIENTS SENIOR CONSTABLE DANIEL LA VELLE AND PROBATIONARY CONSTABLE BRETT MOONEY

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the dangers Senior Constable Daniel La Velle and Probationary Constable Brett Mooney faced in December 2010 when they entered a burning house in Orange in an attempt to rescue the occupants.
- (2) Notes that while it turned out that nobody was home at the time, the action they took involved risks our police officers can face on a daily basis.
- (3) Congratulates both officers who received the Western Region's Commendation at the NSW Police Force Canobolas area command's medals and awards presentations last month and thank them for their dedication to duty.

GRATHLYN MERINO STUD

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that Grathlyn Merino Stud from Hargraves, which is owned by Max Rayner and family, won two top honours at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show for the second consecutive year.
- (2) Notes that at the prestigious show held in Bendigo, Victoria, Grathlyn Merinos were crowned Grand Champion Ultrafine Merino Ram and Grand Champion March Shorn Merino Ewe.
- (3) Congratulates Mr Rayner on the family's contribution to the sheep and wool industry for many generations.

CRICKETER RHETT LOCKYEAR

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Gulgong born first class cricketer Rhett Lockyear on being contracted to play with Sydney Thunder in the Twenty20 Big Bash League.
- (2) Notes that Mr Lockyear, who played his early cricket in Mudjee, has been based in Tasmania for the past nine years; has represented that State in Sheffield Shield matches and was the twelfth man in a Hobart test match against Sri Lanka in the 2007-08 season where he completed a catch and two runouts.
- (3) Welcomes Mr Lockyear on his return to his home State of New South Wales and wishes him success in his future first-class cricket career.

HOCKEY PLAYER EMMERSON WEILEY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Emmerson Weiley on his selection as goalkeeper in the New South Wales Primary Schools Sports Association's field hockey team.
- (2) Notes that Emmerson has played in goals for three years and will play in the New South Wales team which will contest the national championships in Adelaide in October.
- (3) Notes that Emmerson has played for the Hunter Diocese where his performances impressed the State selectors.
- (4) Notes that Emmerson is 12 years old and attends Holy Name Primary School in Forster.

LES MANTOVA 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Les Mantova who lives in the Baptist Community Services Age Care Kularoo Centre, on the celebration of his 100th birthday on 13 June 2012.
- (2) Notes that Les married Una Scott in 1937 and they have two children, Margaret and Peter, five grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.
- (3) Notes that Les worked for the Australian Gas Light Company for 42 years until his retirement in 1979.

MANNING LANDCARE CHAMPION CHRIS SCOTT

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Chris Scott of Cundletown on being named a local champion in Manning Landcare.
- (2) Notes that Chris has been chairman of Manning Landcare for the past 18 years and has contributed to the development of the Landcare movement at local, regional and national levels.
- (3) Notes that Chris is one of 88 finalists in the national Landcare awards to be held in Sydney in September 2012.

MYALL COAST MUDCRABS RUGBY UNION CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Myall Coast Mudcrabs on winning the 2012 Lower-Mid North Coast rugby premiership.
- (2) Notes that the Mudcrabs defeated the Old Bar Clams 17-10 in the grand final to register the club's first ever premiership.
- (3) Notes that Mudcrabs' captain Dayne Applebee was named player of the match in the grand final.
- (4) Notes that in the semifinals the Mudcrabs also defeated the Forster Tuncurry Dolphins who were undefeated minor premiers in 2012.

REAL ESTATE AGENT TROY LORETAN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Troy Loretan, from Taree Elders Real Estate, on being named the highest ranking exclusive listing agent in the Elders real estate franchise network in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.
- (2) Notes that to achieve this ranking Troy competed against other Elders real estate sales consultants operating throughout the Sydney metropolitan area, in high density population centres in the Australian Capital Territory, and in the mid North Coast and western New South Wales districts.

FORSTER TUNCURRY DOLPHINS PLAYER RYAN SCOTT

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ryan Scott on winning the player of the year award for Lower-Mid North Coast rugby.
- (2) Notes that Ryan is a powerful backrower who plays for the Forster Tuncurry Dolphins and is noted for his aggressive lineout work and strong running.
- (3) Notes that Ryan graduated with honours in a construction management degree at Newcastle university and moved to the Great Lakes to work with MidCoast Water.

QUOTA INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CHAMPION NATHAN "NATE" QUINELL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Nathan [Nate] Quinell from Wallabi Point on being named Quota International Community Champion for 2012.
- (2) Notes that Nate was nominated by Taree Quota Club, which described Nate as a special person who has displayed courage, fortitude and determination, and is an inspiration to his community.
- (3) Notes that Nate has been a type 1 diabetic since the age of three; that he developed a hearing problem when he was eight, for which he received a cochlear implant at 18; and that at 16 Nate also began to lose his eyesight and can now only see large objects at a short distance.
- (4) Commends Nate's immense personal qualities which have enabled him to attend TAFE and receive a youth achievement award in 2006 and to graduate as a qualified chef.
- (5) Notes that Nate runs his own restaurant, Nate's on Old Bar, where he uses his other senses, smell and taste, to prepare good and popular food.

MANNING GREAT LAKES RIDING FOR THE DISABLED

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates members of the Manning-Great Lakes Riding for the Disabled [RDA] team, who won a gold medal in the RDA's international competition held in the United Kingdom.
- (2) Commends the members of the team Tarnee Reynen, Rodney Neal, Tara Copp, Dominique Power and Parris Green on their achievements.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT CHRISTOPHER DIESSEL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Christopher Diessel, a Year 11 student at Chatham High School, on receiving the Regional Director's Excellence in Student Achievement Award during Education Week.
- (2) Notes that Christopher received the award for his outstanding academic ability and his involvement in the school community and the Manning district.
- (3) Commends Christopher for helping Chatham High School's breakfast program and for running the school's sound system for assemblies, presentations and other performances.
- (4) Notes that Christopher helped create and maintain the school's website and was the school's head ambassador in the Careers Expo Ambassador Program.

BOWLS CHAMPIONS BRIAN AND PAUL BLACK

Ms SONIA HORNERY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lambton-New Lambton RSL duo Brian Black and his son Paul on winning their club's bowls fours championship this year.
- (2) Congratulates Paul on winning the Newcastle district No. 7 grade pennant and State president's pairs this year.

- (3) Commends them for playing in a charity fundraiser at Lambton-New Lambton RSL to raise funds for their No. 7 grade side to travel to Port Macquarie for the State play-offs.
- (4) Wishes them all the best in future championships.

NSW APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR WILLIAM PETERS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates carpentry and joinery apprentice, William Peters, on winning the NSW Training Award for apprentice of the year.
- (2) Notes that William will complete a Certificate III and Certificate V in building and construction, and a degree in construction management at Newcastle university in 2012.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to William in his future carpentry endeavours.

HUNTER CANCER SERVICES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that two extra medical oncologists could be in place by the end of the year under a new regional cancer plan for Hunter New England Health.
- (2) Notes that operational plans for different aspects of cancer services are set to follow from the strategy, with a medical oncology plan already advanced.
- (3) Thanks Hunter New England Health chief executive, Michael DiRienzo for prioritising much-needed recurrent funding for the Calvary Mater.

HUNTER ACADEMY OF SPORT CRICKET SQUAD

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates all of the members of the Hunter Academy of Sport's cricket squad, named by coaches Fiona McKenzie and Gary Pinches, on their impressive progress made during training sessions and acknowledges the following local squad members:

- (a) Olivia Beck (Wallsend), highly commended
- (b) Kaliah Slade (Maryland), highly commended
- (c) Harrison Hanlon (Lambton), highly commended
- (d) Rhys Hanlon (Lambton), highly commended.

ANTHONY ALBRECHT JULLIARD SCHOOL SELECTION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Hunter-raised cellist, Anthony Albrecht, on his official acceptance to the prestigious Juilliard School of dance, drama and music, where he is set to study a two-year master's degree.
- (2) Notes that Anthony is one of only two cellists in the world accepted into the course, which begins in September 2012.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to Anthony in his future endeavours as a cellist.

HUNTER VALLEY ELECTRIC VEHICLE FESTIVAL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that electric vehicles are a key technology in making our cities and towns more sustainable places to live.
- (2) Recognises the importance of the Hunter Valley Electric Vehicle Festival in raising awareness of the need for alternative energy sources and sustainable transport within Australia.
- (3) Thanks the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment at the University of Newcastle for initiating the festival.

GLENDORE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Glendore Public School on its fourth consecutive win in the Kids Design Challenge-NRMA Techno push challenge at Eastern Creek Raceway in August 2012.
- (2) Notes that over 2,000 children from 70 different schools across the State participated in the event.
- (3) Commends principal Donna Baguley and assistant principals Glen Punchon, Anthony Pearson, Simone White and Linda Pirillo for making Glendore Public School's participation in the event possible.

JESMOND PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students and teachers of Jesmond Public School on making this year's excursion to Canberra possible after the excursion was cancelled in 2011 due to lack of funds.
- (2) Acknowledges the combined efforts of staff and students to publish a cookbook titled "*Around the World in a Lunchbox*", which celebrates the school's multicultural flavour.
- (3) Commends principal Jacqueline Howard on ensuring all sales from the cookbook went towards the Canberra excursion in 2012.

HUNTER WOMEN ATHLETES

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Supports women athletes and their contribution to Hunter sport and football.
- (2) Acknowledges that both Lake Macquarie Football Club and Adamstown Rosebud are integral to the Hunter football community.
- (3) Congratulates Adamstown Rosebuds team, coaches and support crew on winning the Women's Premier League grand final.
- (4) Commiserates with minor premiers Lake Macquarie Football Club, which had not been defeated since joining the Women's Premier League this season.
- (5) Congratulates Tara Andrews, who scored the only goal for Lake Macquarie.
- (6) Acknowledges the spectacular goals scored by Adamstown Rosebud's Stacey Day, Gemma Simon, Kim Wilt and Taylor Smith.
- (7) Wishes the best to all players in the Women's Premier League in future games.

WOMEN IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT ASHLEIGH SMITH

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ashleigh Smith of Jamberoo on recently winning the Australian Hotel's Association NSW Women in Tourism and Hospitality Scholarship.
- (2) Acknowledges that the \$20,000 scholarship will allow Ms Smith to undertake a Bachelor of Business (International Hotel and Resorts Management) at the Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School at Leura.

NATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE RODNEY "BURLOO" BOWDEN

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Gulgong truck driver Rodney "Burloo" Bowden on his induction into the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs.
- (2) Notes that Mr Bowden was one of 130 inductees honoured for a lifetime of service to the transport industry in August 2012.
- (3) Recognises that Mr Bowden followed family tradition when he began working in the trucking industry and has given 36 years to the industry.

TRAINEE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER MEGAN SMITH

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wellington mother Megan Smith on gaining the 2012 TAFE New South Wales Gili Award in the trainee category.
- (2) Notes that Ms Smith, a proud Wiradjuri woman, was also named Aboriginal Trainee of the Year for her enduring work as an Aboriginal health worker.
- (3) Recognises that Ms Smith had no previous training in health and was successful in completing all Certificate III units and Certificate IV units of the Aboriginal Health Work Practice traineeship while working in a Nurse Family Partnership Program.

MUDGEES HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Mudgee Hospital Auxiliary, under the leadership of Glenys Goodfellow, on raising \$40,842 during the year ended 30 June 2012.
- (2) Notes that funds raised by the Auxiliary are used to provide much-needed equipment for the Mudgee hospital.
- (3) Recognises the generosity of the people of Mudgee in enabling the auxiliary to assist with the purchase of equipment for Mudgee hospital.

MUDGEES RESCUE SQUAD PRESIDENT GEOFF HAWES

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Geoff Hawes on his re-election as President of the Mudgee Volunteer Rescue Squad.
- (2) Notes Mr Hawes was an original member of the squad when it was formed 38 years ago.
- (3) Recognises that the Mudgee Volunteer Rescue Squad's activities range from working with emergency services at traffic incident scenes to providing traffic control for many local events such as triathlons and at the opening of the new Glen Willow Sporting complex in April in 2012.

MAX POTENTIAL PROGRAM

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the success of the Max Potential Program for 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the great contributions made by ClubsNSW, local clubs, program coordinators, mentors and volunteers to the program.
- (3) Congratulates the students who participated in the program and graduated on 17 August 2012.
- (4) Encourages continued support for this outstanding young leadership program.

TUGGERAH LAKES SECONDARY COLLEGE TUMBI UMBI CAMPUS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates students and staff of Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College, Tumbi Umbi Campus, on their success in winning the open division of the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge 2012.
- (2) Notes that over 120 students and staff competed in this division.
- (3) Acknowledges the hard work by teachers, staff, principal Shayne Player, the Parents and Citizens Association, parents, students and others in contributing to their successful production.

TUGGERAH LAKES LEARNING COMMUNITY

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates students from schools in the Tuggerah Lakes Learning Community who received awards recognising their outstanding academic achievements at the academic awards ceremony held on 8 August 2012.
- (2) Notes the Tuggerah Lakes Learning Community is a cooperative of the 10 public schools that service the Tuggerah Lakes area under the slogan "United in Excellence, Equity and Opportunity".
- (3) Acknowledges the commitment of students and teachers to quality education and learning outcomes.

LISAROW PUBLIC SCHOOL MUSICAL MAYHEM PRODUCTION

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lisarow Public School on its successful production "Musical Mayhem", performed at the Laycock Street Theatre on 28 and 29 August 2012.
- (2) Notes the enthusiastic participation of all Lisarow Public School students from kindergarten to year 6.
- (3) Acknowledges the enormous contribution made by teachers and principal Ross Hallaways, the Parents and Citizens Association, school staff, parents and many others for the successful production.

GRAFTON TIGERS AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Grafton Tigers Australian Rules Football Club on winning back-to-back grand finals.
- (2) Acknowledges the team's commitment and dedication to come from behind, after trailing at each of the intervals and to score 50 points to one in the final quarter.
- (3) Congratulates Lee Anderson on winning the Woodlock Medal for best on ground.
- (4) Acknowledges the coaching staff and the club's executive along with retiring captain Daniel Zacek.

TRIBUTE TO CHERYL KINNANE, OAM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Cheryl Kinnane, OAM, on her many years as president of the Grafton Women's Hockey Association.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and commitment shown by Mrs Kinnane in providing leadership, knowledge and expertise to the association.
- (3) Acknowledges the junior umpire training provided by Mrs Kinnane over a number of years.
- (4) Acknowledges that Mrs Kinnane is continuing to volunteer her time to the association in the position of senior vice president.

TRIBUTE TO PETER ROLAND

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Peter Roland on his retirement after 39 years as a lawyer based in Grafton.
- (2) Acknowledges his dedication and commitment to the local community in a variety of volunteer organisations.
- (3) Wishes him, and his wife, Heather, a long, happy and healthy retirement.

CLARENCE VALLEY BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Notes the Clarence Valley Business Excellence Awards were held on 1 September 2012 and acknowledges the hard work of the coordinator of the awards, Ms Maggie Barnwall, and congratulates her on a wonderful event.
- (2) Acknowledges the major sponsor of the awards, CHESS Employment and Support Services, on its support of this event.
- (3) Congratulates the businesses listed below on winning 2012 Clarence Valley Excellent Business awards, and acknowledges their dedication and commitment to the Clarence Valley:
 - (a) Complete Staff Solutions: winner in workplace safety category, professional services fewer than five employees category, and overall Clarence Valley Excellent Business Award.
 - (b) Clarence River Seafoods: winner in Food and Beverage category and retailer with fewer than five employees category.
 - (c) Impulsive Creations Hair Studio: new business start-up first year of operation category.
 - (d) Quickloader Australia: new business start-up to two years of operation category.
 - (e) Priceline Pharmacy Yamba Fair: winner in professional services more than five employees category, retailer with more than five employees category, and better access award category.
 - (f) Valley Signs and Printing: trade, industry and manufacturing category.

WESLEY MISSION NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM OWEN—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that Wesley Mission provides a wide range of crucial services in Newcastle and across the Hunter, supporting people through their journey of life.
- (2) Congratulates Wesley Mission on the opening of its new premises in Denison Street, Newcastle.
- (3) Notes that for many years Wesley Mission and the New South Wales Government have had a great working relationship.

FORT SCRATCHLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Mr TIM OWEN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that on 8 June 2012 the Fort Scratchley Historical Society hosted a dinner to mark the official opening of an exhibition celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the World War II defence of Newcastle; the 130th anniversary of the construction of Fort Scratchley; and the thirtieth anniversary of the Fort Scratchley Historical Society.
- (2) Acknowledges that the success of the three-day celebrations is a credit to the members of the Fort Scratchley Historical Society, who work tirelessly to preserve the city of Newcastle's history.

HUNTER REGION APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr TIM OWEN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Hunter Region Apprentice and Trainee of the Year Awards are conducted annually and are designed to reward and promote vocational education and training excellence in the Hunter region.
- (2) Acknowledges that with the growing importance of vocational training in enhancing the Hunter region's prosperity, the awards play a critical role in the economic landscape by encouraging and celebrating excellence in skills development.
- (3) Congratulates the organisers on developing such a fantastic gala event that attracted approximately 500 people, and awarded over 30 trainees and apprentices.

LIFELINE NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER

Mr TIM OWEN—That this House:

- (1) Thanks Lifeline Newcastle and Hunter for its tireless work in the local community.
- (2) Congratulates Lifeline on developing the Lifeline Newcastle and Hunter 2012 Workplace Lifesaver Awards that recognise employees who create a stress-free and productive work environment.
- (3) Supports Lifeline in its mission to assist the community and people experiencing difficulty through accessible and effective counselling, education and referral services.
- (4) Congratulates Lifeline Newcastle and Hunter on raising in excess of \$18,000 at the Lifeline Newcastle and Hunter 2012 Workplace Lifesaver Awards business luncheon.

MIGAS APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA AWARDS

Mr TIM OWEN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the MIGAS Apprentices and Trainees New South Wales and Victoria Awards night was held at the Wests Convention Centre on Friday 18 May 2012, to celebrate the efforts of all the apprentices, trainees and school-based trainees for 2011.
- (2) Acknowledges that 270 guests attended the event, including MIGAS board member Gary Lynch, senior management, staff, participating training companies and most importantly apprentices, trainees and school-based trainees.
- (3) Congratulates MIGAS on executing another fantastic event, which encourages excellence across industry amongst employers and employees.

LEAPFROG ABILITY EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTRE

Mr TIM OWEN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the LeapFrog Ability's Education and Resource Centre was officially opened at 101 Maitland Road, Islington on 17 May 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the LeapFrog Ability team on its continued great work in the Hunter community, which has enabled the organisation to grow in both service offerings and size.
- (3) Notes that the Education and Resource Centre will allow LeapFrog Ability greater capacity to offer support and training to service users in the areas of basic living skills, anger management, self-esteem, dealing with bullying and sex education.

TRIBUTE TO ELAINE JOHNSTON, OAM

Mr DARREN WEBBER—That this House:

- (1) Notes the recent passing of Ms Elaine Johnston, aged 73 years, who was regarded as the founder of women's hockey on the Central Coast.
- (2) Recognises Ms Johnston's lifelong contribution to hockey on the Central Coast, including as a founding member of Central Coast Junior Hockey, Minkey Hockey, the Erina Women's Hockey Association and the Jet's Hockey Club, and as co-founder of the Central Coast Women's Hockey Association, of which she was president for 25 consecutive years.

- (3) Acknowledges Ms Johnston's Order of Australia Medal in 1995, her Centenary Medal in 2001 and her Australian Sports Medal in 2002, for outstanding service to the sport of hockey.
- (4) Offers its condolences to her family, friends and loved ones.

RESTAURATEURS DAVID AND NICOLE CAMPBELL

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates David and Nicole Campbell on their successful opening of the new Wharf Road Restaurant and Bar in Nowra.
- (2) Acknowledges that this new restaurant and bar, which will generate tourism and jobs in the local hospitality industry, is a very welcome addition to the Shoalhaven.
- (3) Notes that the restaurant and bar offers simple, delicious food and great wine in a relaxed atmosphere.

ESSAY COMPETITION WINNER SHEREE KUAN

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Sheree Kuan, of Cherrybrook, who was named the winner of the 2012 "What Matters?" essay writing competition.
- (2) Notes that her essay was deemed the most compelling work from among more than 3,500 entries and wishes her success in her writing future.

STEFF DAVIS AUSTRALIAN UNDER 19 SCHOOL GIRLS SOCCER TEAM SELECTION

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Castle Hill soccer player, 16 year old Steff Davis, who has been named in the Australian under-19 years school girls' team.
- (2) Wishes Steff and the team the very best when they tour Brazil and Argentina in January 2013.

FRANCHISE PARTNERS OF THE YEAR TIM AND BEVERLY OLDFIELD

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tim and Beverly Oldfield, of PoolWerx Castle Hill, on being named New South Wales Franchise Partners of the Year at the PoolWerx Convention held recently in Melbourne.
- (2) Recognises the importance of small businesses to the Castle Hill community.

PARALYMPIAN ROSEMARY LITTLE

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates West Pennant Hills Paralympian Rosemary Little on winning a bronze medal in the T34 100m final with a time of 19.95 seconds.
- (2) Recognises all Paralympians and the hard work they have put in to compete on the world stage.

SCULPTOR ARGO HO

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Carlingford sculptor Argo Ho on receiving the PricewaterhouseCoopers Award at the Sculptors Society Darling Park Exhibition for his bronze sculpture "Twist".
- (2) Wishes Mr Ho all the best for his future creations.

PIANIST NICHOLAS YOUNG

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House wishes Carlingford pianist Nicholas Young good luck as he prepares for the Australian National Piano Award, Australia's biggest classical piano competition, and competes against 10 other pianists in Shepparton, Victoria, in September 2012.

TENNIS PLAYER ANA PRSO

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 10 year old Castle Hill schoolgirl Ana Prso on obtaining the number one ranking in her age group after winning the New South Wales junior round robin tennis competition in Sydney in August 2012.
- (2) Wishes Ana the very best for her future endeavours on and off the tennis court.

CHERRYBROOK RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade on 60 years of service to the local community.
- (2) Wishes Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade's longest serving members, Bill Stork and Doug Crampton, many more years of service to the Rural Fire Brigade.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL STRINGER, AM, ESM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Michael Stringer, AM, ESM, on his 40 years of dedicated service to the community in marine safety, having joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in 1973.
- (2) Notes that in 1992 Mr Stringer received the Order of Australia Medal for services in the field of marine rescue.
- (3) Notes that in 2010 Mr Stringer was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia [AM] in recognition of further outstanding service.
- (4) Notes that Mr Stringer is currently a director of Marine Rescue NSW.
- (5) Commends Mr Stringer on his lifelong contribution to the safety of our community.

ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY AWARD FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT LIAM BRUNDLE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Liam Brundle, of Holy Cross College, Ryde, on receiving the Archbishop of Sydney Award for Student Excellence.
- (2) Notes that Mr Brundle received the award from Cardinal Pell at a special ceremony at St Mary's Cathedral.
- (3) Notes the award recognises students for achievements in a range of areas including leadership, commitment and social justice.

ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY AWARD FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT KATE YOUNG

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kate Young, of Marist Sisters' College, Woolwich, on receiving the Archbishop of Sydney Award for Student Excellence.
- (2) Notes that Ms Young received the award from Cardinal Pell at a special ceremony at St Mary's Cathedral.
- (3) Notes the award recognises students for achievements in a range of areas including leadership, commitment and social justice.

ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY AWARD FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT MAXWELL HALL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Maxwell Hall of St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, on receiving the Archbishop of Sydney Award for Student Excellence.
- (2) Notes that Mr Hall received the award from Cardinal Pell at a special ceremony at St Mary's Cathedral.
- (3) Notes the award recognises students for achievements in a range of areas including leadership, commitment and social justice.

ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY AWARD FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT JOSEPH WEHBE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Joseph Wehbe of St Ignatius' College, Riverview, on receiving the Archbishop of Sydney Award for Student Excellence.
- (2) Notes that Mr Wehbe received the award from Cardinal Pell at a special ceremony at St Mary's Cathedral.
- (3) Notes the award recognises students for achievements in a range of areas including leadership, commitment and social justice.

PREMIER'S TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT MARK LIDDELL

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Northern Beaches Christian School's maths learning area manager Mark Liddell on receiving a 2012 Premier's Teacher Scholarship for his outstanding commitment to quality education.
- (2) Recognises that Mark Liddell is amongst just 25 teachers throughout New South Wales to receive this prestigious award.
- (3) Notes that the Premier's scholarship program helps enable New South Wales' most outstanding teachers to become world leaders in education by acquiring skills and techniques from some of the world's best educational facilities.
- (4) Notes that students throughout New South Wales are the major beneficiaries of this program by being able to share in the new skills, knowledge and teaching methods acquired by the scholarship recipients.
- (5) Congratulates Mark Liddell on his enthusiasm and passion for education and ongoing commitment towards improved learning outcomes for students.

TRIBUTE TO BOB HAWKSLEY

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of long-term Manly Warringah Radio Society member Mr Bob Hawksley.
- (2) Notes that the Manly Warringah Radio Society has operated throughout the northern beaches and North Shore since 1923 and played a pivotal role in coordinating local emergency services during periods of natural disaster.
- (3) Notes Bob Hawksley's dedication towards the society and active participation in both its social and emergency assistance roles.
- (4) Notes that a celebration of Bob Hawksley's life was held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on 24 August 2012.

COUNTRYLINK NORTH COAST TOURISM AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates all winners of 2012 CountryLink North Coast Tourism Awards.
- (2) Recognises the outstanding achievements of the following Port Macquarie businesses in winning gold, silver or bronze in their nominated category:
 - (a) 52+ Things to Do Tourism Marketing Campaign—Gold
 - (b) The Glasshouse—Gold
 - (c) Vacation Village—Gold
 - (d) The Corner Restaurant and Cafe—Gold
 - (e) Rydges Port Macquarie—Gold
 - (f) Festival of the Sun—Gold
 - (g) Port Macquarie Panthers Club—Gold
 - (h) Urban Hotel Group Ironman Australia—Silver
 - (i) Greater Port Macquarie Visitor Information Centre—Silver
 - (j) Extreme Velocity Vertical Wind Tunnel—Bronze
- (3) Wishes all the gold award winners every success as they represent the North Coast at the 2012 New South Wales tourism awards.

PORT MACQUARIE BAPTIST CHURCH FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the fiftieth anniversary of the Port Macquarie Baptist Church on 19 August 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and commitment of church leaders and volunteers to improving the quality of life for many in the Port Macquarie electorate over the past 50 years.

GOOD LIFE IN KENDALL FESTIVAL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates co-ordinator, Warren Parker, on the "Good Life in Kendall" festival held on 18 August 2012.
- (2) Recognises and congratulates all participants on showcasing the wonderful skills and produce of the Kendall region.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.**Community recognition notices agreed to.****UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE LIBYAN STUDENTS**

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [11.05 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the University of Newcastle and the Federal Government on supporting the six Libyan students who have had their scholarships frozen under international sanctions;
- (2) notes the university has waived its fees for these students until the end of the year; and
- (3) expresses its support for those students and all Libyans living in Australia.

Last year, against the backdrop of pandemonium in their homeland, six Libyan students from the University of Newcastle in the Wallsend electorate were at risk of being deported to their war-ravaged country and facing reprisals from former Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Under United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973, Libya's offshore funds were frozen during the rebellion. This left approximately 650 Libyan students without the mandated scholarships needed to cover tuition costs and living expenses in Australia. The decision by the University of Newcastle to waive these six students' fees and pay their stipends until the end of the year prompted the Commonwealth Government to provide monetary protection for the 650 Libyan students enrolled in universities across the country. These were commendable acts of generosity, but could be considered reactive rather than proactive. Contingency plans should be devised by the O'Farrell and the Commonwealth governments to deal with a similar situation, should we face one in the future.

The Council of International Students Australia [CISA] analysed the Libyan student crisis and compiled a submission delivered to the NSW International Student Taskforce. This submission revealed that more than 400 students sought help over concerns regarding their financial situation. Some students feared they would be left homeless, with one student compelled to remove her child from school due to associated costs. Others feared returning home to face imprisonment or death due to their participation in pro-democracy anti-Gaddafi protests in Australia, which happened to a Libyan studying at a Perth university; the students clearly had just cause to be concerned. The University of Newcastle and the Commonwealth Government understood that there would be consequences. Fortunately, the benevolent act of the University of Newcastle in ensuring six students continued their studies at the institution resulted in the Commonwealth Government delivering a \$1.5 million loan to the Libyan Embassy. This allowed the students to continue their education without the fear of being deported to Libya. The Council of International Students Australia argued:

"State Governments have a responsibility, especially where TAFEs are concerned."

One of its recommendations proposed that the New South Wales Government establish an emergency fund for international students in TAFE institutes who may find themselves in a similar predicament. Heather Richards, President of the Newcastle University Students' Association, known as NUSA, and Vice President of the Council of International Students Australia, said:

NUSA supports CISA's calls for a New South Wales Contingency Plan and New South Wales Emergency Fund for international students who have been adversely affected by events in their home country that are beyond their control. International students study in Universities, TAFE institutes, schools and private education institutions in New South Wales. A coordinated response, both state-based and national, is needed when students of any particular nationality are in a crisis situation.

According to Ms Richards, no response was coordinated for six Libyan students enrolled in TAFE. First, she called the Chief Executive Officer of TAFE Directors Australia who was unaware of the crisis at that time. Following a series of phone calls by the Council of International Students Australia, Universities Australia and TAFE Directors Australia finally sent a coordinated a response. Ms Richards contacted Australian Education

International at the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], who confirmed that the Federal and State governments had not discussed the Libyan student crisis. It appeared no-one was looking out for the Libyan students in the TAFE institutes. Fortunately, the Council of International Students Australia was able to salvage the situation.

The Federal and State governments should have had established plans to deal with the situation. A contingency plan, especially one including an emergency fund, is crucial. The Libyan embassy is still in arrears with several universities that loaned funds for students. Given that money was borrowed on the premise that it would be refunded and the funds were frozen, universities may not be so generous if a similar situation were to occur. Having a contingency plan would ensure that international students were shielded from any political disturbances in their home countries that were beyond their control but that still posed a threat to their continuing education. The State Government must react and deliver a proactive response that will guarantee the safety of international students and allow them to continue their studies.

As well as offering enormous value to our multicultural society, international students hold a particular role in sustaining our economy. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics international students contributed a momentous \$13.9 billion to the economy in 2011 through fees, domestic spending, rent, taxes and transport. Overseas students pay astronomically higher fees to study in this country than their domestic counterparts, while they live, work and shop within the surrounding suburbs of their chosen university. Students from the Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle sustain the communities of Jesmond, Lambton and Shortland. Given that they play a significant role in maintaining many aspects of our economy, a contingency plan featuring an emergency fund should be deemed a matter of urgency by the State Government.

We cannot rely on reactive responses if a situation like the Libyan crisis occurs again. International students should be sufficiently supported if their home country has a sudden upheaval. A contingency plan devised by the O'Farrell Government would ensure that international students would be protected and allowed to continue their studies. These students play a significant role in our society both culturally and economically, so ensuring they can continue their studies away from the disturbances in their home country is the least the New South Wales Government can do.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [11.12 a.m.]: I speak to the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. We welcome universities and the Federal Government supporting students from war-torn countries, such as Libya. Australia has strong democratic values with freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and freedom of movement across our States and Territories, and in and out of Australia. Our universities are great representations of these freedoms and that is because our Australian university system is a strong independent decision-making body of institutions. The University of Newcastle chose to support the Libyan students, and the New South Wales Government welcomes the university exercising its democratic right to do so. At the heart of this debate are two points: First, the actions of the University of Newcastle and, secondly, the problems faced by Libya over the past couple of decades. The choice the University of Newcastle made was a good one, and I commend the entire senior executive of the university for making such a choice.

The outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Dr Nick Saunders, did a wonderful job at the university. Dr Saunders took over the vice-chancellorship when the university was in financial difficulty and made difficult, but necessary, decisions to restructure the university. Consequently he has left the university in a sound financial situation. During that period the university continued to go from strength to strength as a provider of world-class education, as a world-class research institution and as a university with a great commitment to equity. I acknowledge the incoming Vice-Chancellor, Dr Caroline McMillen, who is continuing the work of Dr Saunders. Dr McMillen is demonstrating a commitment to the university's research strengths and the core business of education, and ensuring the university delivers the best possible outcome for students. It is worth noting that the incoming chancellor, Dr Ken Moss, who is a fantastic choice, has had a stellar career in the business world. Dr Moss is highly regarded and is providing tremendous leadership through his role as chancellor.

The New South Wales Government is not a major provider of funds for universities, but it does have a role in controlling the legislation dealing with universities. I note that the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, who is in the House, played a tremendous leadership role in developing the Universities Governing Bodies Act 2011. The legislation has enabled university councils to become leaner. It also provided the opportunity to create council structures that best provide capacity for universities to move with the times and be nimble in their decision-making, as well as the opportunity for generational change on some councils. I commend the work of

the Parliamentary Secretary for Education. I know that all the vice-chancellors in New South Wales have spoken highly of the member for Vacluse and her work in this area. It is reform that they have wanted for some time and a reform delivered quickly by this Government.

Recently the situation in Libya has been particularly traumatic. Libya has suffered a civil war that resulted in the end of a terrible regime under Muammar Gaddafi. Australia has a long history with Libya: In 1942 Australian troops fought and died at El Alamein. Libya is a country with a long and rich history, but the past couple of decades have certainly been traumatic for its citizens. Libya has one of the highest education rates in Africa with literacy and numeracy rates in excess of 82 per cent. Now that Libya has been released from the tyranny of the Gaddafi regime it has the opportunity to go from strength to strength. It was unfortunate for the students who had their scholarship funds frozen. I understand, from the comments of the member for Wallsend, that the situation was dealt with well.

I acknowledge the comments of the member for Wallsend about whether governments should have an emergency fund for these types of situations. I note that university funding is primarily a Federal Government responsibility. The State Government is the regulator and the Federal Government provides funding for the universities. I think that responsibility would lie predominantly with the State Government. I am glad that everything has worked out well for the Libyan students. Hopefully the links formed between Australia and Libya through education will promote trade and greater understanding between our two countries, and consequently enable Australia's multicultural strength to grow. Australia's assistance to Libya through education will encourage trade and cultural development between the two countries. I commend the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the House and commend it to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.19 a.m.]: It is not often that I commend the member for Charlestown on his contribution; today will be one of those occasions. I welcome the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. My contribution will be brief because most of what needs to be said has been said already. The Libyan students at the University of Newcastle may lose their opportunity for an education and prosperity—prosperity that would, hopefully, benefit not only them but also their country and their people. It was quite a shock when international sanctions froze funding. The University of Newcastle attracts a diverse range of students from across the globe. It prides itself on its multiculturalism. The pockets of violence in and around the university and in some of the suburbs in which the international university students move is a real blight on our community. But the Australian Government, the university and 99 per cent of the population speak highly of the opportunities created by international students attending our universities.

The six Libyan students who had been studying and who faced the potential of loss of funding also faced the prospect of deportation because their education visas would no longer be applicable. It is an important part of their business model that universities have high fee-paying students from other countries. Every university relies on such fees for its financial security and prosperity. The Libyan students are no different. The member for Wallsend spoke about the roles that governments can, could, would or should play when these types of things happen. I must admit that I am not entirely aware of the funding models that governments use for international university students, but I think there is a role for government—State, Federal, or both—to ensure that students from other shores are assured of their education. The world has been, is, and always will be, I suppose, in various states of turmoil. Some countries are doing better, others are doing worse; some will have sudden and surprising moments, while others will have long-term stability.

We need to know that students who come to this country will be able to complete their studies, and if there is a role for Federal and/or State governments to play in that, that would be a good thing. I note that the member for Wallsend has called on the State Government to be ready when these types of things happen. I could not agree more. We must be ready because if there is one thing we can be sure of with international relations it is that we can expect the unexpected. So let us prepare and be ready for that; let us have a plan in place to look after these people and make sure they get their education. Hopefully, they can return to their countries well educated and better able to ensure the further stability and prosperity of their countries.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [11.22 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Charlestown and the member for Cessnock for their contributions. I say again: It is always great, and particularly relevant, to have local members of Parliament talking about local issues. I thank the Government for ensuring that local members, who have a good knowledge of the university, have spoken in this debate because it makes a difference to the quality of the debate. My thanks go to the member for Charlestown and to the member for Cessnock. I agree with the member for Charlestown in the many great and terrific things he said about the university. I know that

members on both sides of the House would agree with his comments. The University of Newcastle welcomes more and more international students each and every year. That is important for the university, the local community and New South Wales.

As both the member for Charlestown and the member for Cessnock said, it is great for Newcastle and great for diversity; it has brought changes to the culture and nature of the society of Newcastle, and all for the better. I am sure we would all agree on that. The member for Charlestown talked about the world-class education that students at the University of Newcastle receive. The member for Cessnock and I would attest to that. I have been to the university a few times, and have always received quality education from fantastic lecturers, whom I admire greatly. We all welcome Vice-Chancellor Dr Caroline McMillen, who brings a lovely fresh face to the university. I know that Dr McMillen will work just that bit harder than most men do, because that is just par for the course for a woman. I am sure all women in this House will agree with me on that point.

I also agree with the member for Charlestown: The Federal Government is a major funding source for universities. But these days, of course, State governments have been providing more and more subsidies, grants and funding for universities. Today, much of the research done by the University of Newcastle is funded by the New South Wales Government. We have a big role to play not only in funding what is happening at the university but also in the functioning of universities. I thank the member for Charlestown for acknowledging that the State should have some contingency plans and be ready for what might happen. As the member for Cessnock said, we can expect the nature of international relations to be unexpected.

We do not want students from Libya or any other country come to this country to study, pay very good fees to do so, and then find that they are unable to continue their education at universities such as the University of Newcastle because of strife in their countries. We must have contingency plans ready to protect these students. We want to ensure that they are safe in our university and that they live happily in, and enjoy, Newcastle and the Hunter. When they complete their studies we want them to take back their experiences to their countries but, more importantly, we want them to have the opportunity to complete their education here. I thank members for their wonderful contributions. I urge both the State and Federal governments to work together on contingency plans so that if any of our international students were to face a similar situation we would be prepared to support and help them.

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

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [11.27 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Government for its attack on public sector workers across New South Wales;
- (2) calls on the Government to withdraw the 2.5 per cent cap for wage increases; and
- (3) calls on the Government to reinstate access to arbitration through the Industrial Relations Commission, which the former Government always supported.

The Premier has certainly shown his utter contempt for the public sector workers of New South Wales. Never before in our history have such draconian laws been introduced in New South Wales. The Premier is certainly very skilful in his attacks on our nurses, teachers and police officers. We all know those workers contribute so much to communities across New South Wales. Premier Barry O'Farrell not only has cut thousands of public sector jobs but also has cut real wages and conditions of employment for every remaining public sector worker. Only a conservative, uncaring and incompetent government such as the O'Farrell Government would destroy the livelihoods of so many people in New South Wales. The bottom line is that that lot opposite just do not care.

Never have we seen in this State so many thousands of public sector workers oppose a Premier and his Government for what amounts to nothing more than mass sackings. Every public sector worker sacked by this uncaring Premier affects or touches the lives of a further 10 to 20 people. These workers have families to feed and support, childcare fees to pay and mortgages to pay, and now under the O'Farrell Government the ever-rising price of electricity—all under this Premier's watch. During these gutless mass sackings the Premier

and his Government blamed the former Labor Government for its actions. This is simply a smokescreen to enable the Premier to cover up the fact that he and his Government are not interested in the workers of New South Wales.

The Premier has never been a friend of the workers. We need only look at the constant protests of disapproval by the thousands of men and women rallying in Macquarie Street. None of that lot opposite would even go outside to listen to them. It is ironic that this Government has been saying from the get-go that New South Wales is open for business. The behaviour of that lot opposite has done nothing more than drive people out of New South Wales. This Government was not given a mandate to attack the public sector workers of this State. It was not given a mandate to reduce the wages of more than 300,000 public sector workers. It was not given a mandate to gut the police death and disability scheme; to increase the rents of the most vulnerable families in our communities; to remove funding for the provision of spectacles for young disabled children; to introduce preschool fees; to reduce the carer allowance; to remove the independent umpire, the Industrial Relations Commission; and now to gut our education system. The right to education is one of our basic human rights.

An independent commission for industrial relations—a commission with the power to conciliate and/or arbitrate on a broad range of industrial disputes—has existed for more than 100 years in this State. The Industrial Relations Commission is now being controlled—no, gagged by this Government. I assume that is why the Premier did not initially appoint a Minister for Industrial Relations. We have one now, although whether the Treasurer will be a true industrial relations Minister remains to be seen. This Government has proved to be an industrial dinosaur. Historically, prior to the making of any decisions on industrial relations, governments have consulted with all stakeholders, including sector groups, the workers and the unions that represent them.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Shellharbour will be heard in silence.

Ms ANNA WATSON: However, the Premier and the Government hold the view that they are the sole arbiters. Just ask the Minister for Health; she will tell members. She has appointed herself judge and jury, as she said in this place. The Industrial Relations Commission was a fair and balanced body that dealt with matters of unfair contracts, unfair dismissals and breaches of awards and industrial instruments. With the removal of the Industrial Relations Commission, the worker has nowhere to go. Decisions on disputes rest with the boss, and we all know the outcome of those decisions. It is the task of unions to defend the rights of working people. At every opportunity the Premier has taken a knife to the workers. We have seen that happen over the past 18 months; the Premier's record speaks for itself.

The tackling of this anti-worker Government—and tackle it we will—will result in another page in the Labor movement's history of standing up for workers. Some employers have already taken advantage of the changes. The Government wants to increase profits off the backs of workers. The people of New South Wales know what they want. They want a society in which everyone has the right to a job, security of employment and the ability to further their career. This will allow them to support their family and buy their own home, if that is what they want to do. The Premier and his conservative Government are taking us in the wrong direction. That will become clear in the future.

Labor believes in justice and equity. Our requirements are simple. We want Australian businesses to be economically viable, sustainable and profitable because we want jobs for all Australians. We want to share in the success of business. We want fair and reasonable wages and conditions of employment. WorkChoices did not work, as Howard learned the hard way. This mindless attack from the O'Farrell Government will not work either, and the Premier will also learn the hard way.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [11.34 a.m.]: On behalf of the Government, I speak in opposition to the motion. I thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing the motion to the House as it provides an opportunity to highlight the important work being done by this Government. The people of New South Wales elected the O'Farrell Government to govern New South Wales and improve the performance of the New South Wales economy. The people of New South Wales want us to rebuild the State's finances, to drive economic growth in regional New South Wales, to increase business competition in New South Wales, to place downward pressure on the cost of living, and to strengthen the New South Wales skills base. The New South Wales Government has got on with the job of addressing those issues.

I was interested in the contribution of the newest member of the House, the member for Heffron, who despite hanging around in bad company still has the propensity to tell the truth. In relation to the NSW Jobs

Commission Bill 2012, he said that the reason Labor had not established a jobs commission during its 16 years in government or raised it previously in its 18 months in opposition was perhaps that it had not thought of it. It seems that Opposition members suffer from amnesia. The motion of the member for Shellharbour notes the 2.5 per cent cap on wage increases. In her speech the member attacked the cap and said it was not the right course of action. That is odd because, as I recall, it was the previous Government who put a 2.5 per cent cap on wage increases. The motion calls on the Government to withdraw the 2.5 per cent cap on wage increases, yet that was the policy of the former Labor Government.

Ms Anna Watson: It wasn't. That is untrue.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE: Amnesia strikes again. The member for Heffron should not hang around with members opposite for too long in case he also loses his mind. The previous Government never ensured that the productivity savings were delivered; it handed out money. One thing we know about the members opposite is that, like good socialists, they love spending other people's money but they never like accounting for it. That is why the people of New South Wales removed the previous Government and installed a Government that would act responsibly and look after the finances of New South Wales. We have improved the integrity of the wages policy by requiring that savings are made before they can be passed on in higher wages. After taking office, the O'Farrell Government took significant steps to ensure that public sector wages were kept under control. This Government knows that the best way to build the economy is to build jobs and to control government spending.

The Government introduced legislation and a new regulation to ensure that the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales applies and implements the Government's policy in relation to public sector wages. Sensibly, the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales has awarded employees a 2.5 per cent wage increase in accordance with that policy. It is important to note that additional pay rises can and have been negotiated. So it can be done. The members opposite were prepared to accept promises of productivity, which were never delivered. They allowed expenses to run out of control. This Government has taken the action that was needed to ensure the State lives within its means. For the first time since 1995 government expenses came in below target. Opposition members continued to live as though they had a union credit card with unlimited access to funds.

Anyone who has a household budget knows that if one continually runs one's household on credit one will eventually max out the credit cards and everything will come to a grinding halt. It is a bit like a certain member driving his Lamborghini car. When the car loses speed in top gear the driver brings it down to fourth to try to maintain speed. When the car loses speed in fourth gear the driver drops it down to third. The driver revs the car and eventually blows it up. That is what members on the other side did to the economy of New South Wales. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government has a strong policy to turn around the economy. We are rebuilding the economy, restoring confidence and looking after the people. This is a reformist Government, and we make no apologies for that. We were elected to get New South Wales going again and that is what we are doing. I thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing this motion before the House. It highlights why the people of New South Wales rejected the spendthrift approach of those opposite and adopted a Government that governs responsibly.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [11.41 a.m.]: Workers' rights in this country were hard won. Today the public service workers of New South Wales are seeing their rights deteriorate. Hardworking men and women are seeing their financial security evaporate, thanks to the O'Farrell Government. Gone is access to arbitration through the Industrial Relations Commission. Gone is adequate workers compensation coverage. Gone is an adequate death and disability pension for police officers. Gone is the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission, which is now forced to adhere to government policy or find its decisions rendered void.

The Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Bill enforced a 2.5 per cent per annum cap on public sector workers' expenses. It decreed that any employee-related expenses above the 2.5 per cent cap had to be offset by employee-related cost savings. This cap limited the effectiveness and independence of the Industrial Relations Commission, which is unable to make any decision that goes over the 2.5 per cent cap unless that decision involves a reduction in conditions of employment. How can the commission provide fair outcomes? How can the commission provide a balance between the competing needs of employers and employees in these circumstances? As was aptly said by the member for Mount Druitt, the Industrial Relations Commission will do as it is told by the O'Farrell Government.

The 2.5 per cent increase does not match the increase in utility prices that was recommended in the Government's submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART]. The tribunal approved

an 18 per cent increase in electricity prices from 1 July this year, although the tribunal said it could have halved this increase had there been greater cooperation and flexibility from the Government. The Government also made two secret submissions appealing for Sydney Water prices to be increased by more than the 7.6 per cent over four years suggested by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. The Government is forcing residents of this State to fork out more money for essential services while at the same time making it much harder for government workers to earn a fair wage.

How much more pressure can these people be expected to take? New South Wales workers are now facing nothing less than an all-out assault from a Government hell-bent on taking away their rights at work. People who provide vital services to our community, including teachers, nurses and public transport operators, have seen their rights decline and they will see them decline even further. People who make sure our State's services run efficiently will find their own efficiency hampered by decreased work conditions. The State's police officers, who are so important to ensuring the safety and security of our communities and who risk their safety and health on a day-to-day basis, will no longer be covered by adequate death and disability compensation. Jeff Lawrence, Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, was right when he said—

Mr John Williams: Point of order: The member is misleading the House. There is a death and disability scheme in New South Wales. It is wrong for her to say there is not.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order, but perhaps the member could correct her statement.

Ms SONIA HORNER: It is time to stand up and say, "No more". It is time to demand that the rights of the public service workers of this State are protected from the hack-and-slash politics of the O'Farrell Government. The independence of the Industrial Relations Commission must be restored. The financial security of the men and women upon whom so much of our society relies must be ensured.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [11.45 a.m.]: This motion has a whiff about it. It has the rancid stench of hypocrisy. That is what members on this side of the House can smell. To illustrate my point, let me take a stroll down memory lane and look through the Robbo files. Going back to 2009 we see the friends of the workers at work. On 21 November the *Daily Telegraph* published an article headed, "Massive job cuts for firefighters", which stated:

Rangers regarded as the "SAS of bushfire fighting" are among more than 200 parks and wildlife staff facing the axe under savage cutbacks ordered by the Rees Government.

Whose finger was on the trigger? The article continued:

Climate Change and Environment Minister John Robertson said frontline staff would not be affected and a restructure of the department would ensure resources were "reallocated to where they are needed most".

John Robertson's fingerprints were all over it. That is why former Premier Morris Iemma said about the member for Blacktown, "I never found him consistent at any time. It was like wrestling with smoke." And it was. We all remember Premier Iemma—his blood is on the carpet in this Chamber.

Ms Sonia Horner: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. What the Leader of the Opposition did in the past is not relevant to the motion. Also, I ask the member not to yell into the microphone.

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

Mr ANDREW GEE: This motion has the rancid stench of hypocrisy. We have only to go back to 2008 when on the *Stateline* program old Smoky Robertson said:

You can rest assured I won't be becoming an advocate for privatisation or some of the other things that my predecessor—or Michael Costa—had previously advocated for.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: Mr Assistant-Speaker, I ask that you direct the member for Orange to refer to the Leader of the Opposition by that title or as the member for Blacktown and not as Smoky Robertson.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Orange to refer to other members by their correct titles.

Mr ANDREW GEE: He went on to say, "I certainly see that some people might argue I've sold out". Let us look at what happened. There were picket lines outside Cessnock jail and the Public Service Association said, "We have not seen these middle-of-the-night raids and dawn lockouts since the wharf dispute of 10 years ago or so." The Leader of the Opposition was the one doing all this. The friends of the workers say they are all about equality. They love equality: Under them every union mate and union hack gets a job. They say they are the friends of the worker. Look at what they have done with the carbon tax, and hundreds of coalmining jobs have been slashed across New South Wales and Queensland. That is what we have seen in the past two weeks from the so-called friends of the worker.

Ms Sonia Hornery: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The carbon tax is not relevant to this debate.

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

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.49 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Shellharbour. The motion condemns the Premier and this anti-worker Government for their mindless attack on public sector workers.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I point out to the member for Cessnock that the motion states:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Government for its attack on public sector workers across New South Wales;
- (2) calls on the Government to withdraw the 2.5 per cent cap for wage increases; and
- (3) calls on the Government to reinstate access to arbitration through the Industrial Relations Commission, which the former Government always supported.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: My apologies, I was reading from the original motion. I condemn the Government and its anti-labour mindless attack on the public sector across New South Wales. I call on the Government to withdraw the wages cap and reinstate access to arbitration through the Industrial Relations Commission. At the time that notice of this motion was given, there had been 5,000 job cuts in the public sector and since then there have been another 10,000, which amounts to a minimum of 15,000 job cuts to the public sector workforce. Previously in this debate we heard speeches from members who are meant to be parliamentary representatives of regional areas. They are members who supposedly represent The Nationals and who should be representing their regional communities. The public sector workforce in regions is an important part of a region's economy. One need look no further for an illustration of that point than at the closure of Grafton jail with the loss of 92 jobs and a loss of \$28 million to the local economy. The Premier and the Deputy Premier were absent in Grafton to face the music at the time of the announcement. Instead, they sent the poor old member for Clarence.

Mr Ryan Park: What did he say?

Mr CLAYTON BARR: "Bread and milk" was the term he used. He said it was just about bread and milk. But within approximately 48 hours he had figured out that \$28 million buys a bit more than bread and milk. By that time he had figured out that people's lives had been turned upside down by this Government's decision. In a knee-jerk reaction, the Government asked the Deputy Premier to apply his mind to the creation of jobs in the northern rivers region. As I said, 92 jobs had disappeared. For a little while the Deputy Premier spun his wheels and desperately looked for something, eventually coming up with 79 jobs. Seventy-nine jobs do not equate to 92 jobs, but at least he made an effort. Unfortunately, his effort was made only as a result of public pressure, not as a result of government policy.

This motion condemns the Government because the Government has failed to grasp the importance of public sector jobs and that public sector workers need reasonable wage rises and increases. The way the increases have been determined in the past has been through an independent Industrial Relations Commission. An industrial relations commission ceases to be independent when it has a legislated instruction from Parliament stipulating that the commission will implement the 2.5 per cent wage policy of a government. There is nothing independent about that. The decision is legislated and becomes an instruction. That is the key to the difference between the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission under a Labor Government and the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission under a Coalition Government—independence.

Hypocrisy is thy name is a phrase that has been used in this Chamber in the past few minutes. Basically, much to the frustration of some members and most of the community, this Chamber is all about words, wordsmiths, who says what, and who pulls what figures from what table and in what Chamber. Certainly in the context of hypocrisy is thy name, I refer to the Premier, Barry O'Farrell who, during the lead-up to the election, said that we needed a strong, good, big public sector. He said we need it to be bigger and stronger, not smaller.

Mr John Barilaro: Efficient, not big.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The member for Monaro says "efficient", but if the Premier had said "efficient" I would have said so. The Premier never said that. On numerous occasions during this debate the member for Monaro has badmouthed the unions. I state for the record that Government members hate the unions. I ask them to keep reminding the people of New South Wales of that.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [11.53 a.m.]: I note that the motion calls on the Government to withdraw the 2.5 per cent salary cap. I wonder which Labor members were in the Chamber on the day Michael Costa delivered his budget. I will obtain a copy of the videorecording because it seems that a lot of members have lost their memory. Cinderella has awakened from her sleep.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: Mr Assistant-Speaker, I ask you to instruct the member for Murray-Darling to confine his remarks to the leave of the motion. We are not debating what happened in 2008.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Murray-Darling was being relevant to the motion.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Unfortunately, the member for Shellharbour was not a member of Parliament when Michael Costa delivered his budget. She was busily helping Noreen Hay get the knives out to do in the previous member for Shellharbour. She was on the removal committee and she was a little bit distracted.

Ms Sonia Hornery: Point of order: The last two sentences were clearly in breach of Standing Order 129, which relates to relevance. The member for Wollongong has no relevance to the motion.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: We should re-examine the videorecording of the day when Michael Costa came into this House and made the announcement of his Government's intention to limit public sector wage rises to just 2.5 per cent. Labor Government members all cheered him on and were nodding in approval. They reminded me of those dogs in the back window of cars whose little heads bob. The Labor members were all up on their feet to congratulate him—"Michael, you little beauty, you've done it again." They swallowed the whole lot. Not one Labor Government member that day challenged Michael Costa about the cuts. They let it flow. Following the election, the Coalition Government decided to continue that policy, and all hell broke loose. John Robertson, or Smoky Robertson as we know him, thought he had a platform from which to attack this Government.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 75, which requires the member for Murray-Darling to address the Leader of the Opposition by his correct title.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Earlier I ruled that members should be addressed by their correct titles.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: So the Leader of the Opposition left the Chamber and decided that he would raise hell or high water about the wages cap. He decided, "We'll have a protest. We'll roll it out and bring the world to an end." Then Labor headquarters in Sussex Street conducted a poll revealing that the general perception of John Robertson is that he appeared to be a union thug, so he had to reinvent himself. He had to walk away from that platform, and he has done so.

Ms Sonia Hornery: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance.

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

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: He had to walk away, clean up his act and start talking about a jobs commissioner. He is undergoing a process of renewal because he knows that the member for Heffron, who is

present in the Chamber, poses a big threat to his leadership. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he needs to start looking a bit different. Like a chameleon, the Leader of the Opposition has changed. He will not support this debate.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [11.57 p.m.], in reply: I thank and acknowledge the member for Campbelltown, the member for Wallsend, the member for Orange, the member for Cessnock and the member for Murray-Darling for their contributions to the debate. I particularly acknowledge the thoroughly reasonable contributions made by the member for Wallsend and the member for Cessnock. Their contributions are always well thought out and supported by facts, and they confine their remarks to the leave of the motion. The member for Wallsend referred to an 18 per cent increase in the cost of electricity in comparison to a 2.5 per cent wages cap. Those figures can be debated, as opposed to the reference by the member for Campbelltown to Lamborghinis and engines and the member for Orange waffling on about Robbo files. That is a telltale sign of a member who clearly is struggling and has not read the motion. The member for Murray-Darling referred to the wobbly-head dogs.

Mr Andrew Gee: Point of order: The member for Shellharbour referred to the Leader of the Opposition as "Robbo". She ought to show more respect.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Shellharbour to refer to other members by their correct titles.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I was quoting the member for Orange. Government members cannot debate with us industrial relations or the conditions of working men and women in this State because Labor has a proud history of looking after the workers of New South Wales. When we hear a siren in the street how often do we stop momentarily and think, "Do I know the person who needs assistance?" Whether it is an ambulance, a police vehicle or a fire engine, those are the services we look to during times of greatest distress. So why are we penalising these workers? They are the bedrock of our society.

I have a story for the House. I will relate it because this constituent made a point of coming to my office to tell me about the support she had received from all the siren services. Her time of greatest distress came when she received a text message from her ex-husband saying that he was going to heaven. She panicked. She called the police and went to his house. She said she feared for her ex-husband's welfare and believed he had harmed himself. She smelt smoke coming from the garage. Neighbours arrived and she explained what was happening. They also called the police. The police arrived within five minutes, and the fire brigade, the Ambulance Service and the State Emergency Service also turned up.

Those services are essential to our community. Why are we penalising those dedicated men and women? The Government continues to do so. I do not think anybody in this place would want to change places with those workers—with teachers or nurses. The Government needs to reconsider its actions immediately. When we have lost all hope we look to those service workers to save us. I refer to my motion and to what I said in my earlier contribution. This Premier and this Government have shown open contempt for public sector workers, and the remarks today by the member for Orange and the member for Murray-Darling reveal how they feel about those workers. They think it is funny; it is not.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 22

Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Burton
Mr Daley
Mr Furolo
Ms Hay
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery

Mr Lalich
Mr Lynch
Dr McDonald
Ms Mihailuk
Mr Parker
Mrs Perry
Mr Piper
Mr Rees

Ms Tebbutt
Mr Torbay
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari
Tellers,
Mr Amery
Mr Park

Noes, 56

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.10 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the important role that all schools play in providing a world-class education to the young people of New South Wales;
- (2) condemns the Government for proposing to cut funding to schools in the community, in particular faith-based and independent schools; and
- (3) calls on the Government to stop this decision and immediately consult with both government and non-government schools about this matter.

When people from all New South Wales electorates are asked what they expect from a government, generally they say three or four things: a quality health system; hospitals to go to when they and their kids are sick; a safe community; good, reliable public transport; and a good-quality school for their children to attend. When Treasury officials are asked the same question the answer is similar, but with some key differences. They would prefer that no-one gets sick, that public transport be fully cost recoverable, and that school funding be progressively reduced so that greater emphasis is placed on parental contribution. This sets the context for this debate.

This motion is not an attack on Treasury; it has been following this practice for years. It was done under our lot and is being done under the lot opposite. However, a couple of days ago in this House the Minister for Education referred to the importance of governing, not campaigning. I could not agree more. But this week's education cuts happen when a Minister contracts out decision-making and allows the public service to put forward stupid proposals that are not based on community needs and do not take into consideration the important service that is provided to the community. At the heart of the announcement this week to cut funding from schools and TAFE colleges was a budgetary decision by the Premier and his Cabinet. The Treasurer said:

Directors General will be given as much flexibility as possible to achieve the savings in the most appropriate way to meet the service requirements of their agencies.

I do not want directors general to make those decisions. Government members have said time and again that they are elected by the community, they are the decision-makers and they are at the Cabinet table. We look to them to make those decisions, not directors general. Members opposite elected the Minister for Education to make those decisions. In 2009 the Minister said:

A failure to invest in education and training is a failure to invest in our future.

If the Minister still holds those beliefs, who is really running this show? This week Kerry Chikarovski—a huge supporter of the Labor Party—said:

It is supposed to be politicians who decide, not just Treasury.

Education is an emotive issue probably because of three key things: first, we have all been to school; second, we are all impacted by the quality of education that we receive; and, third, those of us with children want the best for our young people. Let us remove the emotion from this debate and talk about the fiscal and economic realities of education because those opposite often talk about how strong they are in those areas. A woman with a bachelor's degree will earn around \$800,000 more in her working life than someone who does not study beyond year 12. For a man, the figure jumps to around \$1 million. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] reports that tertiary-educated men are 18 per cent more likely to find employment than those who are not tertiary educated. Evidence shows that education also helps to reduce involvement in crime, improve health outcomes and, in turn, takes pressure off the government purse.

If that is the case, why would a government propose to reduce funding in an area that brings a strong return on investment? Those opposite say there is a big black hole so we need to find the money. Let us consider some areas where we could find it. The Regional Relocation Grant scheme provides \$7,000 to people who move from one council area to another—fantastic. We have tax concessions of \$300 million over four years for poker machine revenue from licensed clubs. Travel for Ministers and public servants tallies around \$900 million. And government advertising is at around \$256 million. I conclude by speaking on behalf of a young student who wrote to me this week. He said:

The effects this has on many of my peers, myself and my teachers will only be negative. I would like to ask you if you could please try your best to use your influence as a member of Parliament to stop these changes from occurring.

There is not a government in the world that does not face challenges regarding budgetary decisions and fiscal management; but a government is defined by its choices and its priorities. Those opposite have made it clear today that, for them, a quality education is not a priority. Today they have condemned the students and parents—indeed, all residents—of New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Education) [12.17 p.m.]: It is always a privilege to discuss any matter in Parliament, particularly education. I will amend the motion. I move:

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

That was an interesting contribution from the member for Keira who, quite incredibly, was a senior public servant in this State. If we are wondering why we are in these difficulties, all we need to know is that the member for Keira was a senior public servant. He asked: Who makes the decisions? It is true that when the Treasurer delivered the budget he said that savings measures would be determined by the individual directors general responsible for the various agencies. That is the way it should be.

The directors general are responsible for operational matters in all government departments but they do not make government decisions; they are made by Ministers. Directors general make recommendations. The member ought to know that as he was once a senior public servant and worked for the former Minister for Transport. The member has seen it from both sides: the bureaucracy and the executive side. Directors general make recommendations to Ministers about all kinds of things, including how savings are achieved—as is the case here. But I take full responsibility for the decisions made as that is my job as Minister.

The State has a highly respected Director General of the Department of Education and Communities, Dr Michele Bruniges. Dr Bruniges was appointed on merit—something that I cannot say happened particularly frequently when those opposite were in government. The Government makes sure that senior public servants in New South Wales are appointed on merit. I am proud to have a director general of her calibre in this State. Dr Bruniges makes recommendations to me and it is my prerogative to accept or reject them. The announcements I made on Tuesday were the recommendations I accepted, and I take full responsibility for them. I did an interview on 2GB on Tuesday night. People are unhappy about the decision—of course they are.

I was asked, "How much of this can be sheeted home to the previous Government?" As tempting a free kick as that was, I told Ben Fordham in that interview, "I am not going to blame the previous Government; these are my decisions. They are tough decisions that need to be made and they are my decisions." Plenty has been written and said about the issues left by the previous Government, but these are my decisions and those of the

Cabinet. The Government has taken those decisions—tough as they are. I repeat what I have said about the measures announced this week in the Chamber, in the media and at Rooty Hill High School today—where I spoke to teachers and parents about education.

Like any other organisation in Australia, the New South Wales Government and the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities have to stick to a budget. Show me an organisation that does not have to stick to a budget and that is the organisation I want to work for. So far, nobody has identified it. We have to live within our means. As the Premier has said many times, if a State government—irrespective of what political party is in power—reaches the point where it has to borrow money to pay salaries it is in dire straits. The Government is going to make every effort to ensure that it does not reach that point. Indeed, the Government is taking deliberate measures to ensure that New South Wales does not reach that point.

Other countries such as Greece—we are a long way from that point of course—are having decisions forced on them because governments refused to make the right decisions when they had flexibility and choice. The consequences for Greece of not abiding by a budget include closing 25 per cent of schools and reducing teacher salaries by 50 per cent. New South Wales is not, and will not get, anywhere near that point because this Government will make the difficult decisions. The former Labor Party left behind a \$5 billion deficit over four years. Those opposite need to get on the phone to their Federal colleagues. In February 2012 the Government was advised of a \$5 billion hole in the goods and services tax revenue.

Mr Nathan Rees: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I think I know what the point of order by the member for Toongabbie is going to be and it is not a point of order.

Mr Nathan Rees: I refer to Standing Order 74 (2), quarrelsome behaviour. The Minister has used the term again, and it is nonsense.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Toongabbie will resume his seat.

Mr Nathan Rees: It is a fiction and if he is going to continue to use that term he can expect a quarrel.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Toongabbie will resume his seat. If he makes one more interjection like that I will place him on a call to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The \$5.2 billion revenue loss is in writing; I am not sure what is untrue about it. There will be \$5.2 billion less revenue for New South Wales. I spoke to Minister Peter Garrett yesterday and told him that he needed to have a conversation with the Federal Treasurer. If the Federal Treasurer wants to make up some of the shortfall, the State Government will be in a position to reconsider not just education changes but other changes it has had to make in New South Wales. I am waiting to see how that conversation will turn out. The New South Wales Government has been forced to make tough decisions. Nobody in this Parliament—in the Liberal Party, The Nationals, the Labor Party or on the crossbenches—wants to make these decisions, but they are the hard decisions that need to be made. If the former Government had made the hard decisions we would not have reached this point. But the Labor Government did not make those decisions, so this Government has to.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [12.24 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Keira. I will address a number of things in speaking to the motion. First and foremost, and in light of the comments by the Minister, we must debunk the myth that somehow the former Labor Government left a budget black hole for the current Coalition Government. That is not the case. The Coalition appointed Michael Lambert to undertake a financial audit. Michael Lambert, the person handpicked by the Coalition to undertake the audit, made it clear that there was no such black hole. Not only did he say that; he also said the changes in revenue mix and other impacts on the State budget were the usual things that happen with budgets that State governments have to deal with. This Government has made no case that there is some crisis in the budget that warrants ripping \$1.7 billion out of Education. Perhaps the Coalition is finally realising that government is hard and one has to make tough decisions.

When Labor was in government it faced difficult financial situations. Labor was in government at the time of the global financial crisis but we never sacrificed education in the way that this Government has done.

Labor found ways to deal with difficult budgetary circumstances and to protect the Education budget. Successive Labor education Ministers fought to protect Education budgets because they knew how short-sighted it would be to sacrifice those budgets in order to make cost savings. It does not make sense. It is a fallacy for the Minister to claim that these cuts are justified by tough economic circumstances. Students across New South Wales will be impacted by the \$1.7 billion cut to education.

The second fallacy that has been pedalled by the Minister and the Premier is that cuts to the Education portfolio will not impact schools and classrooms. It is simply not the case. The staff members that this Government are cutting come from school front offices. They are school education directors, curriculum support officers and special education support staff who work in regional offices. These people work with schools day in, day out. They help classroom teachers to do their job more effectively. Claiming that cutting the staff will not impact on students, classrooms or schools is untrue. It will have a significant impact on the quality of classroom teaching because teachers will not have the support that they rely on to do their job in the smartest and most effective way possible. Thirdly, at a time of skills shortages it makes no sense whatsoever to cut TAFE staff and increase TAFE fees. Last year this Minister for Education took to the meeting of State and Federal education Ministers—

Ms Gabrielle Upton: Point of order: My point of order is based on relevance. The motion is about schools, not about TAFE.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The debate is wide-ranging. The member for Marrickville may continue.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: I find it extraordinary that the Parliamentary Secretary thinks that vocational education and training is not relevant to schools. But I want to talk about completion rates. [*Time expired.*]

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.28 p.m.]: I strongly agree that all schools play a very important role in providing a world-class education to the young people of New South Wales. We all have a part to play in the education of our young people. Whether our children attend government or non-government schools, all those schools are key to learning—whether it is the hard literacy or numeracy skills or the social learning in the school environment. As the member for Keira said, schools are a pathway to skills training, to higher education, to jobs that support our families, to good health outcomes, to good decisions, and to help us find what we are passionate about. I am in complete agreement with the member for Keira on that point.

Mr Ryan Park: Thank you.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: But that is where our agreement ends today. Members on this side of the House are ready—unlike members in Labor governments—to take the tough decisions; not to put this State into red ink, but to put it on a sustainable economic footing. We are not going to say yes to everyone and roll out the lines of credit. Households around New South Wales do not work like that; they cannot work like that. Responsible governments do not work like that—and this is a responsible Government. Why does Labor do that? It is because it is easier. It is easier to say yes to everybody and not take those tough decisions until forced to do so. We are not going to do things that way; we will take responsibility for what we have inherited and the fall in GST revenues. That was the trust that the voting public put in us in March last year.

This approach is difficult; the Minister for Education said that. It is difficult for the party room, it is testing, but it is the right thing to do. As a parent and Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills, I know that the education of our children is vital. But I also know as a member of this Government that funding for education must be sustainable for the long term. Why is that? Let me touch on the facts again, just in case members on the other side did not hear them. GST revenues from the Federal Government will be reduced by \$5.2 billion over the next four years; so total savings of \$1.7 billion have to be made across the entire Education portfolio over four years for us to address that funding gap. How have we done this? As the Minister just said, we have done this in consultation with the senior leadership of the Department of Education and Communities. At the end of the day, the decision is that of the Minister, the Cabinet and the Government. Funding for non-government schools will be capped for four years at the level provided in 2012-13. It is not going to be capped forever.

The cap will not come into effect until the 2013-14 financial year. Consultation continues with parts of the sector about how that cap will affect them. I bring to the attention of members on the other side of the House

the recent statement by the Catholic Education Commission in which Bishop Fisher said that the community recognises that in tough economic times governments need to be fiscally responsible; that they appreciate that the Government has listened to the voices of their parents, teachers and the community and responded constructively. For government schools will be reduced by about 3 per cent. We are not going to politicise our judgements, we are not going to play favourites, and we are not going to pit one sector against another. We do this because we must have a sustainable financial future for our State's education system. These are tough decisions, but they are necessary. First and foremost, we owe our judgement to our community. To do otherwise would betray the strong trust they placed in us at the last election. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [12.32 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Keira. I stand in solidarity with the member along with my colleagues on this side of the House and the teachers, staff, students and school communities but, most importantly, with the mums and dads of this State in condemning Minister Piccoli and the O'Farrell Government for what can only be described as the most short-sighted, arrogant and draconian decision of them all. To cut \$1.7 billion from the future budget designated for public and independent schools is nothing short of utter bastardry. Has the Premier now rebadged himself Barry O'Metherell? Cuts of this size will impact generations to come. There is genuine fear in the community that there will be cuts in programs assisting students with special needs, and that there will be cuts in programs that assist in literacy and numeracy development. This Government has demonstrated that under its administration children are second-rate citizens.

Members might recall that last year the Government put out its slogan for 2011—making New South Wales number one again. Gone is that slogan: the new slogan that Minister Piccoli wants to advance is that New South Wales must live within its means; that no longer will New South Wales be number one, but we are told that we must live within our means. That is how the Government justifies these despicable funding cuts. For argument's sake, let us accept that there is to be a \$5.2 billion reduction in GST revenue over the next four years, and that the Government, genuinely and painfully, has had to make some very deep-felt decisions about where it would make cuts. What interests me most is that when the Premier and Treasurer came to the Cabinet table and, despite having a triple-A credit rating, discussed the financial situation of this State, they were looking for a Minister more than willing to compromise and sacrifice a portfolio.

We all know that when men and women assume the role of Minister their number one objective should be to promote and protect the interests of their portfolios. But the Premier and Treasurer were looking for a Minister who had no backbone, no commitment and no interest in their portfolio. They certainly found such a person in Minister Piccoli. He was more than willing to sacrifice a million students in this State. I am certain Minister Piccoli was not dragged to this decision kicking and screaming, judging by the way he has behaved in question time in the past week. This has been incredibly disappointing and incredibly disheartening. I have been inundated with emails and calls—not only from the electorate of Bankstown but also, interestingly, from the electorate of East Hills.

I would be very nervous if I were the member for East Hills, the member for Oatley, the member for Drummoyne and other Government members representing electorates across this State. Not all of us in this Chamber are parents, but we all have students in our electorates, we all have teachers, and we certainly all have mums and dads whose priority is to make sure their children receive the best quality education possible. And it is our duty as public representatives to make sure that the next generation receives a better education system than the last. There is no doubt that the children of today and the children of tomorrow will go backwards as a result of the O'Farrell Government's decision to cut \$1.7 billion from Education.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.36 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to continue to reinforce the tough decisions that this Government needs to make for the benefit of all of the people and residents of New South Wales. I will not allow the comment of the mover of the motion to go unchallenged that this Government does not care about quality education. I place firmly on the record that I and every member of the O'Farrell Government are continuing to support and acknowledge the wonderful dedication of the fine teachers and educators of New South Wales, and the important role they play on behalf of the many children across this State. I reiterate that the decision by the New South Wales Government to reduce funding is not made lightly. Indeed, any reduction in funding by a responsible government is made with the best intentions on behalf of all residents of New South Wales.

I will not accept for one moment the ridiculous argument by the Opposition that this funding decision is anything but a responsible, economic decision made by the Government responsible for service delivery to New South Wales residents. We will ensure that we are living within our means and that we do not continue to

overspend, as was the case for 16 years prior to our winning government in March 2011. We cannot continue to borrow funds that jeopardise our triple-A credit rating—a rating that has been lost by the South Australian Government. The long haul back from the loss of a triple-A credit rating would result in countless billions of dollars in additional interest rates, which would be a greater impediment to providing the necessary services for the residents of New South Wales.

Opposition members have suggested that the loss of bureaucratic jobs that they provided for the thousands and thousands of their union mates whilst they were in government over 16 years will increase unemployment. I refer the people making those ridiculous statements to the recent employment figures that show that New South Wales had an almost half a per cent reduction in unemployment. Just for the record: over the past year more than 28,000 new jobs were created in this State. That is what a responsible decision made by a government does—it improves the quality of life for every resident. There will be reductions and there may be further reductions across other departments—I am certainly not going to flag any of those. But the fact remains that we must live within our means so we can continue to provide for all residents of New South Wales. I put on record my great support for the many teachers across my area of Hawkesbury.

We have some of the greatest educators and dedicated teachers one could find anywhere and they are providing a quality of education that I believe is unparalleled across this State and, indeed, across this country. Those teachers have my support and they continue to have the Government's support. Those opposite made many dreadful economic decisions, the results of which we inherited. Inheriting a \$5 billion loss means we need to replenish our coffers and the only way we can do that is by making tough decisions. We acknowledge that tough decisions are necessary and we make those tough decisions sometimes with a heavy heart, but we do that because we know that prosperity in this State can only be achieved once we restore the budget for New South Wales. Once the budget is restored we can replenish the funding in schools and we can replenish funding across many other sectors of New South Wales for all the residents of New South Wales.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.40 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a contribution.

Leave not granted.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.41 p.m.], in reply: I thank the Minister for Education, the member for Marrickville, the member for Vacluse, the member for Bankstown and the member for Hawkesbury for their contributions. We have just seen the Government shut down a speaker in a debate about the quality of education in New South Wales even though in this Chamber over the past 15 or 16 months we have heard countless speeches about libraries, graffiti, grandparents, mothers and corgis. This is a Government that will shut down a debate on arguably one of the most important services a State Government provides. The member for Hawkesbury can say whatever he wants to his teachers and he can say whatever he wants to the parents in his electorate about how he supports education, but his actions demonstrate what he supports. His actions—the complicit way in which he has nodded his head and allowed these cuts to be made—say a lot about what he really thinks about education and about the value of teachers and students in our education system.

Today is a very sad day because today marks the beginning of a very dark period for students, teachers and parents across New South Wales. This is not just about one sector, this is not just a battle about independent schools versus the Catholics versus the public sector; these cuts will hit every student, every parent and every teacher who contributes to the quality of education in New South Wales. There are things in this place that I always thought all of us on both sides share a passion for. There are things in this place that I thought most of us, regardless of our political allegiances, believed in. I thought, up until the other day, that one of those things would have been the quality of education delivered in our schools. I now know that, like a lot of other things, that has changed under this Government. We are now seeing a government that does not even value one of the most fundamental responsibilities that State governments have around the country and beyond—the delivery of a quality education system, regardless of how wealthy one's parents are, regardless of one's religious background and regardless of one's cultural background.

Today we have seen a government that is hell-bent on attacking the men and women who make sacrifices for and dedicate themselves to the quality teaching and learning that happens every day in our schools. Today we have seen the Government shut down a debate to advance and discuss the issues that impact on young people right across New South Wales. Today we have seen the starting of the condemning of every parent in this State. Today and over the past few days all parents who have a child in any school within our communities have made it very clear that they understand now more than ever the difference between this side of the House and the other side of the House. Now more than ever they are waiting to give the other side of the House a lesson come March 2015.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 55

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

Noes, 24

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

MOUNT DRUITT COURT COMPLEX

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [12.58 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the excellent service provided by the Mount Druitt court complex; and
- (2) notes that the complex was just one of the many projects for the residents of western Sydney delivered by the previous Government.

This motion has a number of purposes. First, it brings to the attention of the House the role that the Mount Druitt court complex provides to that community and surrounding areas. Secondly, it recognises that the project was and is a Labor Government project. In that regard it is one example to put a lie to the nonsense pushed by Coalition members that nothing happened or nothing was built during 16 years of Labor rule. Finally, the motion highlights that just about every worthwhile project in western Sydney was initiated and undertaken by Labor governments. The first point is that the campaign to have a courthouse built at Mount Druitt took many years. Over a number of years motions by Blacktown City Council, Australian Labor Party branches and various organisations as well as submissions from various individuals were sent to the Government. Support from the Mount Druitt police was effective when it reported the time lost and security issues involved in taking prisoners

to nearby Blacktown and Penrith courts. The terrible record of domestic violence in our area had groups like the Women's Activities and Self Help [WASH] House argue that the distance to Penrith and Blacktown often was a deterrent to abused women who were seeking help.

Initially the project stalled because the courthouse was caught up in many budget priorities. Then one day, in this very Chamber, the then Attorney General, Bob Debus, spoke to me about a capital works program for which he had achieved funding. He advised me and the then member for Londonderry, Jim Anderson, to renew our representations. The end result was that in mid-April 2006, the then Attorney General, Bob Debus, officially opened the Mount Druitt Court House. The court was of a modern design with perimeter security, a remote witness room, and with separate legal aid, Aboriginal services, probation and parole office and police prosecutor facilities. The court was the first to trial the circular sentencing program for Aboriginal offenders. In more recent times the court has participated in a community roster for justice of the peace services, which is now an established part of the legal landscape of Mount Druitt.

The time limit on debating motions does not permit me to fully recognise all the good work the court represents. Likewise, the time allocated for debate of this motion does not permit me to discuss at length all the Labor projects that make our communities what they are today. So I will not talk about TAFE and the motor registry, which were built under the Wran Government, or the Mount Druitt Hospital, that next month will celebrate 30 years since it was opened, the Westmead Hospital, the new Fairfield Hospital, the old and the new Blacktown Hospital, the upgrading of the Cowpasture Road and The Northern Road intersections with Camden Valley Way, the Cowpasture Road duplications and the Warragamba Dam—just some of the projects that Labor is proud to call Labor projects.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! With the concurrence of the House the member for Mount Druitt may conclude his speech.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: I highlight that during the past 16 years, Labor continued with its proud history of building facilities for our State. At the Mount Druitt Hospital, which was a Wran Government project, we added the dental service, the rehabilitation wards and the palliative care wards. Also, with an emphasis on caring for children, the previous Government extended the accident and emergency department to allow children to be treated separately from adults and provided a computed tomography (CT) scanner. The current Government can be commended for adding to that by providing extra chairs for the dental service, more beds for the rehabilitation ward and a further extension to accident and emergency; but history will always show which side of politics gave people the facility in the first place and continued to expand it—Labor. I welcome further extensions in the future.

I must admit that establishment of a courthouse in Mount Druitt helped me and other Labor members and candidates to refute Liberal Party assertions that electorates such as Mount Druitt are taken for granted. The evidence has never supported that criticism. A short time before the courthouse opened, a former Minister for Transport, Carl Scully, secured a \$12 million upgrade of the Mount Druitt railway station by installing an easy access facility. I hope the O'Farrell Government matches that with a similar achievement for the Rooty Hill railway station. Bearing in mind the short time that remains for my speech, I conclude by saying that any research in the future about the Mount Druitt Court House will show that it was just one of the many achievements delivered during 16 years of Labor government, which included four election wins.

I commend the former Minister for Education, Carmel Tebbutt, for providing funds for the Eastern Creek primary school library, the Rooty Hill school library and a new hall at the Colyton Public School as part of the previous Labor Government's proud record of projects to service school communities in my electorate. In another debate at another time, I will inform the House of a whole list of other Labor project achievements.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Robyn Parker and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 24/55

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

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.04 p.m.]: As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I take this opportunity to comment on the recent Legislation Review Digest report tabled on

11 September 2012. This is the twenty-fourth digest that has been prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. The 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 twenty-fourth digest examined the five bills introduced in the sitting week commencing 27 August 2012. The bills considered were the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Amendment (R 18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012, the Game and Feral Animal Control Further Amendment Bill 2012, the Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2012 and the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012.

The Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Amendment (R 18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012 amends the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995 to give effect to a decision by all Australian jurisdictions to introduce an R 18+ classification for computer games. The committee did not raise any concerns in relation to this bill. The Game and Feral Animal Control Further Amendment Bill 2012 amends the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to make further provisions with respect to the hunting or killing of game birds and other game animals. The committee identified issues relating to inappropriately delegated legislative powers.

The Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 amends the Human Tissue Act 1983 to make further provision with respect to the removal of tissue from a deceased person, and to amend the Anatomy Act 1977 to make further provision with respect to the authorisation of anatomical examinations. The committee identified issues relating to the oral variation of written wishes and retrospectivity. However, given the public policy imperatives, the committee made no further comment in relation to these issues. The purpose of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2012 is to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 to enable the Director General of the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services to authorise, or delegate the ability to authorise, the seizure and disposal of distressed stock animals. The committee commented on issues relating to the denial of compensation and financial burden, concluding that those powers were not unreasonable in the circumstances.

The Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 seeks to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to establish the Community Road Safety Fund. The fund will enable revenue from fines and penalties recovered for certain camera-recorded speeding and traffic light offences to be used to fund the activities carried out by Transport for NSW to promote and improve road safety. The committee identified the inclusion of matters in the regulations, which may be more appropriately included in legislation. The committee prepares the digest to assist the members of this House and the other place in their consideration of bills. I thank the members of the committee—the member for Bankstown, the member for Parramatta, the member for Rockdale, the member for Swansea, and our colleagues in the other place, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and Mr 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 digest for the committee during back-to-back sitting weeks.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.09 p.m.]: I comment on the Legislation Review Digest that was tabled on 11 September 2012—the twenty-fourth digest that was prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. I acknowledge my fellow committee members, the members representing the electorates of Myall Lakes, Parramatta, Rockdale and Swansea, and my colleagues from the other place, Mr David Shoebridge, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. As always, I acknowledge the hardworking committee staff. This week the committee met at 1.30 p.m. and I was able to attend. All members were in attendance at that lunchtime meeting.

Once again Coalition members are playing games. A brief discussion took place regarding the three back-to-back sitting weeks and Mr David Shoebridge and the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane then moved a motion that the next meeting and all subsequent meetings be held at lunchtime. At least two members of the staff indicated that they were fine with the proposal and the remaining members of staff did not raise any concerns. However, Coalition members did not put forward any reason why the committee could not hold its meetings at lunchtime. I have made it clear on many occasions that due to family commitments I am not able to attend committee meetings on Tuesday any earlier than 8.40 a.m. I remind members of a request that I have made for this meeting to be delayed by 15 minutes. I now find myself in a position where I will be able to attend only two out of three meetings held by the Legislative Review Committee. I am sure all members will agree that this is untenable. I have to question my tenure on this committee despite having a genuine interest in its deliberations. I was properly appointed to this committee by my party to represent its interests and the interests of the wider community.

It is a sad reflection of the state of affairs of this Parliament when we have a female Speaker, a female Clerk and a former female sex discrimination commissioner who is now a Minister yet I as a woman—I remind the House that I am the only woman on this committee—am denied the right to attend meetings based not on ideological reasoning or grounds but purely on the fact that my family responsibilities must play second fiddle to the lunches of members representing the electorates of Parramatta, Swansea, Myall Lakes and Rockdale. It has become some sort of sport for Coalition members. I also remind the House that I serve on two other committees in which the chairmen, the member for Cronulla and the member for Strathfield, have actively worked towards finding meeting times that suit all members, for which I commend them.

On a previous occasion one Coalition member told me that he had been instructed to play bad cop and as such his behaviour has obviously been dictated from above. I inform the House that I will be writing to the Speaker to place on record my concerns about the conduct of Coalition members on this committee. This week's digest considered five bills that were not particularly controversial. Of particular interest, the digest reviewed the Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 with respect to the function of any potential trespass on personal rights and liberties as per section 8A (1) (b) (i) of the Legislation Review Act. The issue of oral variation of written wishes was examined. The committee noted:

... a possible consequence arising from the operation of clauses 1 and 2 of the bill could be that an oral statement supersedes a written objection where a person has orally indicated that they no longer object to the removal of their tissue after death, and/or no longer object to the conduct of an anatomical examination.

However, given the public policy imperatives, and given that the designated officer is not bound by the later oral indication—but may merely take it into account when making their decision—the Committee makes no further comment in relation to this issue.

The committee examined the issue of retrospectivity and subsequently noted that in circumstances where the intention is to uphold the wishes of an individual the committee does not consider that to be an undue trespass on personal rights and liberties and as such the committee made no further comment in relation to that issue. As always I encourage members to peruse the digest in preparation for their parliamentary contributions to debate. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [1.12 p.m.]: I thank the member for Bankstown for her contribution to debate on the twenty-fourth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. Coalition members do not believe it is unreasonable to commence work at 8.30 a.m. The member for Bankstown said that no reasons were given for the committee's decision to commence its meetings at 1.30 p.m. On that day the joint Coalition meeting of government parties—the Liberal Party and The Nationals—lasted until almost 1.30 p.m. which could have led to the cancellation of the Legislation Review Committee meeting. Nonetheless, I am pleased to comment on Legislation Review Digest No. 24/55, which was tabled on 11 September 2012. This is the twenty-fourth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. The Legislation Review Act 1987 sets out the functions of the Legislation Review Committee. Part 3, sections 8A and 9, outline the functions in respect to bills and regulations.

The Legislation Review Committee meets more often than any other parliamentary committee. The twenty-fourth digest examined five bills. The bills that were considered were the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Amendment (R 18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012, introduced in this place on 5 September 2012 by the Attorney General; the Game and Feral Animal Control Further Amendment Bill 2012, introduced in the other place on 4 September 2012 by the Hon Robert Brown; the Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, introduced in this place by the Minister for Health on 5 September 2012; the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2012, introduced by the Minister for Primary Industries on 5 September 2012; and the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012, which was introduced only recently in this place—on 6 September—by the Minister for Transport.

When considering Legislation Review Digest No. 24/55 the committee was not in receipt of any ministerial correspondence in respect to bills. I acknowledge the hardworking committee staff members who ensure that the Legislation Review Committee is as efficient as it is. I note the contributions of committee members: the chair, the member for Myall Lakes, the deputy chair, the member for Parramatta, the member for Swansea, the member for Bankstown, and our colleagues in the other place, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and Mr David Shoebridge. I commend Legislation Review Digest No. 24/55 to the House.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [1.16 p.m.]: As the Government was courteous enough to permit me to move my motion earlier today, I am a bit reluctant to criticise it, so I will make a couple of observations relating to Legislation Review Digest No. 24/55 which was tabled on 11 September. I refer, first, to a discussion that took place earlier involving the member for Rockdale and the member for Bankstown. The

member for Bankstown requested the committee to facilitate a meeting time that was suitable for all members. The member for Bankstown, the only female member on the committee, said to me earlier and in debate that the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption which is chaired by the member for Cronulla and on which she and I are members, and the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure which is chaired by the member for Strathfield on which she is a member, have gone to great lengths to ensure that they meet at a time that is suitable to all members.

It seems unusual that the request by the member for Bankstown to commence a meeting 10 minutes later was rejected for whatever reason. Members might turn up to committee meetings 10 minutes late but most of those meetings would still be going. Implied in the argument of the member for Bankstown is that if she were to arrive 10 minutes late for the Legislation Review Committee meeting it would have concluded seven minutes prior to her arrival, which draws attention to this Government's very light legislative program. The twenty-fourth digest examined five bills, one of which ratifies national guidelines to do with classifications. The digest also examined the Game and Feral Animal Control Further Amendment Bill 2012, which one would hardly think would make national news. The Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 makes further provision with respect to the removal of tissue from a deceased person, clarifies when consent can be given and ensures that all the legalities have been sorted out.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2012, to which I contributed in debate, extends the powers of an RSPCA officer, and the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 ratifies a broken promise for a sevenfold increase in traffic revenues. Last week's program covered five bills, two of which came from the Government, and this next program is light. This Government came to office after 16 years in opposition with a massive agenda of reform. When will there be any of that substantial reform, apart from administrative things such as cutting budgets, laying off people and so on? Many members of previous New South Wales governments would be scratching their heads at the lack of legislative reform by this Government.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [1.20 p.m.]: I shall make a brief contribution. I thank, as I have in the past, the members of the Legislation Review Committee for their valuable work on behalf of the Parliament. I should like to correct the record concerning committee meetings. It was suggested that the Legislation Review Committee meets more often than any other parliamentary committee. During this Parliament the Public Accounts Committee has met 33 times—more times than the Legislation Review Committee. It, too, is a hardworking committee and it meets for much longer periods and on more occasions. It is important for those hardworking members of the Public Accounts Committee to be acknowledged as members of a committee that meets on more occasions than any other committee of this Parliament.

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

Report noted.

[The Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.22 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ANDREW STONER: I inform the House that I will answer questions today directed to the Premier, who will be absent from question time. I inform the House further that in the absence from question time today of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales I will answer questions relating to Western New South Wales and the Health portfolio, and the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, will answer questions relating to mental health and healthy lifestyles. The Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations will answer questions directed to the Minister for Fair Trading, who will also be absent from question time today.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

TAFE FEES

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Minister inform the House, given that in opposition the Deputy Premier moved a private members bill to freeze TAFE fees, why the Deputy Premier is backing the Premier's \$1.7 billion cuts to education, including cuts in regional areas, cuts to regional schools and a 9.5 per cent increase in TAFE fees?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Blacktown for his question. The Opposition should be in no doubt whatsoever about the necessity of expenditure cuts that this Government has had to make. When the Coalition Government came to office in March last year it reviewed the state of the finances of the Government. That review revealed a terrible position in terms of the State's finances. Over the four-year period of the forward estimates from last year there was a shortfall in terms of the gap between expenditure and revenue of over \$5 billion. That was what we inherited from Labor after 16 years in office—a gap in the State's finances of over \$5 billion, which we set about filling with our first budget in 2011. The Treasurer handed down another budget in 2012. Courtesy of Labor, this time at a Federal level, the Government faced a further challenge in relation to revenue and expenditure. The Treasurer was very clear when he handed down his budget that tough decisions had to be made for the good of the State's finances moving forward. What had happened was a collapse in goods and services tax revenues to New South Wales over the forward estimates of more than \$5 billion.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. You moved a private members' bill about freezing TAFE fees—

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier is being relevant to the question asked.

Mr ANDREW STONER: The member for Canterbury refers to a time when there was not a collapse in State revenue of \$2.5 billion a year brought on by Labor's fiscal mismanagement as well as the killer carbon tax from Canberra. It has killed business and consumer confidence and goods and services tax revenues have collapsed. The member for Canterbury wants to remind everybody of the private member's bill: What was the Labor Party's position in relation to that private member's bill?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will not argue with the Minister.

Mr ANDREW STONER: The Labor Party opposed it. Once again: Hypocrisy, thy name is Labor.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: This Government is taking some tough decisions. We wish we did not have to take these decisions. We wish that Labor had left this State in better shape than it did. The Coalition came to the election with a clear commitment to manage the State budget responsibly, to protect our triple-A credit rating.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: Had Labor had its way, New South Wales would be in the same shape as South Australia now is, because every decision taken by this Coalition Government to rein in expenditure has been opposed by those opposite. Though the police death and disability scheme was unsustainable and blowing out into a huge deficit, they opposed reform of that scheme. When it came to the workers compensation system, which again was unsustainable for the State and the State's businesses, Labor opposed its reform. If those opposite are not prepared to take any tough decisions to rein in expenditure, what would they do? They would do what Labor governments always do—raise taxes, just like Federal Labor is doing with the carbon tax and the mineral resource rent tax. *[Time expired.]*

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members on the Opposition benches and some Government members that interjecting during delivery of a response by a Minister or the Deputy Premier is disorderly at all times. Members who continue in that vein will find themselves ordered from the Chamber for the remainder of question time. The House will come to order.

BREAKDOWN SAFETY STRATEGY

Mrs ROZA SAGE: I direct my question to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government improving road safety around vehicle breakdowns in response to the tragic deaths of Sarah Frazer and Geoff Clark?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Blue Mountains for her question. Four months ago, it was with a heavy heart that I accepted the Safer Australian Roads and Highways—or SARAH—petition from Peter Frazer. The events leading to the presentation of this petition are profoundly tragic, and I am sure have

touched the hearts of everyone who knows them. In February this year Peter's daughter, 23-year-old Springwood resident Sarah Frazer, and Geoff Clark, a father of four and a tow truck driver, were killed by a passing truck as they were standing by Sarah's broken-down vehicle on the Hume Highway, south of Mittagong. Their deaths were the impetus for the petition and a courageous campaign by the SARAH Group, led by Peter Frazer, to improve breakdown safety and reduce deaths on our roads.

That day back in May, I promised Sarah and Geoff's family and friends that this Government would immediately set about upgrading road safety along major highways across this State. Today my colleague the Minister for Ports and Roads announced a package of measures designed to do exactly that. Later today this House will discuss the 23,000-strong petition, presented by the member for Blue Mountains, requesting new road safety legislation to improve safety at vehicle breakdowns. The Government has been working with the Frazer family since they first met the Premier and the Minister at a community Cabinet meeting in March this year. We are confident that the measures we have announced today will improve safety standards for motorists, tow truck drivers and emergency services workers. The first thing we are doing as part of the strategy is to fix the section of road where Sarah and Geoff died.

Transport for NSW investigated the 1.5 kilometre southbound stretch of the Hume Highway between Mittagong and Berrima where the crash occurred and have recommended that we close the auxiliary lane at this site to provide greater road shoulder width to allow a safe place for people who break down to actually stop. We know this is a short-term measure, but it will be implemented over the next few months. Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services will also develop longer-term solutions at this location. In addition, two pull-off bays at the start and end of the 1.5-kilometre stretch of road covering the Hume Highway site will be upgraded. And the Government will change rule 42 of the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act to make it clear that failure to slow down appropriately and exercise caution when approaching and passing a broken-down vehicle or crash scene could be considered negligent, dangerous or reckless driving.

Overarching these and a number of other initiatives is a new public education campaign on safety during breakdowns that includes encouraging the use of vests and cones at crash sites. As many know, visibility can be an issue in breakdown situations, so we encourage the use of hazard lights as well as the carrying of high-visibility vests inside vehicles. It is important that we now encourage manufacturers to retain safety cones in vehicles when importing them into the Australian market. The key message is for motorists to stay safe when their car breaks down. The Breakdown Safety Strategy was developed by Transport for NSW together with Roads and Maritime Services, WorkCover, NRMA Motoring and Services and the NSW Police Force. I commend the efforts of all those who have contributed to these improved safety outcomes, and I thank the families involved, particularly Peter Frazer, and the SARAH Group for their tireless advocacy on this issue.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given the Government's \$1.7 billion cuts to the Education budget can the Minister guarantee that regional education offices in Bankstown, North Ryde, Kingswood, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle, West Wollongong and Dubbo will remain open?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Even after the measures that have been taken as part of head office restructures there will still be almost 5,000 people in the Department of Education and Communities State office supporting more than 2,200 public schools and supporting the senior public servants who are engaged in ongoing negotiations with the Commonwealth over national partnership matters, national curriculum and the like—the people who do the hard work within the bureaucracy; those valued people in the bureaucracy who support education in New South Wales across all schools.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: You've changed your tune now.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I am certainly not changing my tune. I respect the fact that every public servant, even those in positions that will be affected by these changes, makes a positive and strong contribution to the Department of Education and Communities. But governments are faced with decisions about prioritising where we spend money. As I said a couple of days ago, that is governing; that is campaigning. What we have to do, what we were elected to do, is govern. We are given a certain amount of money—Commonwealth revenues, State Government revenues—and they go up and they go down.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. All this is very interesting but the question was very specific. The communities in those regional parts of the State deserve to know whether the regional offices are going to remain and the Minister should answer that question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Given that the member for Marrickville was previously the Minister for Education, she hides it quite well. There is a requirement under the Premier's Memorandum *Managing Excess Employees in the NSW Public Sector*, M2008-22 and M2011-11, that any restructure goes to consultation. I signed a document yesterday to say that that consultation could begin.

Mr John Robertson: Yesterday?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Yes, yesterday—you heard me right. It is a requirement under the award. It is the same with the changes in TAFE; they have to happen. Consultation commenced a little while back about the schools directorate. But, under the award, any structural changes require consultation. Whether I like it or not, it is an award condition, and that is what is going to occur. When that consultation is complete we will give people the opportunity—

[Interruption]

The member for Marrickville asked me the question; she should have the decency to listen to the answer. We will give the bureaucracy, the public servants, the people in all those communities the opportunity to have a say in the proposed structure so that if changes need to be made, for whatever reason, we can make them. I assure the member that when that is completed and there is a finalisation of where those positions are coming from I will be more than happy to advise the House. I emphasise again that there will still be almost 5,000 people employed in the Department of Education and Communities to support education in New South Wales. Given the question, I refer to the media release in 2003 from the then Minister for Education, Dr Refshauge, when the previous Government carried out a restructure that was going to cost 1,000 positions. The previous Government went through the consultation process—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. I know the Minister does not want to, or is unable to, give a guarantee about those offices at North Ryde, West Wollongong and so on, but a history lesson is not relevant to the question.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: One cannot give a guarantee about something that one cannot legally give a guarantee about. The Leader of the Opposition, as a union hack, should know that. Union hacks like the Leader of the Opposition put these conditions in awards, so he should know better. [Time expired.]

STATE BUDGET

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government delivering on the savings measures announced in the budget and how are they boosting front-line services?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his very sensible question and for his interest in all things financially sensible. When we delivered the budget back in June—not that long ago—we outlined in some detail the fact that it contained many tough decisions. We said that savings measures were required across government, and they were required because of the difficult challenges we were facing. We outlined all that at the time but the Opposition has only just caught on. I would not expect them to read the budget, but all this was in the budget. I would not even expect them to read the budget overview, but this is also in the budget overview—there are graphs and pictures. When I delivered the budget speech in this Chamber—and the Leader of the Opposition was here—I said that tough decisions were required and that we would institute a Labor expense gap, which would be 1.2 per cent across every portfolio.

We did say that excluded from that would be nurses, teachers and police, and that was very deliberate. We said that we would provide flexibility to directors general so that they could protect front-line services, and that is what we have done. Work is already underway and we are responding across the whole of government to the revenue challenges that we face. In Transport more than 1,000 jobs have already gone, shrinking head office—it is about customer service. In the Justice portfolio almost 500 jobs have gone. In Finance and Trade we have done the same thing—hundreds of jobs have already gone.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are responding responsibly to the financial challenges we face. We have done the same thing in Health—hundreds of jobs have gone. It means a smaller head office and more people on the front line—and that means more nurses. That is what we are about. The Minister for Education has announced savings this week with 600 jobs going from head office. But what are we putting on the frontline? More teachers.

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is going nowhere near the question. He should read Maralyn Parker's article today, in which she wrote: "It is a dumping of the front line support for public school teachers".

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Minister is being relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The O'Farrell Government is doing what any responsible government would do when it is facing challenges. We are very proud to shrink head offices during times of challenge and put more resources on the front line. Those opposite adopt the Labor way—and we have seen it in South Australia and Queensland: When tough decisions have to be made they pass them off and they do not care.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They do not care about the credit rating in any shape or form. And what does that mean in a practical sense?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If that is lost, if that is thrown away, it means \$3.75 billion over 10 years.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That would condemn every service in this State to less funding. The Government will not stand by and let that happen. The strategy of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is clear: We are putting more into the front line.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are building more infrastructure and we are putting money into where it is needed most.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Through the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, we are building on Stronger Together Two in the disability sector. We also are introducing family energy rebates to help families who are doing it tough. With the money we have, we are building front-line infrastructure and protecting the vulnerable. When in government Labor members were too focused on themselves. The former member for Heffron said that they were interested in politically popular decisions. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is making the tough but right decisions for this State in order to look after its long-term future.

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

TAFE FUNDING

Mr CLAYTON BARR: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given that the Minister is sacking 800 TAFE employees and increasing fees by 9.5 per cent, why did the Minister and many members of his backbench last year sign a pledge promising to invest in TAFE, increase teaching positions, reject privatisation and keep fees low?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: As the Deputy Premier said earlier, in 2009 the previous Government raised TAFE fees by 9.5 per cent. It is a matter of record that the Deputy Premier introduced a private member's bill,

which at the time was vigorously opposed by the Labor Party. Labor members made a compelling case about why a 9.5 per cent fee increase had to be implemented. Plenty of Labor members went on the record at that time stating that TAFE fees had to rise by 9.5 per cent. Of course, nobody likes to see fee rises at any time or job losses anywhere, whether in TAFE, the Department of Education, News Limited or Fairfax.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The Minister said no-one likes to see job losses. Earlier the Treasurer was bragging about thousands of job losses.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Nobody wants to see fees rise but from time to time it has to happen. TAFE fees have traditionally risen in line with the consumer price index, but this year we have had to make a decision to raise them by 9.5 per cent. That is the same rise that occurred in 2009, which members opposite defended so vigorously. For a member of the Opposition to ask this question is hypocritical in the extreme. During my time in Opposition I recall that there were significant protests out the front of Parliament House about the changes the former Labor Government made to TAFE. Last March we were confronted with a \$5 billion black hole. Then just before March this year the Commonwealth Government came to us and said we would have to find another \$5.2 billion because it was writing down our GST revenues. Those of us who live in the real world will have to deal with that.

As I said yesterday, I have spoken to Minister Garrett. I phoned him, and I would urge other members to do the same. I said, "Peter, talk to Wayne Swan. If he's happy to fill that GST black hole with company tax revenues or other measures I am more than happy for the Government to reconsider a number of measures we have had to take." I am expecting Minister Garrett to have that meeting with Wayne Swan and I am expecting to hear how it goes. I will just check my phone. No, I have not yet had a message from the Minister to tell me the outcome of that meeting. In that sense, this is in the hands of the Commonwealth. Members opposite are so critical, but they have an opportunity to assist New South Wales to deal with some of its budget matters. I keep my phone close to me at all times. I have Minister Peter Garrett's caller identification and I wait for his telephone call. He can call me 24 hours a day.

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY

Dr GEOFF LEE: My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. What is the New South Wales Government doing to increase the safety of backyard pools?

Mr DONALD PAGE: I thank the member for Parramatta for his question and welcome his interest in this important issue. Today at Westmead Children's Hospital I announced with the member that the New South Wales Government is taking action to protect toddlers from harm in backyard pools. I was joined at the announcement by the President of the Australian Medical Association and neurosurgeon, Associate Professor Brian Owler, and the chief executive officer of Royal Life Saving, Rob Bradley. As we head into the warmer months, families are increasingly going to be using their backyard swimming pools. Backyard swimming pools are an important part of family life, but it is a sad fact that each year a number of children continue to drown in backyard swimming pools.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who wish to have private conversations should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr DONALD PAGE: This is a serious issue.

The SPEAKER: I would have thought it was a serious issue.

Mr DONALD PAGE: Each year about 60 young children are admitted to hospital following a near drowning. Unfortunately, many of these children suffer permanent brain damage. Earlier today at Westmead Hospital I met one of those children and his mother. Each drowning or injury in a backyard pool is a tragedy for families and for local communities. The greater tragedy is that effective and well-maintained swimming pool fences, combined with vigilant adult supervision, would have prevented most if not all of these drownings. I cannot emphasise enough the need for proper adult supervision but when that fails—as it sometimes does—we need to ensure that our pool barriers comply with the existing regulations.

The drownings in New South Wales have led to increasing calls by pool safety advocates for a further strengthening of the Swimming Pools Act 1992. Too many backyard swimming pools have deficient barriers

and each deficiency in a pool barrier that is identified and rectified potentially saves the life of a child. The New South Wales Deputy State Coroner has also conducted a series of inquests into swimming pool deaths and has made a series of recommendations about how the Swimming Pools Act should be strengthened. It is clear that we need to do more to ensure the safety of children around private swimming pools. That is why the Government intends to introduce a bill to further amend the Swimming Pools Act in a number of areas. I am pleased by Associate Professor Owler's comments that the Australian Medical Association supports the new provisions and his commendation that New South Wales is taking swift action on this important issue.

The proposed amendments will require pool owners to self-register their pool free of charge on a statewide online register. There will be significant penalties for pool owners who fail to register their pool. As part of this registration process, pool owners will be required to certify that their pool barrier complies with the legislation. Pool owners will be provided with simple checklists to help them do this. The checklists will help pool owners identify defects in swimming pool barriers. Sometimes these are easily remedied. These defects include gates that do not self-close, or gaps under fences that allow young children to access a pool when a responsible adult is not present. Those minor defects are common and often are overlooked. However, minor defects can present as much risk as defects that may need more expert attention.

To reinforce the statewide registration and self-certification process, councils will be required to develop locally tailored, risk-based inspection programs in consultation with communities. The register will help councils to know where the swimming pools are, to target educational material and to reduce drownings. With well over 340,000 pools in New South Wales, it is not possible to inspect all pool barriers. However, councils will be required to develop risk-based inspection programs and to report each year on how many pools they have inspected as well as the level of compliance, or non-compliance, with pool regulations. Such inspections will come at a cost to councils and ratepayers. Councils will be provided with the option of recovering the cost of the inspections from pool owners through a capped maximum fee of \$150 for the first inspection and \$100 for any subsequent inspection.

In recognition of certain swimming pools presenting possibly a higher-than-normal risk, the Government will require mandatory periodic inspections of pools associated with tourist and visitor accommodation. The Government will also require that a pool has a valid compliance certificate before a property is sold or leased. Compliance certificates will have a life of three years. The proposals in the impending legislation have been designed to strike the right balance between a pool owner's responsibility and government regulation. [*Extension of time granted.*]

In summary, the proposals aim to ensure, first, that pool owners are responsible; secondly, that councils have the right tools to make sure that pool barriers comply with the legislation; and, thirdly, that the Government provides the best possible legislative and policy framework to reduce drownings in backyard swimming pools. I urge all members of the House to consider these issues carefully when the bill is introduced.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: My question is directed to the Minister for Citizenship and Communities. What action did the Minister take to stop the Government's \$1.7 billion in cuts to education from impacting on funding to Jewish day schools, Islamic schools and Greek Orthodox schools in New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I thank the member for his question. When elected to government, we came across very difficult financial circumstances. Other Ministers have indicated that when this Government came to office, we were met with a \$5 billion black hole. All members know that; we all heard about it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members that many of them are on calls to order. If members continue to interject, they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: We know that GST revenue will decrease by \$5.2 billion, according to forward estimates. The difficulties we face have been compounded by the former Labor administration's mismanagement and gross incompetence. I ask members to think about the previous Government's incompetence, which has not really been discussed in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members should not be tempted to assist the Minister.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The incompetence of the former Labor Government impacts adversely upon all people in New South Wales, and it is the reason that Labor has been reduced to a political rump. I often think about the \$500 million wasted on the CBD metro and the \$1.7 billion blowout on the Solar Bonus Scheme—a total of \$2.2 billion that this Government could have put to better use.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I am happy to help the Minister by wasting 30 seconds so that he does not drown.

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

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is very specific. It asks the Minister to state what action, if any—and it sounds as though there was none—the Minister took to look after his own schools.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that questions are always very specific. However, I have no power to direct a Minister to provide a specific answer, only to ensure that the answer is relevant. At this stage the Minister's answer is relevant to the question he was asked. There is no point of order.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: This Government was left with a mess that was caused by the previous Labor Government. When I think of the loss of that \$2.2 billion, which has resulted in this Government being required to fix up the mess, Labor has a hide to ask this Government why we are making difficult decisions. Is it any wonder that Labor will not occupy the Treasury bench for a very long time? No-one would ever trust Labor on the Treasury bench again. It will take a generation to fix up the mess that the previous Labor Government left to us.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members have been warned about their disruptive behaviour.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I often visit community schools. I congratulate Albert Vella, who is the President of the Federation of Community Language Schools. He said, "We appreciate the fact that your Government has worked constructively with us in making sure that we get outcomes for our kids." I have been to many of the federation's functions where I have been told, "You're the first Minister we have seen here in many a time. We're working constructively with your Government on making sure that we can get access to the schools." The community language schools are very happy with the job that this Government is doing. They are happy that this Government is making responsible decisions to look after the wellbeing of their kids. That is what they have told me. It is a pity that Labor members left this State in such a parlous position. New South Wales could have been so much stronger but for those muppets on the Opposition side of the Chamber.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. I take it that the Minister did not help at all. Is that the answer? He did not help?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on three calls to order.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: After the election the Government hit the ground running. The Government has a number of initiatives in relation to multicultural communities, who understand more than anyone else that the State needs a responsible government. Those communities want good education, front-line teachers, front-line police officers, and nurses. They know that if Labor is returned to govern, they will not get that.

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDING

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. How is the Government improving patient outcomes through greater investment in medical research?

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Menai for her strong support for medical research, particularly the Ingham Institute of Applied Medical Research in Liverpool. I understand that in October she will be joining members of the institute for the opening of a new research precinct. The institute is one of the

recipients of increased funding that this Government is providing through the Medical Research Support Program. I remind the House that this program was sorely depleted when Labor was in government. Over many years, medical research institutes complained bitterly about not being provided with a fair share of funding that would enable them to compete successfully for National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC] grants.

In the current budget the Government yet again has increased funding, which means that the Government will provide \$150 million over four years for the Medical Research Support Program 2012-16. This is the first time that New South Wales medical research institutes have received that level of funding guaranteed over four years. The New South Wales Government is committed to fostering innovation in local medical research because of the wide range of benefits it represents for patients and their families. The Government allocated an additional \$5 million for that program this year to bring the total allocation for this financial year to \$37.3 million, and funding will increase each year for the next three years. I notice the shadow Minister for Medical Research appears to be a little embarrassed. The base funding for the program when Labor was in government was \$17 million, but it is now \$37 million. Furthermore, it is ongoing guaranteed funding. This follows the outcome of the New South Wales Health and Medical Research Strategic Review, which we released earlier this year, and the recommendations of that review. I want to inform the House about some of the research programs. Funding is provided to large institutes such as the Hunter Medical Research Institute, where researchers have discovered a clot-busting drug therapy that has seen more than 70 per cent of patients—

Mr Nathan Rees: Give them all some.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toongabbie is being ridiculous.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —experience an excellent or good recovery within three months of suffering a stroke. This week I launched Stroke Awareness Week. I find it appalling that members opposite are making light of stroke victims.

The SPEAKER: So do I.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am pleased that we are getting these wonderful outcomes. Another example is the Westmead Millennium Institute for Medical Research, which, in collaboration with other institutes, has developed a new drug that shrinks metastasised—secondary—brain tumours in melanoma patients. This is a groundbreaking discovery in melanoma treatment. Recently I was pleased to give the melanoma research group the final stage of funding towards a fantastic new research project. The Garvan Institute has made a breakthrough in relation to ovarian cancer—a difficult cancer to detect and treat—which could lead to early detection of this cancer. I visited the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and met Dr Catherine Suter, a young woman doing work on epigenetics. I was astounded by the discoveries she was making in her work with laboratory animals.

Dr Suter has discovered that the diet of a pregnant woman has an effect on her baby by changing the genetic make-up of the child, which could lead to obesity and later to diabetes. Such discoveries can have a profound impact on patient care. The Centenary Institute is conducting research focused on the causes of sudden death in the young and initiating appropriate therapies to prevent sudden death in the wider community. The 11 institutes that will receive funding are the ANZAC Research Institute, the Centenary Institute of Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology, the Children's Medical Research Institute, the Garvan Institute, the George Institute for Global Health, the Hunter Medical Research Institute, the Ingham Institute of Applied Medical Research, the Neuroscience Research Australia, the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, the Westmead Millennium Institute for Medical Research, and the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Recently I was proud to launch the Medical Devices Fund, which was a commitment this Government made prior to the last election. Applications for funding are now open. This year the fund will provide \$8 million, with \$5 million to be added thereafter, to improve the commercialisation of new medical devices. The fund will be overseen by an expert group comprising: the Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, who will chair the body; Mr Neville Mitchell, Chief Financial Officer of Cochlear Ltd; Dr Bob Frater, Vice President for Innovation at ResMed Ltd; Mr Michael Still, a company director; and Mr Adam Spencer, science guru and radio announcer, who would be well known to listeners of ABC radio. I have great visions for this project. This investment will attract additional funding from industry and boost the medical devices industry in New South Wales to invent potentially groundbreaking devices such as the cochlear implant. I am pleased that Mr Neville Mitchell is a member of this scientific committee.

CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK TRUST

Ms CLOVER MOORE: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment.

Mr Chris Hartcher: Last question.

Ms CLOVER MOORE: Indeed, it is my last question in this House, and it is in relation to an issue that I have raised many times since becoming the member for Bligh, and the member for Sydney. Given the Centennial parklands serve densely populated communities where people have little or no private open space and also will provide for the 40,000 residents of Green Square, will the Minister commit to long-term recurrent funding to the operating budget of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust so that commercialisation, events and parking will not further alienate the parklands?

Ms ROBYN PARKER: I would have thought the Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney would understand that Centennial and Moore parks provide the open space that is required by residents of densely populated areas such as Green Square. They use these parks as their playground because there is not sufficient open space in their residential areas. Perhaps the City of Sydney could contribute more funding. The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust contributes close to 95 per cent of the budget. I am not sure of the exact figure. The trust sustains its operations, such as maintenance of the parks, through commercial enterprises. I am impressed with the trust's operations at Centennial and Moore parks. I would be pleased if the City of Sydney contributed more towards the parks so that we can make more improvements to the green space for the benefit of those who live in Green Square, Waterloo and other areas surrounding Centennial Park and Moore Park. I will be delighted to work with the member in her continuing role as the Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney. I thank her for her question.

AQUIFER INTERFERENCE POLICY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries. Will the Minister inform the House how the Government is protecting groundwater aquifers across New South Wales?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Last Tuesday the Government announced the Aquifer Interference Policy, yet there has not been a single question from the Opposition about the policy during three question times. That shows how much the Opposition cares about regional New South Wales. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered another first for New South Wales: a clear and objective Aquifer Interference Policy against which all mining and coal seam gas projects and developments will be assessed. As I said, earlier this week I announced the new Aquifer Interference Policy, which operates hand in glove with the Government's new Strategic Regional Land Use Policy.

Since the introduction of the Water Management Act in 2000, there was clear recognition of the need to protect aquifers. However, due to the procrastination and policy inertia of those opposite, absolutely nothing happened. As a direct consequence, our precious groundwater resources have been totally vulnerable. The new Aquifer Interference Policy clearly sets out the New South Wales Government's approach to strengthening protection for aquifers while balancing the needs of agriculture, the resources industry and the environment into the future.

This policy delivers on two election commitments by the Government. First, we are protecting our water resources by providing clear guidelines against which all coal seam gas and mining developments must be assessed. Secondly, we are returning decision-making powers to independent experts, at arm's length from political interference, by providing advice from these assessments to the gateway process, the Planning Assessment Commission and the public. The difference between us and those opposite is that we understand the importance of our water resources to our communities, primary producers, the environment and industry. The clear difference is that we are able to strike a balance between all those who use our valuable water resources. But, most importantly, the difference between the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and those opposite is that we believe in vesting power in the hands of experts and we rely on the transparency of the process to build community confidence.

When we were elected in March last year we inherited a regulatory black hole where the impacts to our aquifers were left to highly subjective assessments of harm. We also discovered the wrecking ball that was swung by those opposite when too much decision-making power was vested in one Minister. There are now at least three Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiries into one former Labor Minister, Ian

Macdonald, in relation to coal leases at Doyles Creek, Ferndale and Mount Penny. Never again can we allow such corruption to occur. We have delivered a consistent approach to reform, which puts decision-making in the hands of the experts.

In the draft release of the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy and Aquifer Interference Policy earlier this year, the Government deliberately sought expert and community feedback. We conducted extensive consultation: over 2,000 submissions were received and more than 1,100 people attended public forums and information sessions. We also convened an expert Stakeholder Reference Group to provide additional advice and input, and included the NSW Farmers Association, the NSW Irrigators Council and many others. Key changes resulting from consultation with farmers, the resources industry, councils, environmental groups and local communities include the Aquifer Interference Policy now applying statewide and no longer being restricted to biophysical strategic agricultural land only.

The Aquifer Interference Policy is activity based: it applies wherever an activity poses a level of risk, and includes all exploration activities. The exceptional circumstances provision that would have allowed certain mining or coal seam gas projects to bypass the Gateway has been totally scrapped. The draft exceptional circumstances provision whereby Cabinet could override the experts gave rise to particularly strident debate. One of the loudest voices belonged to the NSW Farmers Association, which rejected the proposal out of hand based on political intervention overriding due process. With some disbelief, I read that its criticism was that the Aquifer Interference Policy was not a regulation. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Through many briefings and active participation from the Stakeholder Reference Group, the Farmers Association was made aware that turning the Aquifer Interference Policy into a regulation would give the Minister for Water equivalent powers to the independent experts on the Gateway Panel and the Planning Assessment Commission. Quite simply, making this policy into a regulation would undermine the planning system by creating the opportunity once more for political intervention.

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

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: This is a fundamental difference between this Government and those opposite. We believe in the power of a transparent process, of putting information in the hands of the people. That is why, for the first time in New South Wales, the advice of the Office of Water and that of the Minister responsible for water will be made public and available at the same time it is provided to the Gateway Panel or the Planning Assessment Commission. These reforms reveal the stark difference between the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and those opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Leader of the House and shadow Leader of the House will cease arguing across the table.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Once more for the slow ones opposite: The Aquifer Interference Policy is an integral part of the package of 27 measures that make up the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy. These measures put farmers, miners, communities and the environment on an even footing because they provide unprecedented safeguards that go well and truly above and beyond our policy commitments. The Aquifer Interference Policy is a key aspect of the New South Wales Government's aim of achieving a sensible and workable approach to planning and managing our energy, agricultural and water resources sustainably and productively. As can be seen by this latest policy announcement, this Government is truly delivering to protect New South Wales aquifers.

Question time concluded at 3.14 p.m.

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 13 September 2012.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Report**

Mr Andrew Cornwell, as Chair, tabled the report entitled, "Review of the 2009-2010 annual report and the 2010-2011 annual report of the Commission for Children and Young People and the 2009 reports of the Child Death Review Team", dated 13 September 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

PETITIONS

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

Coal Seam Gas Mining

Petition calling for a royal commission inquiry into the impacts of coal seam gas mining, a moratorium on coal seam gas mining and a ban on the extraction technique known as hydraulic fracturing, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

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**.

Container Deposit Levy

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

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

Wallsend Police Station

Petition requesting funding to reinstate a police station at Wallsend to combat crime in this expanding residential area, received from **Ms Sonia Hornery**.

Pet Shops

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

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

The Hon. Michael Gallacher—Riverstone Police Resources—lodged 15 August 2012 (Mr Kevin Conolly)

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

Debate resumed from 6 September 2012.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [3.16 p.m.]: I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012. The object of the bill is to

amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to create a new fund, the Community Road Safety Fund. The purpose of the fund is to enable revenue from fines and penalties recovered for certain camera-recorded speeding and traffic light offences to be used to fund the activities carried out by Transport for NSW to promote and improve road safety. While the Opposition will not oppose the bill, I make a number of observations about the bill's intent and the Government's real agenda with regard to it. Before doing so, I acknowledge the strength of public sentiment expressed on this issue, particularly by the NRMA and the Police Association of New South Wales.

Hypothecating revenue from speed and other camera devices is about to become law because of the agitating efforts of those organisations. By working together, they obtained more than 13,000 signatures on a petition to have the matter debated in this Chamber. Their ongoing advocacy and campaigning, with the support of thousands of motorists and residents across the State, has turned ideas into actions and into law. I congratulate Wendy Machin and Scott Weber on their efforts in this matter and on the work of their respective associations. Let us get to the nub of the bill. This bill is bread and circuses; it is a stunt. It is a distraction from this Government's real agenda to increase massively the number of mobile speed cameras and red-light cameras as well as revenue from fines for offences detected.

We know this bill is a stunt because legislation is not needed to enable Transport for NSW to open an account for revenue from camera offences. The authority can just do it. Will this bill result in one extra cent being spent on road safety? Not a chance—not even one cent. Is there any guarantee under this bill in its current form that money will not be transferred into consolidated revenue? No. The huge embarrassment for the Government is that it has been caught out. Government members thump their chests about how their new legislation will be transparent, but they did not announce, with the usual fanfare and media hype, that all the proceeds in this account can be transferred straight back to consolidated revenue. The whole purpose of this bill is undermined by clause 80I (2), which, I am sure, was inserted by Treasury. The clause states:

Any money in the Community Road Safety Fund that TfNSW determines, with the concurrence of the Treasurer, is not required to meet expenditure incurred in relation to the road safety ... is to be paid into the Consolidated Fund.

The Government has been caught out. On the one hand, it has said it will create a fund expressly for receipts from camera-detected offences; yet, on the other hand, it slips a clause into the bill that says at any point at any time the Treasurer can dip his hand into the fund, take out the money and put it into consolidated revenue. It just goes to show this bill is not necessary and not worth the paper it is written on. The Government could not slip this clause through without being discovered and now it is in the embarrassing position of having to amend its own legislation. What a disaster.

Having a specific fund for proceeds from camera-detected offences to spend on road safety measures—not that its creation requires a law—is probably a good thing. The principle that the Centre for Road Safety and its operations and programs will be funded by this bill is sensible, and the Opposition will not oppose the bill. The principle of upgrading dangerous roads and installing school zone lights being funded by this bill is also sensible. The Opposition will support the bill. What is disturbing and regrettable is the massive increase in revenue from fines from mobile speed cameras that this publicity stunt was designed to hide.

This fund has been set up by the Government to direct attention away from the fact that it is increasing fines for every speeding offence on the books—it is massively increasing the number of speed camera hours and doubling the number of red-light safety cameras around the State. Coalition members went on for years and years before the 2011 election about how these devices were "revenue raisers" and "cash cows". They said the former Labor Government was addicted to the revenue from the cameras. Not only has the Government massively increased the number of hours that these cameras are operating and doubled the number of cameras detecting red-light offences but it has increased the penalties for fines by 12.5 per cent. What does this mean? It means \$180 million of revenue will be raised by this Government from speed cameras and red-light safety cameras across the State.

Mr Geoff Provest: For road safety.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: It would be great if that money went into road safety but not one extra cent will be spent on road safety.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The Parliamentary Secretary will stop interrupting the member with the call.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The extra money raised from this massive increase in the number of mobile speed cameras and in speeding fines and the doubling of the number of red-light cameras is not going into road safety; it is going into consolidated revenue. The extra \$180 million—

Mr Geoff Provest: That's not right.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: We know this for a fact because only \$137 million is going into the fund, whereas the cost for the Centre for Road Safety is more than \$231 million. The Government is using the bill to divert attention from its agenda of massively increasing fines and the revenue from speed cameras but not spending one extra cent on improving road safety. If there is one thing this Government is better at than the Opposition it is gouging motorists with higher fines from more speed cameras. I have never said I believe speed cameras are simply revenue raisers; that was the Coalition's line, and its mantra before the election.

Now that the Coalition is in government it is a different story—hike up the fines, double the number of red-light cameras and increase the number of mobile speed cameras seven-fold. If the extra money were contributing to increased expenditure on road safety then the Opposition would have no issue or argument with the bill. But it is not. This money is going into consolidated revenue. The fund is a stunt to distract attention from the Government's real agenda. The Government would have my strong support and that of the community if the extra money were going to road safety, but unfortunately it is not. The budget for the Centre for Road Safety and the total funding allocated to road safety projects will not increase as a result of this bill. I will say that again because the Parliamentary Secretary may not have understood me—he is a bit dim.

Mr Geoff Provest: Point of order: I ask the member to apologise for that comment. It is unparliamentary. I ask the member to withdraw.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member has asked for the comment to be withdrawn.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I am happy to withdraw it. The budget for the Centre for Road Safety and all the money allocated to road safety projects does not increase by one cent as a result of this bill. The bill substitutes the current funding with money from a new fund. But it is not new money, it is not extra money, and it is not more money for safer roads or school zone flashing lights. It is taking money from one place and replacing it with money from another. That is what this bill is about. Currently, \$100 million is raised from camera-detected offences but this year that figure will increase to \$137 million. That is a 37 per cent increase in revenue from speed cameras. It begs the question: How much of this increase is going to be spent on road safety initiatives? How much is the budget for the Centre for Road Safety going to increase? Will it increase by 37 per cent? Will it increase by 20 per cent or by 5 per cent? It will not.

The millions of dollars raised by gouging drivers is not going to road safety because this bill does not increase money for road safety by a single cent. That is what the Opposition means when it says this bill is a stunt. It is a distraction from the Coalition Government's decision to rip an extra \$180 million from the public through increased fines, red-light cameras and speed cameras. The Opposition will not oppose this bill but we call it what it is: a stunt. It will not increase funding for road safety in New South Wales. It is an attempt to distract motorists from the record increase in cash revenue from speed and other cameras.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [3.28 p.m.]: I certainly would not call that entertainment; I call it inaccurate. I support the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012. For the first time New South Wales will see all funds from fixed speed cameras and mobile devices infringements and fines directed to improving road and traffic safety. Just like the fund established by the Greiner Government that directed revenue generated from the 3 x 3 fuel levy to build new roads and improve road safety, the Community Road Safety Fund will be used to fund safety improvements using revenue generated from fines. This is an important step forward in changing the culture from one of gouging motorists—which Labor did for 16 years to prop up the budget bottom line and cover up its waste and mismanagement of the State's finances—to using the money raised from motorists who have done the wrong thing to improve road safety. The Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 is a long overdue reform. It is important; it is not a joke. Currently, 400 people are killed on New South Wales roads every year and 26,000 are injured.

[Interruption]

I do not think it is the time to be calling across the Chamber. We all know a friend, work colleague, family member or loved one who has been a road victim or been affected by someone who has been killed on

our roads. I will put it in perspective and demonstrate the terrible effects of deaths on our roads. There were more than 500 casualties during Australia's 11-year involvement in the Vietnam War. That is a terrible loss of life and I do not for one moment diminish the contribution of the men and women who served in that terrible conflict and the effects that the surviving veterans suffer to this day. However, we must also be conscious of the fact that over an 11-year period 4,400 people will be traffic victims on New South Wales roads.

To tackle this major issue and reduce that awful number requires a whole-of-government approach involving a coordinated and collaborative effort from multiple agencies, including the police, Fire and Rescue NSW, Transport for NSW through the Centre for Road Safety, Roads and Maritime Services, and Department of Education programs. The strategies put in place need to be backed by a funding package, and the bill establishes the Community Road Safety Fund that will direct revenue raised from motorists to the core of the problem: road safety. The revenue raised will come from four types of speed cameras: fixed, mobile, red-light and point-to-point. The bill contains provisions that will enable revenue generated from new speed detection technologies that will be adopted in the future to be paid into the fund. Speed cameras should be about road safety, not revenue. This Government has shown that by fulfilling another election promise and conducting audits of speed cameras.

The rhetoric of Labor members is interesting. There was no Opposition member in the Chamber; now there is one. That is how concerned they are about road safety in New South Wales and about people dying on our roads. All they are interested in is playing politics on every single matter that comes before this House, rather than looking at the initiatives being put forward by this Government. Labor members sat on their hands, year in and year out, while members of our community wrote letters and raised issues. In opposition Coalition members came into this place and raised these issues with the Labor Government. But it did nothing. That is just another example of Labor governments seen to be gouging through speed cameras and the like. They were told that is what they were doing, but they ran away, hid and did nothing. Because this Government is addressing these issues in a transparent way, members opposite become paranoid: All of a sudden there is transparency, and they do not like transparency because the public can see what is going on. That is the difference between them and us.

As a mayor who worked on the ground in local government, I witnessed firsthand the effects that road accidents, and all too often fatalities, had on loved ones. Dangerous intersections, poorly lit sections of road and sharp bends are issues that we deal with on a daily basis. The Howard Government established the blackspot funding program. This practical tool enabled communities, through their local council, to apply for Federal financial assistance to improve road blackspots. To be fair, the current Federal Government recognised that as a fantastic initiative and has kept it going—and local government and the community are very pleased about that. As mayor and now as a State member of Parliament, I have worked over many years with local schools, businesses and communities to get funding outcomes to address road blackspots either through direct government funding or through development contribution schemes.

It is important that we have the dual objectives of ensuring that governments at all levels are in touch with local community requirements while putting in place the framework to deliver funding and capital works improvements. I have enjoyed working with local communities and councils in my electorate and will continue my strong working relationship with mayors, councillors and council officers in all three local councils in my electorate—Blacktown, Hawkesbury and Penrith. The local traffic committee—usually chaired by the mayor or a council representative—brings together local government, police, Roads and Maritime Services, the local State member of Parliament and also representatives of other road users and stakeholders such as bus companies and schools. It is a great forum to discuss problems and to workshop ideas and solutions to those problems.

Mr Robert Furolo: Point of order: I well understand the role of traffic committees and recognise their importance, but they are not relevant to the bill. I ask you to draw the member back to the leave of the bill.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I ask the member for Londonderry to return to the leave of the bill.

Mr BART BASSETT: Local government is very important when it comes to these sorts of initiatives. From time to time local authorities that have had problems with speeding on streets and so on and have asked Roads and Maritime Services to allow them to put in speed cameras. But that could not be done. Traffic committees are important because they can feed that information back to the Government, and have Roads and Maritime Services consider those sorts of matters and make decisions about them. So my comments are completely relevant to the bill. As mayor, I have enjoyed my role on the local traffic committee, and will

continue to work with all three councils and their local traffic committees to achieve outcomes that improve traffic flow and safety for all road users. I congratulate all councillors who last weekend were elected in my local area, and I look forward to working with them in the future. I offer my thanks and appreciation not only to those councillors but to the incoming councillors in those areas.

There are a number of significant problems affecting the Bankstown and Penrith local government areas; I refer to Stoney Creek Road and Forrester Road, which form part of the rural road network that runs from new housing estates in Ropes Crossing through to the still semi-rural communities of Llandilo and then over to Castlereagh. There have been road-related accidents and unfortunately a fatality on sections of these roads, and both the mayors and their general managers as well as councillors and staff have been attentive and proactive in workshopping ideas and modelling possible solutions that could improve the condition of sections of those roads that need funding for capital works. The Stoney Creek Road causeway crossing is one such section of road. This bill is about ensuring that the money from those devices goes towards road safety. The issues at crossings such as on Stoney Creek Road involve road safety awareness, education and improved infrastructure to make things better for motorists.

The other aspect of the bill is education and the need not only to look at current problems on our roads that could cause accidents and fatalities but also educate existing and learner drivers about good driving techniques. In recent years there has been an increasing level of cooperation from schools and parents to promote driver education programs for young people in years 9 and 10. Local Rotary clubs have put together, along with stakeholders and professionals, a comprehensive driver education program, and I am pleased that this bill contains provisions to ensure that money is spent on driver education. I am pleased to speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012, which will provide a foundation to maintain the current level of funding for road safety that can be built on and advanced in years to come.

Road safety is a serious issue. No responsible government would roll out devices that will be seen as just gouging motorists. The facts prove that when a red light camera is installed, over time the fines revenue from that camera reduces significantly. That is what this Government wants. It does not want these devices used for revenue raising; it wants them used to improve safety. The data proves that when people know these devices are in place, they become more cautious and fines revenue reduces. We would all love to see no fine revenue in the fund. The reality is that will not occur. I commend the bill, which will result in revenue raised from speeding infringements spent on improving road safety, to the House.

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [3.35 p.m.]: I support the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 and I commend the Minister for introducing it. The bill will amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 and its primary purpose is to establish, under the administration of Transport for NSW, the Community Road Safety Fund. Payments into the fund will include fine and penalty revenue from camera-recorded speed and red-light offences detected by—as we all well know from representations we receive as members of Parliament—the four types of speed cameras used in New South Wales: fixed, mobile, red-light speed and point-to-point. A power is included in the bill to enable offences detected by future new technologies or changes to enforcement practices to be directed into the fund. This is an important amendment given the pace at which new technologies are being developed.

With the introduction of the fund, Government funding for the road safety program in New South Wales will continue to be provided at the 2011-12 level of \$231 million per annum, of course indexed for consumer price index increases. The fund will be used to meet the cost of delivering the New South Wales road safety program. This is a very important program, which I know has community support. It includes key initiatives such as engineering works; enhanced high-visibility police enforcement; public education campaigns such as random drug testing and safety around schools; and road safety partnerships with local government, the Department of Education and Communities, and Corrective Services NSW.

As a country member of Parliament and resident, road safety is a huge concern for my constituents and me. I recently welcomed State Government funding for the installation of school zone flashing lights at Drummond Memorial Public School and Warialda Public School, in my electorate of Northern Tablelands. These flashing lights have made motorists, and will continue to make them, more aware that they should drive with caution near schools. This is a very important initiative and, as I have said, it is widely supported in the community, particularly to ensure the safety of students when crossing busy roads. I am encouraged by the State Government's commitment to speed up the rollout of school zone flashing lights at schools throughout the State

as there are still a number of other high-profile areas around schools in my electorate that deserve these lights. They include Uralla Central School, St Josephs Primary School, also in Uralla, and Gilgai Public School. There are others, but I have named just a few that are still of high priority.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of school crossing supervisors, who do an outstanding job keeping young students safe, day in and day out. I am saddened by the recent tragic accident in Singleton involving a school bus in which a young boy lost his life and many other young children were injured. I believe this incident has again highlighted the need for seatbelts to become mandatory on school buses throughout the State. That is particularly crucial in country and rural areas where it is not unusual for students to travel a distance of 50 kilometres or more to attend school, predominantly on roads of poor quality and with a 100 kilometres per hour speed limit. I suggest that the Government implement a program where rebates are given to complying bus contractors. Road trauma is a tragic statistic in New South Wales. The Government's Road Safety Strategy for NSW 2012-2021 states:

While only one-third of the NSW population resides in country areas, two-thirds of all fatalities occur there. On a rate basis, then, country residents have a fatality rate per 100,000 population more than four times that of their metropolitan counterparts.

That is a frightening statistic. The report continues:

In country areas, the majority (72 per cent) of drivers and riders involved in fatal crashes are country residents, with around half of these living in the same Local Government Area as the location where the crash occurred. A large proportion of fatalities in country areas occur on 100km/h roads.

It is hoped the bill will improve community confidence following much public debate concerning the use of revenue raised by speed camera programs. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.41 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012. As my colleagues on this side of the House have said, this is an important bill because it will help meet the costs of delivering road safety measures across the State. We all wish we did not have to dedicate funds to such a cause but, tragically, the reality is that the cost of road trauma in this State is very high. As has been mentioned, around 400 people are killed and more than 26,000 are injured on our roads each year. No figures like that are acceptable. Around 42,000 road crashes are recorded annually, and last year the cost to the community was around \$5.08 billion. That is a very large sum but, of course, it does not reflect the angst, the upset, the emotion and the trauma that road crashes cause families, friends and the community.

The biggest contributing factor to the road toll is speeding, and that is a key area of action for this Government. My constituents in Vaucluse raise issues of road safety with me relatively frequently and I work with them closely on those issues and with my local councils, Waverley and Woollahra councils. Death or serious injury from road accidents is unacceptable for everyone. I was pleased to announce recently the installation of flashing lights on Edgecliff Road, which is a busy road. Although it is not a main arterial road it has two schools on either side of it—Reddam and Holy Cross. I am also working closely with the community to have flashing lights installed at Kincoppal, Rose Bay, on New South Head Road, which the community has been long arguing for in order to protect their schoolchildren.

This bill demonstrates that this Government is committed to improving road safety in New South Wales. We are committed to reducing the cost of road trauma to our community. The bill supports the achievement of our 2021 State Plan commitment to reduce deaths on our roads by providing an ongoing funding source for the New South Wales road safety program. Our goal is to reduce fatalities to 4.3 per 100,000 population by 2016. The main purpose of the bill is to establish a new direct funding source for road safety initiatives in this State—the Community Road Safety Fund. This fund will receive revenue from camera recorded speed and traffic light offences detected by the four types of speed cameras used in New South Wales—fixed, mobile, red light, speed and point-to-point cameras. The proposed fund will be administered by Transport for NSW and will be used to fund the cost of delivering the broad range of initiatives in the road safety program.

Those road safety initiatives are coordinated through the Centre for Road Safety in partnership with Roads and Maritime Services, NSW Police, the Department of Education and Communities—with which I work closely—and our local councils. As Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills, I am pleased to note the important work that the Department of Education and Communities undertakes in relation to road safety. The department provides, through public high schools, driver education for students in years 9 to 12 and road safety education for students from kindergarten to year 12 as part of its Personal Development, Health and

Physical Education syllabus. My son has recently taken to the road as a learner-driver so I am very aware of how incredibly important these initiatives are in educating our young people about the dangers of speeding and unsafe driving.

The key initiatives and focus areas for the road safety program over the next 10 years are outlined in the NSW Road Safety Strategy, which was released for public comment last month. Measures in the road safety program include engineering works, public education campaigns, education programs and enhanced police enforcement. This strategy has been developed in consultation with community groups and stakeholders to ensure it reflects best practice road safety and community priorities—that is how we like to do things on this side of the House. Importantly, this bill sends a clear message to the community that speed cameras are not just about raising revenue; they are about increasing road safety because the revenue will go to those things that we know have a track record of reducing dangerous driving and speeding on our roads.

The establishment of this fund is a key part of the New South Wales Speed Camera Strategy and will build community confidence in speed camera programs in our State. The Government remains committed to demonstrating to the community that speed cameras are effective in improving road safety, and to providing 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 delivering the promised road safety benefit. All this information—and I commend it to all members—is publicly available online for the community to review. The New South Wales Speed Camera Strategy was developed following the Auditor-General's review of speed cameras, which was completed last year. This review found that the right type of speed camera in the right location can prevent deaths on our roads.

The strategy outlines how speed cameras and red light 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. The bill proposes that all revenue generated by the four types of cameras used in New South Wales will be directed into the Community Road Safety Fund. Drivers who ignore the law and endanger other drivers will be paying for road safety in New South Wales. That is a positive outcome. In 2010-11 the cost to the State Government for delivering road safety measures was \$231 million. Importantly, establishing the Community Road Safety Fund will help supplement and stabilise our commitment to road safety. In summary, the establishment of the Community Road Safety Fund proposed in the bill demonstrates this Government's commitment to improving road safety for the benefit of our whole community in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [3.47 p.m.]: I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 because I know that the passage of this bill will ensure that the current level of road safety funding will be maintained. Residents in my electorate of Rockdale know how hard the Minister for Roads and Ports is working to improve road safety. The Minister is delivering locally in Arncliffe by committing to the construction of a pedestrian tunnel and to safety upgrades to roads across the electorate. The purpose of the bill is to establish and enable payment into and from the Community Road Safety Fund under the administration of Transport for NSW. The fund will be financed by penalties and fines imposed for speed and traffic infringements detected by the four types of cameras used in New South Wales—mobile speed cameras, fixed cameras, red-light cameras and point-to-point cameras. Transport for NSW will use this revenue to meet the cost of delivering the New South Wales road safety program. The fund will be transparent, with Transport for NSW providing a full account of incoming revenue and outgoing expenses as part of its annual report.

Having received representations from the NRMA in relation to new section 801 (2), the Minister for Roads and Ports amended the bill to ensure that money paid into the fund will be used only for road safety initiatives and will not be able to be paid from the fund into consolidated revenue. Every year approximately 42,000 road crashes are reported in New South Wales, which, sadly result in 400 families losing a loved one. That equates to one person a day dying on our roads. Further, 26,000 individuals are injured. These figures are just for one year and are far too high. This is why the Government is determined to improve road safety. We want the safest roads in Australia to be in New South Wales, in particular in Rockdale.

I refer to goal 10 of the State plan, NSW 2021, which states, "We endeavour to improve road safety". We have set a target to reduce fatalities on our roads to 4.3 per 100,000 people by the year 2016. This is an achievable target and one that I have full confidence in, as I know that bills such as this go a long way to improving our road safety program. Part of the goal is to develop and implement the New South Wales Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020, which will build on existing effective programs including the road toll response

package. Other parts of the goal are to improve the safety of roads by carrying out road development and upgrading, maintenance and safety works such as safety barriers, work on local roads to address crash risks, and by conducting highway safety reviews to inform safety works and upgrade identified blackspots, including continuing the duplication of the Pacific Highway.

Another part of the goal is to fast track the rollout of additional flashing lights to alert drivers to school zones. In Rockdale we have installed flashing lights on Wollongong Road and Bryant Street to inform drivers of the presence of schoolchildren from Athelstane and Rockdale public schools. Another part of the goal is to introduce a safer driver's course for learner drivers, with a curriculum set by a board of road safety experts. The Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 sends a strong message that speed cameras are not about revenue; they are about road safety. Speed accounts for approximately 40 per cent of road fatalities. That is a devastating figure and equates to around 170 lives. With fine revenue paid into the Community Road Safety Fund the road safety budget is maintained as a priority. I think that is something every member in this place wants to see. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.52 p.m.]: The purpose of the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012 is to establish and enable payments into and from the Community Road Safety Fund under the administration of Transport for NSW. Payments into the fund will include fines and penalties recovered from camera-recorded speed and red light offences detected by four types of speed cameras in New South Wales. This is an important bill. It is a shame that members on the other side have said it is just about revenue raising. I dispute that. Today a simple message came home to me when the Hon. Michael Gallacher launched the new high-visibility highway patrol motorbikes and vehicles out the front of Parliament House. This is about preventing the more than 400 deaths and 26,000 injuries per annum that occur on our roads.

There is a financial penalty attached to breaking road rules. I have one simple message to the motorists of New South Wales: If you do not want a fine, do the right thing—do not speed. Speeding drivers put their lives and the lives of others at risk, particularly members from country electorates whose areas experience unnecessary deaths and carnage time and time again. Mr Acting-Speaker would experience the same thing on the roads in his fine electorate of Monaro as my electorate experiences on the Pacific Highway and other arterial roads in the Tweed. I think it is a great move by the Minister for Roads and Ports and the hardworking Minister for Transport to ensure that the Community Road Safety Fund is adequately funded and to get the message out there. Like many members in this House, I hang my head in shame when I see senseless loss of life on our roads.

Unfortunately, a lot of young people in my electorate have been killed in motor vehicle accidents. Others have suffered horrific injuries. I am sure those deaths and injuries inflict lifelong suffering and emotional trauma on the victims' friends and family. We must do everything we can to get the message out that people must not speed. People who do not speed do not have to worry about paying a fine. A lot of hardworking people in the department are trying to get the message out. We have seen the anti-speeding campaign depicting a wagging little finger and there have also been a number of police campaigns. This bill will help to stop the carnage. Perhaps it will even help the member for Fairfield not to speed in his Lamborghini. I fully endorse this bill. Anything we can do to protect lives should be strongly supported. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [3.56 p.m.]: I support the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012, which provides for the appropriate use of funds raised from fines following the detection of speed by speed cameras in addition to fines raised following the use of red light cameras. In its report following an inquiry into school zone safety in March 2012 the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, Staysafe, recommended that revenue raised from school zone cameras be reinvested in specific road safety projects. On 1 June 2012 the Minister for Roads and Ports outlined a seven-fold increase in mobile speed cameras as well as a doubling in the number of red light speed cameras, and committed all revenue raised to be spent on road safety.

The object of this bill is to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to establish the Community Road Safety Fund. The purpose of the fund is to enable revenue from fines and penalties recovered for certain camera recorded speeding and traffic light offences to be used to fund the activities of Transport for NSW to promote and improve road safety. It has to be remembered that road accidents are one of the major causes of death and injury in New South Wales. Each year approximately 400 people are killed and 26,000 are injured on our roads. To direct revenue from camera-recorded offences into the Community Road Safety Fund sends a clear message that the money will be used purely to improve road safety.

The money can be spent on many road safety measures, but I will talk specifically about the Traffic Offenders Program in the Myall Lakes area. The program targets recidivism rates among people who drink and drive, speed, or commit other traffic offences. It strives to do more than educate them. It also strives to change their behaviour by introducing them to people who have had serious accidents, drug and alcohol specialists and others. That is one simple road safety measure but there are many others. The importance of road safety will be emphasised when people know that the money is going to fund road safety initiatives and that it is not going into consolidated revenue or other things. It sends a strong message, and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [3.58 p.m.], in reply: On behalf of my colleague in the Legislative Council the very capable Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, I thank the member for Londonderry, the member for Lakemba, the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Vacluse, the member for Rockdale, the member for Myall Lakes, and the member for Tweed for their contributions to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012. This is a very important bill. In fact, it is critical because in the past 30 years New South Wales has experienced significant improvements in the level of road safety, but in this State road crashes continue to be a leading cause of death for people under 44 years of age.

Establishment of the Community Road Safety Fund will ensure that revenue from speed cameras is used by the New South Wales Government to develop and deliver evidence-based road safety policy programs and capital works in New South Wales to reduce deaths and injuries on our roads. I foreshadow that, as outlined by my colleague in the Legislative Council, the Government will move an amendment to ensure that endeavours to reduce road deaths and injuries continue. The concept of the bill is simple. The community can be reassured that road safety programs will be funded directly by the small minority of drivers on our roads who do the wrong thing and who continue to exceed the speed limit, or who do not obey traffic lights. The Government has made its intentions clear in relation to speed cameras: The right speed camera in the right location can save lives. The community asked for transparency in the use of speed cameras.

I note comments stated in the NRMA Motoring and Services petition that was tabled in this House in November 2011. The petition asked for hypothecation of traffic fines revenue to fund road safety. That petition was supported by 13,500 members of the community. On 1 June 2012 the Government's commitment to addressing community concern was announced by my colleague who has carriage of this bill in the Legislative Council as part of the New South Wales Speed Camera Strategy. The Government has honoured this commitment. This bill will ensure that the money generated from speed cameras will be used to improve road safety in New South Wales for all road users. In the coming years the Community Road Safety Fund will fund the continued rollout of flashing lights to enhance the visibility of school zones and at-risk road users, enable the development and implementation of a safer driver's course to assist novice drivers to become safer drivers on our roads, and improve data collection techniques and analysis to gain a better insight into low speed run-over crashes, such as driveway crashes—an issue that has been pursued very vigilantly by my colleague in the other place.

All those strategies aim to improve the safety of those important road user groups and ultimately to reduce deaths and injuries on our roads. This bill will provide a great way forward for road safety in New South Wales. It will provide a dedicated fund to improve road safety through the delivery of best-practice programs that will be developed in partnership with road safety stakeholders. It will also reinforce this Government's commitment to ensuring that revenue from camera-detected speeding and red light offences will fund the programs. On behalf of my colleague in the Legislative Council, I again thank all members who participated in this debate for their contribution. I foreshadow that I will be moving an amendment, which was widely circulated prior to today. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Gladys Berejiklian.

Consideration in Detail

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! By leave, I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.03 p.m.]: I move Government amendment No. 1:

No. 1 Page 4, schedule 1 [1], lines 15-18. Omit all words on those lines.

This amendment will ensure that the intention of the bill is clear and that the purposes to which money in the fund can be applied are limited to road safety. Following the introduction of this bill in the House, representations were received by the Minister for Roads and Ports in the other place from NRMA Motoring and Services. The NRMA raised concerns regarding new section 80I (2) in schedule 1 of item [1] to the bill. That provision would have enabled money in excess of the road safety budget to be paid from the fund to consolidated revenue following the agreement between Transport for NSW and the Treasurer. The provision originally was included to allow flexibility in the event of greater-than-anticipated speed camera revenue. It was not intended to divert money away from road safety.

It is projected that the revenue generated by the speed camera program will be well below the \$231 million annual road safety budget, and it was not anticipated that excess money would be available to be paid out of the fund. Our commitment to road safety is genuine. We have taken on board the issues raised by NRMA Motoring and Services. With this amendment, money paid into the fund will be able to be used only to pay for road safety. I congratulate my colleague in the upper House on facilitating this change. The amendment provides the community with greater confidence that money raised from camera-detected offences will be used only for road safety now and in the future. I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [4.05 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the amendment. However, it should be a significant embarrassment to the Government that new section 80I (2) was in the bill in the first place. Its inclusion effectively undermined the whole intent of the bill. It would have meant that at any time the Treasurer could have accessed the fund and withdrawn funds. If the objective of the bill is to give confidence to the people of New South Wales that revenue raised from speed camera detected offences is applied to road safety, the inclusion of such a provision in the bill completely undermined that. How it got there in the first place is a mystery. Was it Treasury that wanted to make sure that it could get its hands on the fund? I do not know. It is either that or the exercise of poor judgement by the Minister for Roads and Ports and his office, which I doubt because I know how hard they work on these issues.

New section 80I (2) shows that the Government could not even get right a bill with only five pages. It is not a big deal, it is not that difficult, and the truth is that this whole legislation is not necessary. Transport for NSW can set up an account without this legislation so that revenue from speed camera detected offences can be paid into the fund. Transport for NSW does not need this bill. This bill is just a stunt. It is an opportunity for the Government to say, "Oh, look at what we've done." This bill is entirely unnecessary. I am pleased that the Government has recognised that new section 80I (2) completely undermined the intent of the bill. If the Minister for Transport had not moved an amendment to effect its removal, the Opposition would have done it for her. I am pleased that the Government has recognised the folly of the provision and has acted to bring some integrity to the process. Nevertheless, it remains the case that this bill is not necessary and it does not increase funding for road safety by one cent.

The Government must make it very clear to the people of New South Wales that while the revenue will be directed to the Community Road Safety Fund, it will go nowhere near meeting the cost of operations of the Centre for Road Safety. The Minister for Transport has just stated that the bill is expected to raise \$137 million. The current budget for the Centre for Road Safety is \$231 million. Clearly, the revenue raised from speed and camera-detected offences will not expand the Centre for Road Safety or increase the programs that are being funded. All the programs that Government and Opposition members mentioned during the second reading debate are laudable, important and much needed, but no extra money is being made available. So what is the purpose of this bill?

It is not as though the Government will spend more money on saving lives or helping local government organisations to meet their objectives to improve road safety in their communities, and it is not as though more money will be spent to roll out more school zone safety cameras. Whatever already has been stated in the budget is all that road safety will get. This bill does not increase funds for road safety by one cent. However, I am pleased to support the amendment to remove new section 80I (2). If the Government had not moved the amendment, this bill would be even more worthless than it is. I am pleased to support the amendment.

Question—That Government amendment No. 1 be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Government amendment No. 1 agreed to.

Schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

Third Reading

Motion by Ms Gladys Berejiklian agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEVY

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [4.10 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to talk in the House tonight about an initiative that has been lacking in New South Wales and in most jurisdictions in Australia. To date, South Australia and the Northern Territory are the only States and Territories that have adopted container deposit levy legislation. Members might ask whether I am qualified to talk about container deposit levy legislation. As members may know, supplies to Broken Hill mainly come from Adelaide. As a consequence, Broken Hill was involved in the first container deposit levy legislation introduced in Australia, which was initiated in South Australia many years ago. Until very recently, containers collected in Broken Hill were returned to Adelaide as part of that scheme.

With the introduction of that legislation, South Australia started to see a reduction in the volume of containers returned. So it increased the deposit levy to 10¢. As a result, the manufacturer Lion Nathan withdrew from recognising Broken Hill as part of the South Australian container deposit levy legislation. That decision was made by Lion Nathan, but the majority of the soft drink manufacturers and other container suppliers still participated in the scheme. Therefore, I have knowledge of the position before and after the introduction of container deposit levy legislation, and I know what happens with the removal of a container deposit levy. The collection of 10,000 signatures in a short time is a clear indication of the huge support for this scheme across the Murray-Darling electorate. The western New South Wales shires have called for container deposit levy legislation at every Local Government and Shire Association conference. This scheme is a no-brainer. On 12 April this year, Broken Hill City Council wrote to the Minister for the Environment, stating:

Up until 2008 Broken Hill residents had the benefit of participating in the South Australian container deposit/refund system by returning beverage containers to a private recycling operator in town. From 2008 residents were no longer able to receive a refund on glass containers or aluminium cans ...

Consequently, we have seen the quantity of containers collected reduce from 826,000 kilograms to 220,000 kilograms between 2007-08 and 2009-10. The balance of uncollected containers is going to the tip. The containers are being dumped. The township of Broken Hill looks very different since the removal of the container deposit levy. Recent research conducted by the Local Government and Shires Associations shows that council kerbside recycling costs would be reduced by between 19 per cent and 47 per cent if the container deposit levy was in place. New South Wales councils could save from \$23 million to \$62 million on recycling costs, and councils across Australia could save from \$69 million to \$183 million per annum. That is a significant amount of money.

There is an opposing argument. An organisation known as the Packaging and Stewardship Board has been able to bribe the two main parties to make sure they do not engage in this practice. There is no doubt that the levy is a cost to manufacturers, and they say that consumers will have to pay more for their soft drinks and other products if a container deposit levy is in force. I challenge them to compare the advertised prices in Adelaide with the prices in any other capital city in Australia. It does not cost more in Adelaide. South Australia is as competitive as any other State in the sale of these products. Manufacturers have the ability to absorb those costs.

I refer to a program called Keep Australia Beautiful. Those against a container deposit levy have managed to bribe the principals of that program and they have the audacity to ring me and tell me that container deposit levy legislation does not work. I can tell them that it does, and the residents of Broken Hill are demanding the introduction of a container deposit levy. In the past this levy impacted on our economy, our lifestyle and our ability to maintain the beautification of the city by reducing the amount of litter in the streets of Broken Hill. I encourage the Government to seriously consider this petition signed by more than 10,000 people.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [4.15 p.m.]: I too welcome the petition brought to the House by the member for Murray-Darling and commend the member for bringing this matter before the House. When in government, New South Wales Labor advocated strongly for a national approach to be taken on this issue. We successfully argued at the Council of Australian Governments that options to improve recycling and combat waste, including a container deposit levy, be comprehensively examined and considered. The process is coming to a close and the final options for a national scheme will be discussed in the coming months. We are aware of the many potential benefits of a container deposit levy and there is strong community support for the proposal. We believe that a container deposit levy scheme should be a national scheme and carefully designed to avoid significant extra cost to consumers.

Approximately 13 billion containers are used each year, of which about 40 per cent are recycled, mostly by kerbside recycling. About 50 per cent of container products are consumed away from the home. Half of the containers end up as landfill, which represents a huge waste of resources. One issue with kerbside recycling is the damage done to glass bottles. I assume that every electorate has recycling bins. In Cessnock we have wheelie bins. Residents go to great lengths to ensure they recycle and then the truck comes along, the recycled material is dumped in the back of the truck and all the bottles are smashed. Those smashed bottles cannot be recycled as bottles, although the glass can be recycled. There have been some exciting innovations using crushed glass to replace sand in the construction of roads. It would be better to keep those glass bottles in one piece and send them back to the product manufacturer for reuse.

It takes about 84 per cent less energy to recycle a plastic bottle than to make one from raw materials. That is a significant amount of energy and energy waste. The energy saved from recycling one glass bottle provides enough energy to power a 100 watt light bulb for four hours. The recycling of six aluminium cans, a sixpack, can offset a 25 kilometre train trip, a 17 kilometre bus ride or a 10 kilometre journey of an average sized car. Some people will object to this proposal. Those who oppose the proposal would include the Food and Grocery Council because they have a vested interest in the process and whether it would affect consumer willingness to purchase or otherwise. I think it is an exciting concept. Like many members, over the last 25 years or so I have constantly read that in South Australia consumers can get money on returned bottles and I have wondered why that does not happen in every State.

I do not have a problem about the recycling aspect, but a price must be set at a level that will encourage people to do the right thing but not so high that it severely impacts on consumer willingness to purchase. I look forward to New South Wales participating in the Council of Australian Governments meeting on this issue and a national approach to this challenge. I hope all the States can work together. Given that most of the States are now managed by Coalition governments, there should be agreement. Undoubtedly, they will be able to work with our fantastic Federal Labor Government, which is at the forefront in protecting the environment. I commend the member for Murray-Darling for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [4.18 p.m.]: I thank the member for Murray-Darling for his interest in resource recovery and recycling, and for bringing the views of his constituents before the House today. This issue gets people excited; people who are for and against container deposit levy legislation have been talking to me since I became the Minister for the Environment. We all understand that improving packaging recycling is a key priority. None of us likes litter. From a New South Wales Government perspective, we want to ensure that we deal with the issue as has been set out by the Council of Australian Governments—that is, to look at it comprehensively on a State-by-State basis and to work with other States and Australian environment Ministers at a national level.

Before I go through the process—and it is important that members understand the process—I will refer to the State's track record when it comes to recycling and resource recovery. I commend the New South Wales community for their efforts, because our recovery of beverage containers from households is at record levels. Last year households across local communities achieved an incredible 83 per cent recovery of household containers through our extensive kerbside collection system. The member for Cessnock referred to the bins of household rubbish that get tipped into trucks and taken away. What happens outside the home environment in littering and packaging recycling is a big issue. All of us want to ensure that we reduce landfill.

Our kerbside collection system reaches 94 per cent of all New South Wales residents. The vast majority—more than 70 per cent—of beverage container consumption happens at home. Therefore, it is little surprise that this is a key driver behind these results. However, there is room for improvement, and even more so for a Government with high recycling and resource recovery goals. We recognise that the rate of packaging and beverage container recovery outside the home is considerably lower. That is why we are working with other governments to look at the packaging debate with rational and balanced eyes. We are looking beyond the emotive issues and towards solutions that accomplish our environmental targets as well as maximise returns to the taxpayer, the consumer and the family.

In today's terms, our record on recycling is good compared to the record in States that have implemented recycling programs. However, the remaining States have not implemented measures similar to those in New South Wales. On 24 August I met with my fellow environment Ministers at the Council of Australian Governments Ministerial Standing Council on Environment and Water—called the SCEW meeting to address this important issue. Indeed, I led on behalf of the other States. Our approach is to look at the outcomes of public consultation. [*Time expired.*]

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [4.21 p.m.]: I thank my colleague the member for Murray-Darling for presenting the House with this petition. The actions we take in this Chamber, and the reason we became involved in politics, are to build a future for our children and future generations. Nothing can be more important than looking after our environment and ensuring that it is sustainable for future generations of New South Wales men, women and children. Recycling and litter are still a problem, although vastly improved from 20 years ago. Governments must continue to do what they can to minimise rubbish that is left on our streets and beaches and in the ocean. Plastic bottles are a great contributor to litter and landfill, and this problem must be addressed.

Australians consume drinks in almost 13 billion containers a year, only 40 per cent of which are recycled. Frankly, this figure of recycling is too low and New South Wales Labor has advocated strongly for a national approach to fixing this problem. It is something which we successfully argued for at the Council of Australian Governments during our time in Government, and I am confident that a national scheme will be put in place in coming months. Presently, of the 40 per cent of containers that are recycled, the majority are collected from kerbside recycling, with much less collected from venues away from homes, such as food halls and public spaces. The rest either find themselves as litter on our streets or as landfill, which is a huge waste of resources. Recycling is the solution.

A container deposit system appears to have widespread community support. Newspan reported 82 per cent in favour of government action to introduce a 10¢ deposit and refund scheme on cans and bottles. Apart from creating a more sustainable future, there are other potential side benefits. Thousands of new jobs would be created in processing and managing the retrieval of the containers. Charities would benefit, as local organisations could collect old beverage containers and use them as financial support. In my day, as children we used to collect bottles. The young kids would make a lot of pocket money from collecting bottles, as many of us used to do. Hundreds of convenient drop-off centres could be established.

South Australia is a shining example where a proper scheme of container deposits works, with recovery of beverage containers increasing to 80 per cent. New South Wales Labor calls on the O'Farrell Government to continue the push for a national scheme through the Council of Australian Governments process and by doing so ensure a sustainable future for our children. The community wants it and a container deposit scheme is a rational solution to this frightening environmental problem. I congratulate the member for Murray-Darling and thank him for bringing this petition before the House.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [4.24 p.m.], by leave: I commend the member for Murray-Darling for bringing this petition to the House. Like others, as a young bloke I went around building sites and collected bottles from the builders; it resulted in a nice bit of pocket money. Coming from a tourist electorate, I note that the amount of plastics and bottles that get washed up on beaches and cause problems to the marine environment once they get washed down creeks is absolutely disgusting. For a number of years I lived west of the Great Dividing Range. I lived in Moree and I covered the area near Bogee. When I was travelling into town I could tell how far out of a town I was because of the amount of bottles on the side of the road; I saw more bottles the closer I got to town. I also spent some time in the Murray-Darling electorate before and after 2008. On my first visit to the electorate I noticed that the roads were free of litter—free of plastic bottles, beer bottles and drink bottles. When I visited after 2008 and after Broken Hill City Council knocked back the container deposit legislation, I noticed the increasing proliferation of bottles on the side of the road.

Mr Troy Grant: It's the crystal highway now.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: As the member for Dubbo said, it is like the crystal highway. This Parliament should be taking the lead. We should not be hiding behind the fact that we need the agreement of the Council of Australian Governments. Let us take the South Australian approach and put container deposit legislation in place. That would ensure that the highways and byways in western New South Wales and on the coast are not littered with bottles. We must ensure that we protect the marine environment in the rivers and creeks on the North Coast. Anyone who has visited the North Coast will have noted the proliferation of bottles and plastic containers washed up on beaches and sitting on the side of the road. As the member for Murray-Darling said, kerbside recycling does not fix the problem.

When I was a member of Apex we collected bottles because the local cordial manufacturer wanted them back. When we collected the cordial bottles we also collected hundreds of other brands of bottles—beer bottles more than anything else—from under people's houses. However, we could not get the money to transport them to Sydney and have them recycled. In the end we crushed the bottles and they sat there for years before they were recycled. The cost of recycling to councils is huge. We can talk about the benefits of recycling—and they are good—but the reality is that no-one makes money out of it. The ratepayer must pay for it. Container deposit legislation will mean that self-responsibility will occur. Kids will make more pocket money. People will return containers, and the price of drinks will not increase. Indeed, it will help the environment and get this rubbish out of the natural environment.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.28 p.m.], by leave: The member for Murray-Darling is right and so too are The Nationals on this issue. It is about time the Liberals and remaining Government members realised that The Nationals and the member for Murray-Darling are correct.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member will be heard in silence.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The Government will fail to meet its municipal waste recycling target of 66 per cent by 2014, as currently it has reached only 44 per cent. The only way the Government will meet its target is to support The Nationals and the member for Murray-Darling. South Australia has had a container deposit scheme in place for 30 years and achieves recycling rates of more than 80 per cent. The Northern Territory has just introduced a scheme. Internationally, these deposit refund schemes are the most effective mechanism for achieving high container-recovery rates. Container deposit schemes exist in Canada, Sweden, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Israel and 11 States in the United States of America. On average, the recycling target is 80 per cent and sometimes as high as 95 per cent.

New South Wales does not have a container deposit legislation scheme because Labor buckled under pressure from the beverage industry. In 1995 the Carr Government went to the election promising to introduce a container deposit levy, but a beverage council coalition known as the Industry Environment Council knocked it off. A call for papers in the upper House by The Greens revealed a 2000 report commissioned by the Carr Government, which stated that the industry did not want to hear that the 10¢ refundable deposit on bottles and other containers would create 1,500 jobs and ease Sydney's landfill problems. Of course, that was supported by local government, which has emphatically supported container deposit scheme legislation. The State Government can introduce the scheme now but, of course, it should lobby its Federal colleagues at every opportunity to make sure it gets done.

The introduction of a container deposit scheme can be done at the local level. In the upper House The Greens have given notice of a bill and in this House Clover Moore, the member for Sydney, has given notice of an identical bill. The Government could get the bill passed tomorrow. The Greens would vote with the Government in the upper House and the lower House would get the bill passed. The impact of not having such a scheme is clearly visible. People driving from South Australia know when they have entered New South Wales: the sparkle can be seen along the highway from the bottles, cans and plastic. The Government should listen to the member for Murray-Darling. Obtaining 10,000 names on a petition in his electorate is a huge achievement. I acknowledge the work of the member for Murray-Darling, who is a champion for his local community fighting for these issues. It is good for the State, for local government and for jobs. The Government should adopt a container deposit levy scheme.

Discussion concluded.

HIGHWAY VEHICLE BREAKDOWN SAFETY

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services) [4.32 p.m.]: In February this year we were shocked to hear of the tragic accident that took the lives of 23-year-old Sarah Frazer and Geoff Clark, a father of four. They were struck by a passing truck when attending to Sarah's broken-down vehicle. While this accident was a terrible tragedy that devastated our community, it has since served as an important catalyst for change: to not only improve break-down safety but, more generally speaking, to improve safety on our roads and highways. Today we saw evidence of this change with my colleague the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, announcing the New South Wales Government's Breakdown Safety Strategy—a package of measures designed to upgrade road safety along major highways across New South Wales.

This strategy is the culmination of a courageous campaign by the Frazer and Clark families and the Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH] group generally to improve the safety of breakdown lanes and help improve safety on our highways. This petition is being discussed today precisely because of the hard work of those families. I particularly acknowledge Sarah Frazer's father, Peter, who earlier this year presented me with a petition of more than 20,000 signatures. Members of both families are present in the gallery today to hear this afternoon's discussion. I thank them on behalf of the Government and the New South Wales community for their persistent and courageous efforts.

I am pleased to say that the Government is confident that the measures the Minister announced today will deliver change by improving safety standards for motorists, tow truck drivers and emergency services workers. As the Minister announced, the first part of the strategy is to fix the section of road where Sarah and Geoff died. Having investigated the 1.5 kilometre southbound stretch of the Hume Highway between Mittagong and Berrima where the crash occurred, Transport for NSW has recommended the closure of the auxiliary lane at this site to provide greater road shoulder width to allow a safe place to stop for people whose cars break down. This immediate measure will be implemented over the next few months. Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services also will be developing longer-term solutions at this specific location. Two pull-off bays at the start and end of the 1.5 kilometre stretch of road covering the Hume Highway site, which is in poor condition, will be upgraded.

Overarching these and a number of other initiatives is a new public education campaign on safety during breakdowns, including encouraging the use of vests and cones at crash sites. Many people know that visibility can be an issue in breakdown situations. We encourage the use of hazard lights and the carrying of high visibility vests inside vehicles. It is important that we now encourage manufacturers to retain safety triangles in vehicles when importing them into Australia. In addition, we will advocate new tow truck standards for winching mechanisms to enable left-hand side control. This is particularly important for tow truck drivers to conduct their work out of harm's way. This Government is serious about improving breakdown safety. Our earnest desire is that from this terrible tragedy some good can come, hopefully leading towards the saving of lives across New South Wales roads and highways. I, along with the roads Minister, hope that the release of today's strategy will prompt thoughtful discussion of what we can all do to protect our lives and those of other road users.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [4.37 p.m.]: As parliamentarians we bring to this place the lessons learned from our lives and experiences. These form the basis of our decision-making and reflect the values we hope to bring to our roles. That is how it should be. Today's discussion is difficult for many of us. We are here as fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives. The events that are the catalyst for this discussion touch us all. I acknowledge in the gallery the families who have been affected by this tragedy. As we know, Peter Frazer and his family lost their daughter and sister Sarah, and Mrs Samantha Clark lost her husband, Geoff, when Sarah's car broke down on the Hume Highway south of Mittagong and Mr Clark came to her assistance. The breakdown lane was only 1.5 metres in width and, with the prevailing speed limit of 110 kilometres an hour, the consequences were tragic.

Since that terrible day both families have worked tirelessly to ensure that no other family has to endure such loss and pain. They set up the Safer Australian Roads and Highways—SARAH—organisation and within three months were able to secure 23,000 signatures for the petition we are discussing. Today's petition calls for legislation requiring all major roads, highways and freeways to have continuous breakdown lanes of at least 2.5 metres in width. This is common sense, and all the petition asks for is that the Roads and Maritime Service

comply with the standards set out in the Austroads Guide to Road Design. It is difficult to understand why the former Roads and Traffic Authority last year removed references to minimum shoulder widths in the Austroads Guide to Road Design. At the very least the Roads and Maritime Services should adopt the Austroads standard and incorporate the recommended road widths into its road design standards.

I join with the Deputy Premier in welcoming the Breakdown Safety Strategy, which was released today and commend the Government for its response to this tragedy. We all welcome today's announcement of a number of measures in response to the petition. The third lane of the section of the Hume Highway in question will be closed and effectively become a breakdown lane. Of course, the Opposition supports this action and we respectfully suggest that the Government needs to be clear about when this will happen. The Government has also made a commitment that all new major highways and freeways have breakdown lanes of at least three metres.

In the other place the Opposition has tried on several occasions to get a commitment from the Minister that the current M5 widening project will include breakdown lanes that comply with the standard in the Austroads guide. Now that the Government has committed to three metre breakdown lanes on high-speed roads for new projects, it must also assure the community that there will be safe breakdown lanes provided with the M5 widening. The project is underway so the Government must act now. The Government has conducted an audit of breakdown lanes on the Hume Highway and other major non-metropolitan multi-lane highways and it has committed to mapping all State roads with a speed limit of at least 80 kilometres per hour to further analyse shoulder widths throughout New South Wales.

The Opposition supports the development of an internet application that emergency services and first-response vehicle operators can access to find out the width of road shoulders. In the meantime, it is important that the results of this audit are available to the public. I know that Mr Frazer has been working with the Government and Roads and Maritime Services, particularly the Minister and his staff, in conducting the audit and he, too, has called for this information to be available to the community. We join Mr Frazer and his family, Mr Clark's family and the Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH] campaign in requesting that the results of the audit be made available. The petition also calls for the introduction of legislation requiring vehicles to slow down and move to the adjacent lane when drivers see flashing hazard or emergency lights. The Government has indicated that it is looking to change rule 42 of the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act and at the possibility of some other legislative changes.

I understand that the Government has some concerns about this proposal, especially in relation to enforcement. Of course, long-lasting behaviour change requires effective enforcement. Seatbelt and drink-driving laws are good examples. The Opposition is pleased to offer its support in moving towards a workable solution. Regulation in and of itself will not change behaviour, and that is why the Government will need to ensure that there is a comprehensive and properly targeted campaign, at the very least to start drivers thinking about road safety in the event of a breakdown. I understand that the Government has made commitments to this, and I acknowledge its efforts. The Government has proposed a number of other measures in the Breakdown Safety Strategy released today. I acknowledge the efforts of the Minister to address this issue. As Mr Frazer has said, it is a great start.

Sarah Frazer was on her way to start studies at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. She was a young woman at the beginning of her life. Geoff Clark was doing his job and helping a stranded motorist whose vehicle had broken down. These circumstances should not have ended so tragically. Today we bring awareness to the tragedy, but we should be doing more. In the five years to 2011 there were 145 breakdown lane crashes, 111 casualties, eight deaths and 103 injuries. I hope that from today we can bring these numbers down. The Opposition will not play politics on this issue and I again offer our support in working towards any measures that will increase the safety of people who have broken down on our roads and of workers who come to their assistance.

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [4.42 p.m.]: It is an honour to speak in support of the Safer Australian Roads and Highways petition, known as the SARAH petition. It is a sad day because it has come about as a result of the tragic deaths of Sarah Frazer and Geoff Clark. I acknowledge Sarah's parents, Peter and Judy, who are with us today, and her family and friends who have all worked so consistently to see the issue of road safety—and breakdown safety particularly—brought before the Parliament. I also acknowledge the presence of Mr and Mrs Clark, the parents of Geoff Clark, and the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, who has personally driven and presided over the reforms that we are able to announce today. Sarah's sister Jessica could not be with us today in the flesh, but I am sure she is here in spirit.

Despite the personal tragedy and grief suffered by Sarah's wonderful family, her father, Peter, and sister Jessica have spearheaded the campaign to see the loss of their daughter and sister turned into a matter of public importance and policy reform. Sarah's mother and others have also played a tremendous role at what must have been a very difficult time for them. Receiving more than 23,000 signatures in eight weeks is an inspiring response. What a tribute to a woman taken so young, and to Geoff Clark, who was loved by so many. The death of Sarah and Geoff saw a huge outpouring of grief in communities across the State. The Blue Mountains community mourned the passing of a vibrant and creative young woman who was lost just as she was setting off to begin a new chapter. The Southern Highlands community was also devastated by the loss of Sarah and Geoff. We know that road well and the risks associated with it. On the day of the accident Geoff had simply been doing what he did best: helping someone in need of a hand. He is remembered as a wonderful family man and friend, and he leaves behind his wife, Sam, and sons Liam, Bryce, Kieran and Aidan.

The tragic accident has brought to light a number of similar stories that shine a spotlight on the desperate need to address road safety, as this petition identifies. As the Deputy Premier said, the Government has announced today a package of measures to improve road safety along major highways in New South Wales, and a strategy to improve breakdown safety in particular. The closure of the third lane on Bendooley Hill will be in place before the Christmas holidays. It is my great hope—which I know is shared by all members of the House—that the message of this tragedy will never be forgotten. We need to ensure that there is continual progress in improving safety on our roads and awareness amongst drivers. By doing this we can truly honour the memory of these two outstanding members of their communities who died so needlessly.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Drutt) [4.45 p.m.]: I acknowledge the efforts of the Frazer family and the Clark family—I do not know the Clark family, but I know the Frazer family pretty well—in the work that they and everyone behind them have done to bring this petition before the Parliament for action by governments and hopefully prevent a similar tragedy in the future. I do not know how to put into words the feelings of family members confronted in February this year with the news of the terrible accident that took the lives of Sarah Frazer and Geoff Clark, arising out of what one would think was an everyday occurrence on our roads—that is, a vehicle breaking down and moving to a breakdown lane to await assistance.

We are often confronted by graphic news stories of serious injuries and deaths caused by speeding motorists, drunken drivers or vehicles out of control because of some mechanical failure. This case involved a young woman who simply broke down on a highway and a young man who stopped to see whether he could help. The two of them were killed instantly while stopped in a plain old breakdown lane. I pass on my deepest sympathy to their families. I know Peter Frazer from when he was a younger man—he is still a young man—working in the Mount Drutt area. I hope that none of us has to go through what these families have endured in coming to grips with such loss. Perhaps their grief is mitigated in some small way by the knowledge that other lives may be saved as a result of this incident.

The campaign that has brought this matter to the New South Wales Parliament has resulted in focus on an issue that, frankly, I did not know existed. Few members, if any, realised that there was an Australian standard for the width of breakdown lanes or that it could be ignored when building a motorway—or, if not ignored, amended by authorities. I am sure that very few members knew about that before this incident hit the headlines. I acknowledge the actions of the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Roads and Ports today. I am sure the families can take some satisfaction at this early stage that all was not in vain. It is not the end of the matter—I think we all agree on that.

I acknowledge that our traffic authorities are conducting an audit of all highways, especially high-speed motorways. I also hope that the travelling public will note inadequate breakdown lanes and bring them to the attention of their local members of Parliament or roads authorities. I call on the authorities to ensure that, when building new motorways or widening existing ones, breakdown lanes are wide enough—whatever the standard is. They must be in accordance with the Australian standard to give innocent people like Sarah and Geoff a safe place to stop on the side of the road when their cars break down. I think members on both sides of politics and many in the community have learnt from this tragedy. I am sure that all agree it was too high a price to pay. This issue will be resolved in the future.

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [4.48 p.m.], by leave: I speak today as the State member representing the Frazer family, as a member of the local community and as a mother who could not think of anything worse than losing a child. I have known the Frazer family—Peter, Judy, Rebecca, Daniel, Ben and Jessica—for only a short time. This dreadful tragedy took their daughter Sarah away from them and also took Geoff Clarke—a tow truck driver who simply came to Sarah's aid. In the tight-knit communities of Winmalee

and Springwood their loss is felt greatly. The support of friends, some of whom have made the trip to Sydney from the Blue Mountains, is testament to the effect that this tragedy has had on the community. I also acknowledge members of the Clark family. I commend the strength, unity and resolve shown during your campaign to ensure Sarah's legacy and to make the highways, roads and breakdown lanes safer for everyone.

This State Government has heard, listened and acted. The Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, together with Peter Frazer, announced the new breakdown strategy that was developed by Transport for NSW in conjunction with Roads and Maritime Services, WorkCover, the NRMA and the NSW Police Force. I have had frequent contact with the Roads and Maritime Services due to ongoing road building along the Great Western Highway. I know that our road builders put the safety of our roads as their highest priority, and I am confident that the measures outlined today by the Deputy Premier and announced by the Minister will improve safety standards for motorists, tow truck drivers and emergency services workers. Overarching these initiatives is the important new public education campaign that will focus on breakdowns and on encouraging the use of vests and cones at crash sites. I know that issue has been mentioned many times.

It is important that we encourage manufacturers to retain safety triangles in vehicles when importing them into the Australian market. The Government will liaise with the tow truck industry to provide training that includes the use of safety devices, warning devices and hazard lights. These measures will enhance visibility, which is often a big problem in breakdown situations. Be assured that the Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH] campaign has achieved its goals. No-one in this Parliament or the wider community wants any family to go through what you have been through. To Peter, your family, the Clark family and all your supporters, you have shown great courage in a time of deep distress to ensure the future safety of people in a breakdown situation. I believe something positive has been achieved for the motorists of New South Wales and Sarah's legacy has been established.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! On behalf of all members I thank those in the public gallery for coming to listen to this discussion today. Like all other members, I hope sincerely that from this terrible tragedy the world will be made a better place.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY HEALTH SERVICES

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [4.53 p.m.]: I met recently with Dr James Robertson, a general practitioner from the Gandangara medical service in Liverpool. He has since written to me. I will read his letter into *Hansard* as it summarises very well the difficulty of practising medicine in south-west Sydney in 2012. Dr Robertson writes:

The people of south western Sydney are amongst the most impoverished in the country, yet their healthcare system continues to fail them miserably in providing affordable, accessible and comprehensive health care.

... My experience as a general practitioner in Liverpool has involved, in a large part, a substantial daily effort to detect ways of providing my patients with good care despite the primary healthcare system, rather than through it.

... patient choices when it comes to primary care generally fall into three broad categories. In my part of the world the most common choice is that of the bulk-billing medical centre ...

Here the meagre benefits paid through Medicare to the practitioners involved means seeing several patients superficially in an hour is more cost effective than seeing three patients thoroughly. This leads to superficial medical practice and unhappy practitioners. The doctors skate over the surface of medicine and the patients' real problems remain unaddressed beneath.

Alternatively, one can pay a co-payment of anywhere from \$20 to \$120 on top of the Medicare rebate to be seen properly. This works well if you have the money but is obviously not possible for almost all of my patients. It also raises suspicions as to motive when one wants the patient to return soon or frequently for review.

Finally, one can attend the emergency room at the local hospital.

... a testament to the failure of the first two options in providing proper primary care, as general practitioner patients end up in the emergency room.

It is extremely important to understand that rates of diabetes, hypertension, hypercholesterolaemia and obesity are high and getting higher, yet they are rarely reasons for impoverished, poorly educated patients to present to the doctor.

The fee-for-service model in primary care relies on the patient stating their presenting complaint. Yet these risk factors for cardiovascular disease are all asymptomatic illnesses. If they are not causing pain or inconvenience and the doctor is pressed for time, they are easily ignored by both the patient and the doctor. They remain poorly addressed until the patient ends up in the emergency room with a heart attack or stroke, by which time it is all too late.

... I happen to be personally very interested in "closing the gap". But if cardiovascular disease is the main cause of the mortality gap between Aboriginal Australians and the rest of us, and the risks for it remain poorly addressed by primary care, then how do we actually "close the gap"?

While the rhetoric on both sides of parliament has been flying thick and fast, what has been happening to Aboriginal Australians is now happening to the rest of us, and the impoverished are going first.

... [Gandangara] is a primary health care service that provides comprehensive care as a not-for-profit entity. It is run by the Aboriginal community but sees patients of all backgrounds. The waiting room is at times a wonder to behold as Australians of Vietnamese, African and Aboriginal descent all sit next to each other. The doctors are paid a salary so there is no incentive to see as many patients in an hour as possible. Yet, despite all efforts, this health service still struggles to attract funding just to remain viable, when I see it as a template for comprehensive, bulk-billed primary care that could, and should, be replicated throughout the state.

To add insult to injury, I have found that public hospital outpatient services are being privatised by stealth. Long waiting times mean patients are funnelled into the specialists' private rooms where they have to pay to be seen.

Today I was told my 16-year-old patient with recurrent tonsillitis couldn't be seen as a public outpatient in any of the hospitals in south-western Sydney. She has to be seen in the ENT specialist's private rooms. None of them will bulk bill.

I talked with a colleague about having her seen in central Sydney as if she were in a remote community. She seems to be in the remote community of Liverpool. In my experience, this same process has occurred with colorectal surgery, urology and vascular surgery to varying but increasing degrees throughout central and south western Sydney over the past 10 years.

Unless you have the money, it is harder and harder to be seen properly. Until our State and Federal representatives properly address such fundamental problems as those I have just outlined, the socioeconomic gradient of health in this country will continue to steepen, the gap between rich and poor will continue to widen, and my patients will continue to struggle. Primary healthcare needs more funding and fundamental restructuring.

That is the view in 2012 of a highly motivated and caring doctor who is in the trenches at Liverpool. I place that letter in *Hansard* so that all members know the real situation. I pray that patients in south-west Sydney continue to see improvements in care.

GREATER PORT MACQUARIE BUSINESS AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [4.58 p.m.]: It is often said that small business is the backbone of our community, and how true that is. Last Friday night in Port Macquarie we celebrated small business in a big way. At the Commonwealth Bank Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards 500 people packed the auditorium at Port Macquarie Panthers to see 26 awards, out of almost 100 finalists, presented to our local business community. The Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce, led by Hayden Oriti, works to develop and grow local business by creating opportunities that will benefit the business and professional community throughout the greater Port Macquarie region. The level of professionalism in the room that night was outstanding. While time does not permit me to mention all of the winners, I will single out just a few of them. While most of the awards are voted on by the local community online, five categories are judged by their peers and it is those I will mention this afternoon.

In the category of Embracing Technology the finalists were Baker IT, PC Pitstop, Todokids, and Wauchope and Port Macquarie Performing Arts. The award went to Wauchope and Port Macquarie Performing Arts, which is a dance school now using social media to help showcase the great talents of its dancers. Congratulations to Stacey Morgan and her staff. The award finalists for the Environmentally Sustainable section were Diamond Waters Treehouse Retreat, Bendigo Bank, Busways and Hastings Valley Landscapes. The winner in that category was Diamond Waters Treehouse Retreat at Dunbogan. It has been a very successful two weeks for Peter Johnson and Kerry McFadyen. Their outstanding retreat is simply beautiful. Two weeks ago they also won a major tourism award, so I am sure the champagne flowed for them that night.

Disability friendly businesses are extremely important in our community and the finalists in this category were Bendigo Bank, St Joseph's Family Services, Crema and Hot Graphics. The award went to St Joseph's Family Services, who work so hard to ensure they cater for all sections of our community. The Excellence in Business award went to Hopkins Consultants. Michael Mowle and his staff are some of the leading surveyors in the area and were worthy winners. Finalists included Greater Port Macquarie Focus, Men at Work and St Joseph's Family Services. Finally, the award for Woman in Business saw four determined and very successful women who run their businesses as nominees. Not surprisingly this category was sponsored by the Hastings Business Women's Network, of which I have been a proud member for many years.

The Hastings Business Women's Network is an organisation of some 200 local women who come together to exchange ideas, information and inspiration as they strive for business success. Founded in 1999, the Hastings Business Women's Network has a proud history of encouraging, empowering and educating women in business in Port Macquarie and surrounding regions. On 27 September, the Minister for Women, the Hon. Pru Goward, will be in the Port Macquarie electorate and I am pleased to say she has agreed to be the special guest at our lunchtime meeting. The nominees in this category were Julie Berry from Berry Financial Services, Kylie Biltris from Childish Photography, Melinda Newton from Apollo Blinds and Tracy Deane from Casualty Espresso. And the winner was Melinda Newton. I give my heartiest congratulations to Melinda on this outstanding achievement.

Two other special awards were presented on the night. The People's Choice Award went to the Town Green Inn and the Business to Business Choice Award went to Childish Photography. I would like to congratulate all of the nominees and winners. Small business plays a vital role in any community, whether it is through employment or servicing the needs of the community in Port Macquarie and surrounding areas. As a former small business owner I know how tough it can be and I know that by going that extra mile, adding that extra smile for the customer goes a long way. It was all of that and more that saw the 26 winners take to the stage to collect their awards. They have set the example for other local businesses to strive harder and in time they too will receive the recognition they so greatly deserve.

ABERMAIN EISTEDDFOD

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [5.03 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to the Abermain Eisteddfod, which celebrates its ninety-second year. Recently I had the good fortune to assist with the Abermain Eisteddfod in a small way. Unfortunately, the organisers were short on hands and put out a last-minute call for assistance and I spent the day with them. However, this is not about me. The main organisers are Catherine and Warren Parsons, who have been organising the eisteddfod for more than 20 years. The Abermain Eisteddfod is an amazing opportunity for young schoolchildren to go on stage. I am an enormous advocate of opportunities for young people in particular to perform on stage because of the potential for building self-confidence. I believe that standing in front of a crowd and speaking, singing, dancing or acting is one of life's great challenges. The Abermain Eisteddfod offers this opportunity over several weeks.

The first of the days started with the choirs participating at Mount View High School, one of my local high schools. The choirs travel from throughout the Hunter to the town of Cessnock to participate at the school. I want to acknowledge—this is by no means a criticism—that the majority of schools that participated were from the Catholic and Christian independent schools. I understand having been a former teacher in a public school that there are many pressures on schoolteachers. Hopefully in the future we will have more public schools participating as has been the case historically. Of course, every student and teacher who participated in the Abermain Eisteddfod needs to be congratulated and commended.

The eisteddfod continues. During the school holidays the drama and dancing sections will be held at the Plaza Hall at Abermain. Warren and Catherine have already put in hundreds of hours of work in organising, preparing and scheduling the eisteddfod and making sure the sections involving the bigger school groups have already concluded. They will now go into two weeks of full-time work, six days a week from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. to create the opportunity for smaller children and some bigger children to participate and test their talents against each other.

One of the things that are truly wonderful about the event is the opportunity for feedback from the judges. It is very public feedback. The judge stands up at the end of each section and gives an appraisal of the performances. Of course, the judges, being wise people, always give very positive, warm and supportive appraisals that are also true and honest. They offer suggestions for improvements but the students should never feel bullied or that they are being disrespected for their efforts. The judges' comments are always about how well they have done and how they can do a little better. I thank the judging panel for their participation.

The Abermain Eisteddfod will continue and will celebrate its ninety-third year next year. Given the service that Warren and Catherine Parsons have provided over the past 20 or 25 years I would like to think they will still be organising the event when it celebrates its magical moment of 100 years. As with all things, they are always looking for more volunteers and people to help. I guess there has to be succession planning and transition under which Warren and Catherine will gradually reduce their involvement with the event and some others will take it on. Hopefully there are some parents and friends and families who have seen how wonderful the event is. Maybe they have benefited themselves or their children have benefited from the event and they value what it does and what it offers to young people.

The Abermain Eisteddfod is not just about the electorate of Cessnock. It services the entire Hunter Valley and probably more than 1,000 students participated this year. I imagine that over the 90 years it has existed tens of thousands of students have participated in the Abermain Eisteddfod. Congratulations to the organisers, Warren and Catherine Parsons, all the supporters and volunteers and the judging panel. Congratulations too, of course, to every single student and schoolteacher who participated in the event.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): As someone who participated in eisteddfods from the age of five I congratulate the member for Cessnock on advising members of the Abermain Eisteddfod.

COMMUNITY RADIO STATION 2RDJ

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI (Strathfield) [5.07 p.m.]: I wish to speak about community radio station 2RDJ 88.1, which has been a feature of my local community for nearly 30 years. Radio 2RDJ is the sound of the inner west. It is based in Burwood, which is in the Strathfield electorate, but broadcasts all over the inner west through suburbs such as Ashfield, Enfield, Summer Hill, Croydon and Canada Bay, and on warm, starry summer nights I am sure the broadcasts can be heard all over New South Wales. At 7.00 a.m. on 5 November 1983, 2RDJ first hit the Sydney airwaves on its frequency of 88.1 megahertz, broadcasting from its studios in the Woodstock Community Centre at Burwood. It was the triumphant culmination of 11 years of hard work by a dedicated band of enthusiasts and volunteers.

Radio station 2RDJ hosts a wide range of shows that reflect the diverse culture of our community—many different language shows and music shows ranging from dance and rap music for the kids to country, classical and jazz music for us more refined and mature folk. Radio 2RDJ also hosts a lot of informative news programs for the local area. The program *Kaleidoscope* is well known in the area for interviewing local people and developing solid news stories. I have had the pleasure of being interviewed by hosts George and Felicity Stephenson on this show, as has my colleague from the other side of Parramatta Road, the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti.

Radio station 2RDJ celebrates its thirtieth birthday next year and is proud to report that it has been broadcasting on air continuously since that first day back in November 1983. Radio 2RDJ supports many local community groups by use of a community noticeboard segment from which local groups can relay information about what they are doing to residents in the local area over the radio medium. Radio 2RDJ is a proud supporter of small businesses in the local area. Being a media partner of the 2RDJ Local Business Awards, the station is constantly looking for ways to interact and be involved with the many outstanding hardworking local businesses in our area.

Radio station 2RDJ prides itself on being a training ground for youth. Many local students undertake on-air training at the station as part of their course and many young people have progressed from 2RDJ to a career in commercial radio. In fact, people who have been listening to the coverage of the 2012 Paralympic Games on 2GB may have heard reports coming through from one of their news reporters, Tim Sowden. Tim was trained at 2RDJ and used to do a Sunday afternoon show where he developed his on-air abilities before moving into professional radio work.

As with all good community organisations, it is the volunteers who have made 2RDJ the fantastic local radio station that it is today. I would like to make special mention of the 2RDJ Chairman, June Donovan, from Croydon Park. June has been at the helm of 2RDJ for a number of years; without her hard work and dedication the station would not be a shadow of the fantastic community institution that it is today. I would also like to mention the secretary of the station, Colin Richardson, the treasurer John Elwell, the directors Tina King, Joseph Del Duca, Nella Gaughan and Peter Worthington, along with the programming director, Gary Stark. I apologise to Nella if I got her surname wrong; I am Italian.

I also take a moment to mention another member of the 2RDJ family, Stephanie Berry from Strathfield. Stephanie is one of the hardest working community volunteers I have ever seen. She dedicates more or less every waking moment to the 2RDJ headquarters in Burwood, assisting with administrative and other tasks. I have spoken with many people from the station and they have all made one thing absolutely clear: without the hard work of dedicated local volunteers like June Donovan and Stephanie Berry the station would not exist today. I commend these hardworking members of our local community for all of their efforts and look forward to working with them as they continue to be a strong voice for our local community for a long time to come.

COWRA SPRING SHOW AND CAMPDRAFT

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [5.12 p.m.]: Spring is a wonderful time of year to be in Cowra, as I am sure members will agree. This week I was delighted to open the 133rd Cowra Spring Show.

Mr John Williams: Did you say 133rd?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Yes, 133 years—quite an outstanding achievement. A show would never be a show without a hardworking committee. Mr Acting-Speaker, I know that from opening your Small Farm Field Day in Berry last weekend. What a wonderful event that was. The Cowra Show Society is made up of a particular group of special people. The patron is the Hon. Ian Armstrong, AM, OBE—no stranger to this place. He and his wife, Jenny, do a marvellous job. The executive committee is headed by its President, Mr Ian Packer. I met Ian and his lovely wife, Louise, the other evening. The immediate past president is Mr Maurice Walsh. The vice-presidents include Jenny Armstrong, Anne Jeffery, who was a former Burrinjuck Woman of the Year, Geoff Delaney and Chris Groves. The treasurer is Bob Griffiths, and other executive members include Rohan McKay, Ron Gillard and Ian Donges. The secretary is Amanda Cox. What an amazing job Amanda does in putting the details of this show event together.

This week I was delighted to meet the Cowra Showgirl competition entrants Amanda Jasprizza, Erin Carney, Clare Allan, Rebecca Weal, Lucy Constance and Christy Dunlop. Amanda Jasprizza was the winner of the showgirl competition this year. What an accomplished and beautiful young woman she is. There was also a junior showgirl and junior showboy competition. The entrants were Mia Hudson, Ella Roberts, Hayley Harding, Tyler Munro, Krystal White, Summer White, Bella Cummings, William Norton, Matthew Banks, Eden Cook and Campbell White. The two winners were Mia Hudson and William Norton. They both looked such treasures on stage together, shaking hands and paying lovely compliments to each other, at such a beautiful young age.

The Junior Rural Achiever competition is fiercely fought in Cowra. What an amazing and talented bunch they were. They included Nicole Spolding, who was the ultimate winner, Rachael Moore and Luke Britton, who were highly commended, and Jack Baker, Luke Bryant, Caitlyn Symons, Laini Cook, Elizabeth Wells and Amy Walker. They are such a credit to agriculture in the Cowra district. I spoke with them after I officially opened the show and was impressed with their demeanour, their respect for the people around them and their willingness to put something back into the community that has brought them up. These young people are of the ages around 16, 17 and 18 years; it is marvellous to see such fine young people in our community. The Senior Rural Achiever award was taken out by Brooke White, who was the winner of last year's showgirl competition. Brooke obviously is going to move on to fantastic things in the future.

Another great event happening in Cowra this spring is the opening of the Cowra Campdraft and Rodeo Association's new arena and cutting area. I managed to get some funding for the Cowra Campdraft and Rodeo Association in December 2010 as part of Community Building Partnerships. They achieved \$80,000 towards the building of that new arena. The association is holding its annual campdraft next weekend, 5 to 7 October, and expects to limit entries to about 900. That number of entries will require the use of in excess of 1,200 head of cattle over the weekend. This association has been so hardworking; it is really responsible for the entire redevelopment of the Cowra showground. As of 23 August it had finished levelling the centre ring, which is just inside the trotting tracks. The whole of the inside area of the ground has been sown with rye-grass.

In all, the association has done more than \$190,000 worth of work at the showground. That is in addition to the support provided by council, which included the building of the amenities block and the donation of material for an all-weather road. The association is currently improving the surface of the new campdraft arena to ensure it remains soft enough for the horses to work. The business community in Cowra is just phenomenal. Whenever they are asked to participate in a fundraising drive, the business community comes out and supports, supports, supports. A lot of funding has gone into that campdraft facility from the local business community, and I thank it very much for its support. As I said, spring is a great time to be in Cowra, particularly with the show and this fantastic new campdraft facility. I encourage all members to take the next opportunity they have to come and visit Cowra.

SEASIDE SINGERS COMMUNITY CHOIR

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.17 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about a wonderful organisation in my electorate, the SeaSide Singers Community Choir. Port Stephens seems to be

blessed with an inordinate number of talented people. Perhaps we have just the precise natural environment needed to nurture the souls of artists and feed the spirit of the gifted. Members will know from my previous statements in this place that Port Stephens is unsurpassed in natural beauty. That is irrefutable. As I go to various events in my electorate I am always greeted by an abundance of talent. Be it a school choral performance or a community event with a soloist, there is always someone I am surprised has not yet turned up as a contestant on the *X Factor*.

Not likely to be on a prime time television show anytime soon, but providing just as much enjoyment, is the SeaSide Singers Community Choir, which has more than 40 members with ages ranging from 35 to 84. The choir meets weekly. On retiring to the beautiful Port Stephens from Sydney, Diana Souter, a graduate of the London College of Music—who has also been a schoolteacher and a human resources manager—was inspired to form the choir. Diana's husband, Ron Souter, a retired accountant, happens to be a talented baritone. The pair both put in around 20 hours a week running the organisation, proving the adage that you never really do retire. Membership rules of the Seaside Singers are simple: the choir is open to all those who love music and singing, and there are no auditions.

It was Diana's aim to have a viable and substantial choir with sufficient numbers to provide high-quality singing that the community would support and be proud of. I believe she and her committee have achieved that goal. The choir members enjoy entertaining and singing popular classics, show tunes and choral works at community and cultural events and festivals, as well as at the annual variety concert. The concert at the Soldiers Point Bowling Club is presented by the choir and showcases local performers to an audience of several hundred people. Performers not only include the SeaSide Singers Community Choir but also dancers and instrumentalists. Members of the choir enjoy their music because it is fun and it keeps them active, happy and healthy and, above all, involved in the community. The choir also provides an educational experience for its members by providing a vehicle for them to develop and express their musical ability. Social isolation is often experienced in retirement and the choir alleviates this for many members who have found a kindred spirit with their love of music.

The choir proudly wears a uniform of sea green, black and white and proudly performs at fundraising concerts, community gatherings and town festivals. The SeaSide Singers held its first choral festival on 1 September 2012 and I was pleased to open the afternoon session. The festival was so popular and there were so many participating choirs that performances had to be staged over two sessions; an evening performance was also held. Ten choirs, which came from around the State, accompanied by families and friends, performed in the festival entitled "Sing at the Seaside in Spring". It was indeed a fitting tribute to welcome spring and showcase both our beautiful area and our talented local singers. As well as attracting many choirs, the event was so popular with the public that both the afternoon and the evening events were sold out. The organisers received accolades for the festival from far and wide and I quote a visiting choir member:

All in all the whole day was professionally organised and a huge buzz to be part of. I am surprised and inspired by the high standards of all the choirs and the rich variety of music and the amount of participation. The SeaSide Singers can be very proud that they have brought so many people together from more than 150 kilometres away and made it successful on a scale I did not think possible.

The choir is well organised and committed to bringing more cultural events to Nelson Bay. Following the success of the spring festival, I have no doubt it will.

MONA VALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.22 p.m.]: It is with great pride and delight that I inform the House of the centenary of Mona Vale Public School in the heart of Pittwater. Over the past 100 years, the evolution and growth of Mona Vale Public School means that it is now one of our largest, most popular and well-respected local schools in the Pittwater community. Mona Vale Public School's history began in 1906 when its grounds, at the corner of Bungan and Waratah streets, were acquired prior to the construction of a small stone building consisting of two classrooms in 1911. Since the school was officially opened 100 years ago in 1912, it has undergone a continual process of expansion and improvement of its buildings, equipment, playgrounds and curriculum to the point that it has now developed into a comprehensive and modern education facility.

It is easy to look at the school in its current form and admire the role it plays throughout our community. It is important we appreciate the journey of the school and all those involved in its establishment and success during its history. Through world wars, depression and natural disasters, the school has served our

local community loyally and selflessly, and has helped to forge the character of so many students who have become leaders in our families, in our society and in our community. The school has served as a constant community resource that has provided opportunities and benefits to countless local schools and their families. An incredible number of local residents have attended Mona Vale Public School over the past century. It has become firmly etched in Pittwater's history and continues to serve as a permanent and growing link between many local families. I know students of the school who have grown up together and have married and now their own children are attending Mona Vale Public School; it has a special link to our community.

The celebration of the school's centenary is an important opportunity to acknowledge and pay tribute to the school's teaching staff and executives who have not only provided essential and core educational opportunities for students, but from a community perspective they have gone above and beyond to expand the opportunities that the school provides both inside and outside the classroom. Last night I attended a fundraising event for the Mona Vale Hospital where Assistant Principal Dr Martin Hardy of neighbouring Pittwater High School served so wonderfully as conductor of the Northern Beaches orchestra, comprising several former Mona Vale Public School students. Through creative arts, sport and recreation, personal and social development, cultural and environmental awareness, the accolades the school has received for its efforts is not only a huge endorsement but also a tribute to its exceptional teaching staff over so many years.

It is impossible to name everyone who has played a role in the successful development of the school, particularly during its early years, but I cannot mention Mona Vale Public School without referring to the extraordinary service of several key individuals. Richard Hoskins, who served as principal between 1976-2003; Mr Ray Trevor-Wilson, who served as deputy principal between 1988-2003; Mrs Liz Aird and Miss Bev Harvey, who retired in 2002 after 31 and 37 years of service respectively; Mrs Jane Lean, who retired in 2000 after 28 years; Mrs Gaylene Youell, who retired in 1997 after 31 years; Mrs Judith Croke, who retired in 2010 after 34 years; and Miss Beverley Lewis, who was not only a student at the school but also worked as a teacher for over 32 years and played an integral role in many of the school's most successful sporting and extracurricular activities.

Miss Lewis continues to assist the school, particularly during this centenary year, and has been responsible for the school's centenary publication which showcases the school's history and memorable achievements. Mrs Liz Crick and Miss Angela Despotovic have faithfully served students with a sense of fun, deep-abiding commitment and love. The exceptional tenure of teachers such as these highlights not only the dedication and commitment of the school's teaching staff but also the attractive environment that has been developed at the school over so many years that encourages people to come, to stay and to serve. I thank and recognise the school's most recent principals, including Mandy Fisher, Michelle Jacobs, John Bladen, and current principal, Mr Greg Jones, who is an educational powerhouse.

All of these teachers have performed their roles with distinction and have been an enormous asset to the school community. It is important to also recognise the countless number of individuals who have served as members of the school's Parents and Citizens Association over the years and the invaluable contribution they have made to the successful and vibrant school we see today. It is through the willingness of these parents and citizens' volunteers that many of the opportunities provided to students are available, and our community is eternally grateful. This Saturday the school is holding its centenary festival to bring together past and present students and the wider community to celebrate the school's many achievements and wonderful history.

COMMUNITY RADIO STATION 2SSR

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [5.27 p.m.]: I recently attended the unveiling of the newly renovated studios and office of our community radio station, 2SSR 99.7FM. I joined a number of shire representatives, including former Sutherland shire Mayor Carol Provan and, as of today, newly re-elected councillor, who was there to praise the dedication and hard work of the volunteers at 2SSR and officially declare the new studio open. Despite being an avid radio listener in my daily car trips, I was not very familiar with the work at the shire's local community radio station until recently. One of its well-known hosts, Bob Birkhead, a self-confessed radio buff, recently invited me onto his weekly show, which airs each Monday from 9.00 a.m. to midday.

Each week he has a featured guest who usually has a strong connection to the shire. When first asked to be a guest on his show, I must admit I was nervous about going on air. I obviously am not a stranger to public speaking but the thought of being interviewed live was a little nerve wracking. When I arrived at the station housed within the grounds of GyMEA TAFE, I was greeted by some of the wonderful volunteers who have been

donating their time to the station since it formed in 1984. The station is operated by Sutherland Shire Community Radio Association Incorporated and is non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian. When my time came, I was ushered into the recording booth with Bob, who quickly set me at ease.

Bob asked some pertinent and considered questions about the Sutherland shire and about my role as the member for Menai. One of the discussion topics included my suggestions for improving the Sutherland shire and the things we should be aiming for. Bob and a group of like-minded shire residents, including the former member for Cronulla, Malcolm Kerr, formed a committee and called themselves "The Shire Future's Project". Both Bob and the committee have compiled a comprehensive list of areas to improve upon for the shire. I was reading through the list today and it is varied but quite considered. I look forward to having an ongoing involvement with the committee to see what we can do to improve the shire.

I have digressed, so back to 2SSR. Since its humble beginnings, 2SSR has emerged as a respected local radio station by listeners, sponsors, civic authorities and the community at large. When talking to the volunteers at the station—I believe there are about 150 of them, including host Bob Birkhead and General Manager Trevor Davis—one instantly knows that it is a labour of love. At the opening, 2SSR FM also took the opportunity to launch its new and improved website. The launch of the website was part of a new strategy to create a stronger web identity. The station now offers live streaming and it has also delved into the world of social networking with Facebook and Twitter accounts. Whilst they are new accounts, I am already enjoying the regular tweets of the shire news and updates. The website provides visitors with regular news updates and program guides for the station. It also acknowledges the need for an online presence in this internet age. Special mention must also be made of foundation member Eunice Wingrove for her hard work and effort in maintaining the original website for so many years.

It is obviously an exciting time for 2SSR and I applaud its work in maintaining a quality community radio service for the Sutherland shire and in embracing new technology to meet the changing needs of its audience. I was also interested to learn that it runs training courses in broadcasting for all ages so it can pass on the knowledge of some of the more seasoned radio buffs to enthusiastic amateurs. With our world becoming smaller due to the growing pace of technology and communication, it is important that our thirst for global content does not ignore the wealth of local talent we have in Australia. I am pleased that 2SSR encourages local artists and plays a minimum of 30 per cent Australian content in its overall schedule.

As a community radio station, 2SSR does not compete with commercial stations but it has developed diverse programming to suit the whole community. In addition, both studios have modern and efficient technology and their programs are streamed live across the globe. The internet has definitely improved the reach of local community radio to audiences that were never thought possible. As a community-based organisation, 2SSR receives a small amount of funding from the Government, but it is the ongoing generosity of its dedicated volunteers and sponsorship from the business community that keeps this station running, and that was evident at the opening. The Rotary Club supports the station and helped it get its new premises. I take this opportunity to congratulate 2SSR on its 28 years of service to the Sutherland shire community and wish it every success for at least another 28 years.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR IAN LONGBOTTOM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [5.31 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to a great friend and former colleague of mine on Lane Cove Council Mr Ian Longbottom. Last night I had the pleasure of joining many others from the Lane Cove municipality in honouring the long and distinguished contribution of Ian Longbottom. Ian was first elected to Lane Cove Council as an Independent candidate in September 1991. Ian then served as Deputy Mayor of Lane Cove from 1999 to 2001 and as Mayor from March 2004 to September 2009. Throughout that time, regardless of the office he held, Ian served as a mentor for many newcomers to council and not only showed them the ropes but helped them recover from their first "bloodings".

It is fair to say that few democratically elected representatives at the municipal level have had the same depth of professional and corporate experience in so many different locations across the world as Ian has had. He has held a variety of senior executive positions in the cosmetics and retailing industries, working for major international companies not only within Australia but as far afield as Japan, South-East Asia and the United States of America. During his period of civic service Ian brought that professional, corporate experience to the governance of Lane Cove Council, not only during its deliberations and debates but also in its decision-making processes. The ratepayers of Lane Cove always knew that if they went to Ian with an issue they would get a fair

hearing and wise counsel. One of the signs of his commitment to Lane Cove and to improving the area he loved came in 1993 when he saw the need for a local news and information publication. The proactive person that he is, Ian resolved to start a publication, and shortly thereafter launched the *Village Observer*.

Today, the *Village Observer* is a much-loved and well-respected local newspaper within the Lane Cove municipality. The respect and affection with which the paper is held by the community is due, in large part, to Ian's persistence and hard work. Indeed, it was not until last year that Ian ceased to be the editor and owner of the *Village Observer*. In one of his farewell messages to the people of Lane Cove, Ian noted that he had served 21 years on Lane Cove Council and that his time in council meetings or in other council-related activities came, by his estimate, to a whopping total of 30,000 hours in the service of his beloved municipality. It is not an exaggeration to say that Lane Cove will notice the absence of this long-serving and tireless servant of the Lane Cove municipality. I commend Ian's years of public service to the House, and on behalf of the constituents of Lane Cove I wish him the very best for his future endeavours.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): As someone who also benefited from Councillor Longbottom's stewardship I congratulate the Minister for Fair Trading and member for Lane Cove on acknowledging a wonderful local government career.

MARSDEN ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.35 p.m.]: This evening I draw the attention of the House to the fiftieth anniversary of Marsden Road Public School. Last Friday 7 September I had the pleasure of attending a function at the school to mark this significant milestone. Also in attendance was the Federal member for Fowler, Chris Hayes, and Councillor Wendy Waller from Liverpool council. We were welcomed to the event by the school principal, Greg Way. The assembly that we attended featured the school choir. Also present was Mrs Debbie Marin, who had children and grandchildren at the school and whose great contribution to the school was acknowledged. The school put items into a time capsule and went through items that had been put into a time capsule that was buried at the school in 1979.

The school was established in 1962 and it has had some illustrious students pass through its doors, including Wendy Waller and Michael Clarke, the current Australian cricket captain. It is to his credit that Michael Clarke has from time to time been able to go back to the school despite the demands on his time. The school is now very different to how it was in 1962. Currently 632 students attend the school, and 546 of those students have a language background other than English. Students come from 60 different cultural backgrounds and 20 per cent of the total enrolments at the school have refugee backgrounds—many with backgrounds of considerable difficulty and challenge. I note that the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors [STARTTS]—an organisation I have a great deal of regard for—has been active at the school from time to time. Also, 67 per cent of the students could not speak English three years ago. It is a good demonstration of the multicultural nature of Liverpool's current community.

Marsden Road Public School is very different physically now to the way it was. It has essentially undergone three or four years of continual building projects. In November 2010 I went to the official opening of the State-funded new hall, a new covered outdoor learning area and refurbished classrooms. Federal money has since been allocated to the school, and the playground, which used to be known as the Marsden Road lake, has now been levelled out and the potholes removed. Essentially, in the past few years a new school has emerged in the physical sense. I recall several speeches in this place over a number of years addressing that issue. The physical improvements have been matched by the contributions of the teachers there. The work they do is very impressive and it contributes significantly to the educational outcomes at the school.

The fact that it is the fiftieth anniversary of the school and the fact that other schools are having similar types of anniversaries in the electorate that I represent is an indication of the history of the electorate and of the urban development that occurred post the Second World War, particularly in the 1960s. Liverpool changed dramatically in that period of time. When Councillor Waller tells stories of when she first went to school there, she tells stories of seeing horses next to the road and of carrying sticks to get rid of the snakes on her way to school. It is now the centre of a very substantial residential area, and that is a reflection of the significant urbanisation that has occurred in Liverpool post the mid-1950s, with the development of places such as the Green Valley estate. The Orange Grove estate development occurred at about the same time.

During its 50 years Marsden Road Public School, together with other schools in my electorate, has provided good public education to the people who live in the area. As I said at the event last Friday, if we are

serious about Australian democracy then public education must be at the core of it, because that is the way students can be given good quality education, no matter what their background, their religion or their parents' income. It is that tradition, as much as the other things, that were celebrated last Friday. Marsden Road Public School has done very good things, as have all the other schools in my electorate over a very lengthy period of time. I was delighted to be in attendance at the event and to add my congratulations to those of others.

LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL SCHEME

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [5.40 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to how the New South Wales Government's Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme is helping my constituents in Cronulla. The Government's State Plan NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One has a commitment to build the infrastructure that will make a difference to both the economy and people's lives. In 2011-12, the Government committed \$70 million to help local councils pay for loans to afford much-needed upgrades and maintenance of infrastructure as part of the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme. The scheme provides councils with a 4 per cent interest subsidy for a period of up to 10 years on significant loans taken out to pay for backlog infrastructure projects such as roads, community halls, libraries, paths, parks, sports fields and water facilities.

This important initiative is helping New South Wales councils to reduce the large backlog of infrastructure projects in their communities and to stimulate economic growth and jobs for the benefit of communities and the State. A total of 95 applications seeking funding for infrastructure projects totalling more than \$650 million were received for backlog infrastructure projects. An independent assessment panel completed the assessment process and recommended 82 projects proposed by 62 councils for Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme subsidy funding. This represents an approval rate of 86 per cent of the projects proposed by councils. A further \$30 million has been announced for the Infrastructure Renewal Scheme as part of the housing package in the 2012-13 State budget. Applications for the second round of funding will be called later this year.

For the 2011-12 funding round, a probity adviser ensured that the assessment of the applications was undertaken in a fair and transparent manner. An assessment panel comprising independent chair and relevant representatives of government departments made recommendations on funding and a technical specialist sub-panel provided the assessment panel with a detailed technical analysis of each project. In Cronulla, the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme is assisting Sutherland Shire Council's \$3.34 million upgrade of the iconic esplanade and the seawall. The council is borrowing \$2.3 million for the project. The seawall and esplanade from the headland south of the Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club are being revamped to the southernmost reach of the grass in Cronulla Park.

The work includes a 150-metre seawall extending from the esplanade to below the sand line to provide greater public safety, improved stair access to the beach by ramp, upgraded lighting, improved and increased seating, interpretive bollards to express the site's heritage, timber decking, additional seating on the esplanade and built into the seawall, beach showers, the repaving of the esplanade, and bush regeneration on the cliff face. The project also provides an improved protection of assets—namely, the heritage surf club and sports club—erosion control and the renewal of necessary infrastructure. The seawall had deteriorated significantly and was not designed to current standards, which created hazards for beachgoers. The Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme is a promise kept by the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals. It will create jobs, develop and renew infrastructure and improve the quality of life for the people of New South Wales, including my constituents in Cronulla.

WYONG GOLD CUP

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyong) [5.44 p.m.]: I do not have the genes to be a jockey—I am a bit too tall and definitely too heavy and my voice is probably a little too deep. However, members can imagine my excitement when I was recently able to hold the Melbourne Cup, that prestigious piece of iconic silverware. On Thursday 6 September and Friday 7 September, my electorate was fortunate enough to host the Wyong Gold Cup, which celebrates the very best in racing. Importantly, this year the Wyong Gold Cup celebrations were enhanced by the presence of the Melbourne Cup as part of the Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour. The aim of the tour is to provide rural, regional and metropolitan communities across Australia with an opportunity to see one of this country's most iconic sports trophies. The Victoria Racing Club recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour. This is the first time in 12 years that the most famous piece of silverware in Australian sport has been brought onto a provincial racetrack on a cup race day.

The Melbourne Cup tour aims to celebrate the heroes and to highlight the cultural and social importance of the Melbourne Cup race within Australia and the international racing calendar. In past years, the cup has visited more than 150 aged care and hospital facilities and 170 schools and has been exhibited at almost 650 community events and celebrations. This year Wyong was fortunate to be one of just 26 towns across Australia that was included in the cup tour. Having been exhibited in more than 210 towns and travelling more than 285,000 kilometres to be viewed by hundreds of thousands of people since 2003, the Victoria Racing Club is proud to claim the Melbourne Cup as the most travelled sporting trophy in the world.

The cup also took pride of place at an official breakfast at Kooindah Waters hosted by the Wyong Regional Chamber of Commerce, which was a sell-out event. Special guests of honour were former champion jockey Malcolm Johnston and 1994 Melbourne Cup winning jockey Wayne Harris. The cup also was taken to the Norah Head lighthouse, where it was photographed as the sun rose over the ocean, and to local schools—including Wyong Grove Public School—aged care facilities and Wyong Hospital. At all events and locations, the public had an opportunity to be photographed with the cup for a small donation. All money raised during the cup's visit will go to Camp Breakaway. The camp is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary and the Minister for Disability Services will take part in tomorrow's ceremony.

Mr Tony Drew, President of the Wyong Race Club, informed me that a crowd of 7,000 people attended the event over two days. That is a fantastic boost to local tourism and the people of Wyong were thrilled to have people come from far and wide for this special event. Mr Drew also said that events like this demonstrate what can be achieved when people come together to celebrate and promote a special occasion with the broader community. Event organiser Chris King, of Central Coast Tourism, said the day was an outstanding success and provided the community with an exclusive opportunity to unite in celebration. He said that Central Coast Tourism was thrilled to host the 2012 Emirates Melbourne Cup in Wyong because it boosted morale by providing the community with a memorable first-hand experience with the iconic trophy and an Australian racing legend, Jim Johnson.

I congratulate the major sponsors and note the tremendous partnership forged between the Wyong Race Club, Wyong Shire Council, Wyong Regional Chamber of Commerce, Central Coast Tourism and Mercure Kooindah Waters, who all worked closely together to ensure that the event was an outstanding success. It highlighted the tourism and events capabilities of the communities and businesses of the Central Coast of New South Wales. I am sure all Central Coast residents are now looking forward to the great race that stops the nation. The 152nd running of the Emirates Melbourne Cup will take place on Tuesday 6 November. I am sure that all members are anxiously awaiting confirmation of the attendance of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall at the event.

SHOALHAVEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [5.48 p.m.]: Like so many members, last week I finished my term as a local government councillor. I spent 8½ wonderful years serving the people of ward 1 on Shoalhaven City Council. I pay tribute to some of my colleagues on the council—and the member for Cabramatta was not one of them. I pay special tribute to my good friend the former Mayor of Shoalhaven, the Hon. Paul Green, who was elected last year to serve in the Legislative Council. He has been an exceptional mayor and led the community in an extraordinary direction since his election four years ago. I believe he has matured enormously and he has served the people of the Shoalhaven with distinction.

I thank my colleagues Nigel Soames and David Bennett who were elected with me in 2008. I appreciate their personal support and dedication to the goals and ambitions that I had for the Shoalhaven. They have been exceptional local government representatives and I thank them for their service to our city. I first encountered Councillor Josi Young on the development committee when I was serving as a councillor from 2004. She has served the Shoalhaven for more than 17 years and retired this year. I had the great fortune to sit beside my good friend Councillor Bohdan Brumerskyj. He has done a wonderful job for someone who became a councillor so young. I wish him and his wife, Kate, all the best for their future.

Former Wollongong City Council Labor councillor Bob Proudfoot has made me appreciate that just because someone is on the other side of the political divide does not mean that we cannot be mates and work together in the best interests of the community. I wish him all the very best for the future. I also wish councillor Garry Kearney all the best after eight years service as a councillor, and I welcome his wife, Lyn, to his council seat. I know that my good friend and comrade John Fergusson has retired from the council, but I hope he enjoys his small business career.

I wish Robert Miller all the best as he continues to farm the lands we were elected to represent. I also congratulate John Wells, Lynette Kearney, Jemma Tribe, Karen Ainstess, Clive Robertson, Allan Baptist and Patricia White on their election. I extend my special congratulations to the Federal member for Gilmore, Joanna Gash, who on the weekend was successful in her bid to be elected as mayor. I look forward to working with her over the next four years. I commend for his re-election Councillor Greg Watson, a veteran of 38 years in local government. I also congratulate Councillor Amanda Findley on securing a second term.

In Kiama council within my electorate I congratulate Councillor Brian Petschler on his re-election, as well as Greens member Andrew Sloan, and Warren Steel. I congratulate Dennis Seage, who is doing an exceptional job as the RSL President for Kiama-Jamberoo. I congratulate local farmer Mark Honey, and Kathy Rice. I also congratulate Mark Way, who has been an exceptional advocate for fisheries and fishing in the Kiama area. I also congratulate Neil Reilly, a former Labor representative but a great Independent councillor who is doing a wonderful job for the community. I also congratulate my good friend Gavin McClure, who has owned and operated a small business in the Kiama community. As the owner and proprietor of Kiama Cabs he will be an outstanding councillor. I commend outgoing Councillor Sandra McCarthy, who is the longest-serving mayor of Kiama, along with Peter Bowman, Monique Dare-Ward, Trevor Fredericks, and Lexie Wheeler.

In Wingecarribee I congratulate Juliet Arkwright on topping the poll. After the extraordinary challenges she faced throughout the campaign I think her election was the sweetest victory of all. I congratulate her on returning to council. I also congratulate Jim Clarke, Duncan Gair and Graham McLaughlin on their re-election, along with Ian Scandrett on his election to council. I note that the results in the Wingecarribee are still being tabulated. I also thank my good friend Jim Mauger, and David Stranger and Paul Tuddenham for their service. I note that Councillor Ken Halstead will be retiring from council after his service as mayor for two years.

In my time on Shoalhaven City Council I fought many battles. They included the battle for the installation of closed-circuit television cameras in the Nowra central business district, the North Nowra Link Road and the Princes Highway upgrade. I also have fought to bring economic investment and growth to our area by securing the local government conference in 2011, which saw over \$1 million of investment. When serving on the executive of the Local Government Association I was able to work on that process. I remember seeing the successful election of my friend the member for Oatley to that Local Government Association and I enjoyed serving with him.

I have met many great and wonderful people during my tenure in local government service. Many of those friends are in this place, such as you, Madam Acting-Speaker Gibbons. The member for Cabramatta is not one of them. In addition to the member for Camden, who has been a great servant of the people, along with the member for Wollondilly who came into the Chamber to get himself acknowledged, I thank all those who have done an exceptional job throughout their wonderful and outstanding local government careers. It has been a wonderful part of my life. I commend all the staff of Shoalhaven City Council as well as all the staff and senior executives who serve Wingecarribee, Kiama and Shellharbour councils in my electorate.

LIFELINE MACARTHUR ANNUAL VOLUNTEER DINNER

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [5.53 p.m.]: On Friday 17 August I had the pleasure of attending the Lifeline Macarthur annual volunteer dinner, with my great mates the member for Wollondilly and the member for Campbelltown, the opal of the south-west. Lifeline Macarthur provides telephone crisis support as well as a mix of face-to-face counselling services across the Macarthur and Southern Highlands regions. Being R U OK? Day today is a fitting day to speak about this great organisation and its great staff, sponsors, ambassadors and volunteers. The dinner was to celebrate the contribution that these great people make to ensure that Lifeline is there for our community when people need it the most. Today I congratulate all these people.

I thank the board of directors, Dennis Roams, Jenny Noble, John Martin, William Blakey, Russell Bott and Sheree Morgan, for their leadership of Lifeline, along with Chief Executive Officer Peter Mihajlovic. I also thank the entire team at Lifeline Macarthur: Dian Ball, Jacky Moore, Bob Sparkes, Liz Seidel, Jacki Hammonds, Kay Spencer, Tracey Lampard, Poppy Krallidis, Roger Bowyer, Shay Carter, Kerryn Armor, Katrina Woods, Maria Matriano, Martin Jess, Deborah Cooke, Maddie Oliver, Nada Mihajlovic, Emylee Tuzon, Anthony Passlow, Philip Fitzgibbon, Caroline Oliver, Sue Bolton, Tracy Darrell, Debbie Gurney, Maritza Akers, Michael Banasik, Leanne Mauger, Jim Crawford, Helen Sahin, Kathryn Stimson, Roger Bower, Jim Howe, Marion Ison and Valerie Walker. I thank Lifeline Macarthur patron Ken Moroney, AO, and former Lifeline chief executive officer and my extremely good friend Margaret Appleby for their ongoing support.

I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful volunteers who attended the volunteer dinner and who make Lifeline the beacon that it has become in our community. Thank you Sue Moore, Chris Marston-Hillier, Judy Marston-Hillier, Elizabeth Thompson, Judy Ironside, Lesley Carlson, Catherine Holovinsky, Deirdre Darcy, Joanne Darcy, Helen Wonson, Therese Baskys, Maree Galea, Natalie McDougalt, Janice Rees, Kathryn Hale, Ron Moore, Ron Cockburn, Colleen Westley, Janet Zirfas, Irene Smith, June Shierlaw, Rose Peterson, Wendy Stanton, Ceciley Jones, Barbara Wojtisiak, Carl Richardson, Fran Fuller, Bob Cotter, Janelle Mohide, Russell Hughes, Peter Martin, Viviana Lee, Pam Bassett, Adele Bradley, Shireen Burnell, Suzanne Corcoran, Carrol Dawes, Karla Deacon, Jeanie Fletcher, Julie Iremonger, Carolyn Lawson, Ann Marsh, Susie Morrish, Gaye Outred, Anthony Owen, Carol Rogan, Rhonda Stuth, Erin Thompson, Ida Tivadar, Susanne Tume, Marita Pace, Ray Walters, Ken Squires, Anita Whitehouse, Denis Whitehouse, Chris Pearse, Bob Inglis, Marge Mills, Lorraine Hardman and Marisa Bates.

I also thank Jenny Rugless, James Tyler, Linda King, Dave King, John Frogbrook, Bev Frogbrook, Henk Hummel, Ben Muirhead, John King, Sandra King, Jeff Bird, Leanne Foy, Brian Lomath, Val Lomath, Ilia Oitmann, James Moore, Rebecca Hynds, Val Clough, Dot Brewin, Maria Matriano, Leonie Poswistajlo, Joan Budd, Margaret Leaver, Bruce Fisher, Paul Morrow, Jenny Robbins, Peta Collis, Chris Jeffries, Elvie Villarreal, Pat Wallace, Christine White, Ellen Barnes, Glenn Campbell, Sarah Fenwick, Ted Threadgate, Steve Savage, Kim Wilkinson, Diana Shaw, Helen Fullgrave, Robin Johnson, Karilyn Taylor, Wendy Hobday, Karen Hill, Adrian Hurst, Warren Galbraith, Kerrie Olive, Jessie Mayhew, Priscilla Croxton, Jane Beavis, Mandy Ambachtsheer, Kim Hyndes, Kay Scott, Sandra Parker, Joyce Mate—recently named Aboriginal of the Year—Maria Tisdell, Helen Campbell, Michelle Khahola and Connie Decostino.

I also thank Dianne Fox, Lesley Fuller, Laurie Walker—my first football coach when I moved to Camden—Jon Price, Mary Hilberding, Hayley Bellamy, Sally Roberts, Catherine Forsyth, Wendy Coomber, Cettina Houston, Monica Harris, Agnes Little, Bob Carter, Leanne Park, Karina Kershaw, Michelle Dimon, Carly Green, Si-Wei Khoo, Anita Sadiq, Kaye Walsh, Andy Milton, Tina Thorpe, Margaret Bruce, Kerry McMartin, Martin Derby, Thagaran Chetty, Carmel Votano, Jennifer Pareezer, Kate White, John Shipway, Nicole Soto, Dr Steve Hansen, Cathy Wotton, Tara Rumiz, Barbara Rochaix, Lisa Harvey, Jim O'Brien, John-Albert Nguyen, Janice Mooney, Wendy Gillon, Natasha Samawi, Rudi Kolkman, Jacqueline Rogan, Brittany Tilley, Craig Curtis, Chris Heckenberg, Tony Evington, Fay Sporne, Julie Rogers, Erich Hoffman, Denise Page, Susie Fransa, Janelle Arraiza, Kavita Desai and Clary Desai. I congratulate and commend these fine people on their contribution to helping those in need and saving lives.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE ADVISORY GROUP

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [5.58 p.m.]: On Monday 10 September 2012 at Ingleburn I, along with the Minister for Police and Emergency Service, Michael Gallacher, the Commissioner of the Ambulance Service of NSW, Mike Willis, the Commissioner of NSW Fire and Rescue, Greg Mullins, the Commissioner of the State Emergency Service, Murray Kear, the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service, Shane Fitzgibbon, and the Assistant Commissioner of the NSW Police Force, Alan Clarke, bade farewell to a 72-person task force, led by Fire and Rescue NSW, as they embarked on a three-day International Search and Rescue Advisory Group [INSARAG] external classification exercise. This accreditation is international and highly prestigious. The mission involved a real-time response to an earthquake in the mythical nation of Blueland, where reports of extensive damage and people trapped had overwhelmed local emergency services. The international call for assistance was made and accreditation commenced from the initial call-out.

At the Search and Rescue Facility at Ingleburn preparations are made to register, equip, medical check, brief and deploy a self-supporting international task force. The task force is a highly skilled team comprised mainly of specially trained firefighters from Fire and Rescue NSW. Their specialist rescue skills are complemented by people from the NSW Police Force, NSW State Emergency Service, the Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW Health, engineers from NSW Public Works and representatives from Australian Government agencies AusAID and Emergency Management Australia, a division of the Attorney-General's Department. I addressed the task force on their departure. I told them that in times of danger we look to men and women of courage to respond, that they were the best we had to offer the world, that we knew that they would do us proud and I wished them godspeed on their mission.

During the continuous 48-hour exercise held at the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service facility on Whyte Island in Brisbane, the task force was required to undertake a series of assessments across a range of simulated tasks, in real time, that they might encounter in the field following a major earthquake or other

disaster. During that time classifiers from the United Nations were watching their every move and assessing them. I am pleased to advise that the task force has returned safely from the mission. It has now received the United Nations international accreditation as a heavy rescue task force, which is no mean feat.

Australia now has two accredited teams—one from New South Wales based at Ingleburn and Campbelltown, that opal of the south-west, and the other in Queensland, north of the border. This makes Australia one of just three countries in the world that has two accredited heavy rescue teams that can respond to any disaster in the world. The other two nations that share this honour are the United States of America and Japan. This exercise has confirmed Australia's ability to mount a coordinated response to large-scale overseas emergencies. With the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Classification, Fire and Rescue NSW has received recognition as one of the most highly skilled Urban Search and Rescue [USAR] operators in the world.

Previously members of the task force have served with distinction responding to major disasters that have occurred throughout the world, including in Queensland, Christchurch in New Zealand and Fukushima in Japan. We can be very proud of the expertise, courage, skill and dedication to duty of these officers. They stand ready and able to respond not only to emergencies in New South Wales and Australia but also on the world stage as part of the international response to disasters. This is another example of New South Wales taking its place in the world. I am very proud to have them located in Campbelltown. I commend them to the House.

LES POWELL SCHOOL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [6.03 p.m.]: Recently I attended the Les Powell School's Numeracy and Literacy Day. Les Powell School is located at Townview Road, Mount Pritchard, and is next door to Mount Pritchard East Public School in my electorate of Cabramatta. Les Powell School is a special school that caters for children and families with disabilities in the south-west Sydney region and is named after Mr Les Powell, a former mayor of Fairfield. It was truly a heart-warming and inspiring experience to see these children being educated, making real progress with their literacy and numeracy skills and having fun. I was joined on the day by my colleague the member for Fairfield, Guy Zangari, and many parents whose children attend Les Powell School.

The day was interactive with students demonstrating the different skills they had learned at school. The look of pride on their faces was priceless as the children showed their parents what they had learned. They learn with the help of song and music, through the hard work of their dedicated teachers and through technology, as the classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and touch screens. The Les Powell School has approximately 80 students from kindergarten to year 12. Some of the kids have more than one disability and to see them courageously doing their best is truly inspiring. I take off my hat to the parents of these children and thank the teachers and staff at the school, led by principal Mr Sargon Makko, for their continued dedication to these kids. Les Powell School operates with a few belief statements which I will share with members:

We believe that all children can learn.

We believe that all students deserve capable, caring, professional, well-trained and dedicated staff who have high expectations for their learning success.

We believe that all students are entitled to a learning environment in which they experience security, acceptance and dignity as individuals.

We believe that educationally appropriate and well-kept facilities foster a productive learning environment.

We believe that all teachers must be provided with appropriate, up-to-date classroom materials and teaching tools.

We believe that an understanding and use of information technology is essential to the success of students and staff.

We believe that the education of our students is a shared responsibility and school community participation is a vital component to a student's achievement and success.

Some of the children at Les Powell School are confined to wheelchairs for their mobility while others have mental impairments. The school teaches them its motto, "Towards Independence" by providing all students with learning outcomes that will be relevant to their present and future community living. Individual education programs and individual transition programs are implemented in the key learning areas. Program decisions are made collaboratively at individual education programs meetings by parents and caregivers, class teachers and

other people from the school or from other services. Learning is achieved through individual education programs, music, storytelling, creative activities, real-life experiences and the use of technology with interactive whiteboards.

The Les Powell School also has a hydrotherapy pool, assisting with therapy and the relaxation of students. The school has a swimming instructor who teaches the children important water skills so that they are educated on the benefits as well as the obvious dangers of being in a pool. I applaud all staff and parents involved with the Les Powell School at Mount Pritchard. Above all, I congratulate the kids themselves on their progress in literacy and numeracy. It truly is an inspiration and something I want to share with this Chamber. These children have a tough fight ahead of them—tougher than any of us will ever face. Yet every day they smile at their parents, they learn from their teachers and really make the most of the opportunities given to them. They have all shown enormous character and strength of heart to keep progressing as they are at school. I thank the Les Powell School for inviting me to attend its Literacy and Numeracy Day, and wish the students and the school the best of luck in the future.

CLARENCE ELECTORATE BRAVERY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [6.08 p.m.]: I acknowledge the extraordinary achievements of some extraordinary people in my electorate of Clarence. The residents in my electorate and I are proud to have Nathan Rheinberger, Michael Williams, Corey Warburton and Michael Bethune as members of our community. Their acts of bravery have not gone unnoticed, and should be noted in this House. On 9 February 2009 16-year-old Nathan Rheinberger had just finished surfing at Turners Beach, Yamba, when he spotted some people on the beach waving in two swimmers. Despite having no experience as a surf lifesaver, Nathan paddled out on his surfboard to see whether they were having difficulty. On reaching them he found two teenage girls in a raging rip, both in a very distressed state and struggling to stay afloat.

Battling crashing waves and strong current, Nathan managed to pull one of the girls onto his surfboard then held onto the back of his board and supported the other girl under his free arm. As the waves were coming, he pushed the girl he had placed on his board onto the wave while dragging the other girl along with his arm. Out of breath and still in the rip, Nathan started getting cramps in his legs, but he pushed through the pain and moved them across the rip and towards the beach where he was assisted in waist-deep water by friend Tim Horan. This was an extraordinary act of courage by a teenage boy who risked his own life to save the lives of two teenage girls who were in serious danger of drowning. Earlier this month Nathan was the recipient of an Australian Commendation for Brave Conduct.

On 27 February 2008 the trawler *Sea Rogue* sank suddenly in the early hours of the morning approximately 15 kilometres offshore from Byron Bay. On board were the skipper, Alan "Charlie" Picton, and deckhands John Jarrett and Michael Williams. Not having time to radio for help to alert anyone to their predicament, Michael Williams selflessly decided to swim for help. In the pitch black, he set off to swim the 15 kilometres to shore in shark-infested waters with only the lights on the shore to guide him. Ten hours later, Michael staggered to shore at New Brighton Beach with cuts and bruises. He was completely exhausted and dehydrated from his epic swim.

Authorities were alerted and an immediate search and rescue operation began for his two mates. His crewmate John Jarrett was found clinging to an esky lid. Unfortunately, the skipper of the trawler, Charlie Picton, was lost at sea. John Jarrett is alive today because of Michael Williams' extreme bravery, selfless courage and sheer determination. I am privileged to know Michael personally. I played squash against him many years ago. I also know his parents, Don and Faye, who are wonderful people. They should be very proud of their son. Michael Williams received an Australian Bravery Medal earlier this year—and rightly so.

On Monday morning 21 July 2008, 14-year-old Corey Warburton was walking across the Grafton Bridge footbridge when he noticed a jumper neatly folded on the path with a note placed on it. After reading the note he became concerned. He looked over the rail and saw an elderly woman lying face down in the Clarence River, some 30 metres below. When he saw her hand move to her face, he immediately took off his jumper and his shoes and jumped into the cold winter waters of the Clarence River. Corey spent the next 20 minutes trying to rescue the woman by dragging her 80 metres towards the shore. Ten metres from shore Corey got stuck in the reeds and had trouble holding the woman's head out of the water.

Fortunately, at that time 16-year-old Michael Bethune came to his aid. Michael ran 200 metres and jumped into the Clarence River and helped Corey hold the woman's head out of the water. Finally, with the aid

of Michael's mother, Sandra Shipley, and local police officers, the woman was dragged onto dry land. Michael Bethune's contribution is made even more significant by the fact that he has cystic fibrosis. Although he knew his medical condition would be affected by his actions, he thought nothing of that when he went to the woman's aid. Corey Warburton received a bravery award for his extraordinary efforts. It is with great pleasure that I recognise all those men in this place.

PLANNING GREEN PAPER

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [6.13 p.m.]: My constituents want a planning system that assists them to make long-term choices for their local area that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. The Government's planning green paper aims to improve planning and development through early community participation, strategic planning, faster and less complicated development assessments, and infrastructure links with growth. The strong reform agenda has the potential to improve planning and create significant benefits for the economy and for local communities.

Over 30 years ago the landmark Environmental Planning and Assessment Act introduced community participation and environment and heritage protections in planning. The role of communities and councils in shaping their neighbourhoods was fundamental after years of widespread heritage destruction under the Askin Government. But 30 years of incremental and ad hoc amendments by successive governments eroded transparency, accountability and democracy in what was once a progressive planning system. I led opposition against changes such as part 3A, which fast-tracked development at the expense of environment and heritage and people's say in their neighbourhood.

Sydney needs to build an average of 25,000 dwellings each year to house its growing population but is falling short. The serious challenge of dangerous climate change means sustainable development is now more important than ever. We need a planning system that is easy to understand and work with, involves communities in decision-making and protects the needs of future generations. Planning legislation should enshrine a long-term strategic vision for the State established through community participation. A planning system needs to integrate and improve public transport with urban renewal. While the fundamental reforms and specific proposals within the green paper are positive, benefits will be compromised by proposals to exclude the community and stakeholder participation and loopholes that allow development to avoid proper assessment.

The green paper proposes regional planning boards of local and State government bureaucrats and experts to make long-term strategic planning decisions like rezoning without any input from democratically elected councillors. I believe we should follow the lead of Metro Vancouver, where elected councillors are board members who make regional decisions. The city of Vancouver has involved people in planning since the 1970s and received widespread community support for high-density infill development plans in the 1990s. Vancouver was recognised as best practice in Leslie Stein's "A Review of International Best Practice in Planning Law". The green paper's public participation charter must be the first reform implemented. Communities must be given the chance to contribute actively.

Adequate public participation at the strategic stage is a challenge because people tend to engage in planning only when their neighbourhood is immediately affected. I fear that even with education aimed at cultural change, communities could be seriously sidelined and justified in believing that they have been excluded from having a say in their neighbourhood. The green paper would give the State Government control of major residential, retail and commercial development, effectively reinstating part 3A. Part 3A disenfranchised communities across New South Wales and the Government committed to abolish it before the last election.

I oppose the green paper's strategic compatibility certificates that allow a proposal to proceed straight to a development application if it complies with high-level regional planning objectives. This loophole allows development to bypass strategic planning and to exclude communities from the entire process. The City of Sydney council has shown that good planning outcomes can be achieved through thorough community participation. The council's new city-wide planning controls involved residents, businesses, community groups, government agencies and the development industry in more than 100 meetings and workshops. Major studies were exhibited for community feedback and thousands of submissions were assessed. As a result, the council will meet approximately 85 per cent of its housing and jobs targets by focusing development in urban renewal areas such as Green Square, Harold Park and the Ashmore Estate, while protecting heritage in suburbs like Chippendale, Surry Hills, Redfern and Glebe.

The rezoning of Harold Park in Glebe involved public meetings and workshops attended by more than 500 people, online consultation and consideration of almost 300 submissions. The City of Sydney secured over

a third of the site as public open space, land dedicated for affordable housing and community facilities, heritage conservation and higher sustainability targets. The council of the City of Sydney is working with the emerging Green Square community, Australia's largest urban renewal project, which will house 40,000 new residents and create 20,000 new jobs four kilometres from the central business district. The community is shaping its urban and cultural environment through meetings, workshops, event days, online forums and access to a full-time community development coordinator.

A planning system that effectively involves communities works for the economy and for industry. The City of Sydney council has involved the community in planning and good development and urban renewal is taking place. Excluding people from planning and creating loopholes for developers will again disenfranchise communities, set residents against developers, and risk stymieing development and holding back the economy. I call on the Government to implement a modern planning system that delivers certainty for industry and applicants while enabling community input and protecting residential amenity, as well as ensuring heritage and environment protection.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.18 p.m.]: I take this opportunity, on what I understand will be one of the last opportunities—

Ms Clover Moore: The last.

Mr ROB STOKES: On this the last occasion on which the member for Sydney will contribute to debate in this House, I take the opportunity to thank her for her wonderful advocacy for her community during more than 24 years of service in this Parliament. She has served as a terrific example of what a local member can achieve—a local member who is acting in the best interests of her community. I recognise her passion for urban planning, her recognition that people are at the heart of planning, and her recognition that genuine participation is the only way to achieve the best planning outcomes. The point of the planning green paper to which the member for Sydney referred and the challenge of a good planning system is not to continue with current duplicative participation that is ignored, but instead to facilitate early participation that is genuinely heard and later reflected in plans that guide development. On that note, I thank the member for Sydney for her sterling contribution to this House.

PENRITH ELECTORATE CRIME

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [6.19 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House some crime rate statistics that have been published by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR]. If members were to comment on issues that raise the most concern in their constituencies, there is little doubt that crime and law and order would be right near the top of the list. It is important to refer to statistics published by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research to get an idea of track records and performance in crime rate reduction. There is plenty of good news to report about the Penrith local government area. The latest statistics published by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show a significant decrease in a number of crimes. For example, over the past 24 months, there has been a reduction in violent offences of 12.4 per cent in the Penrith local government area.

The statistics also show a downward trend for property offences, which over a longer reporting period of 60 months now has an average annual reduction of 3.5 per cent. What fantastic results for the Penrith community. In the more specific major offence reports, domestic-related violence is down by 15.4 per cent. The Bridges Project, which is run by the Penrith Women's Health Centre, has had a big impact on domestic-related violence in my electorate. The Penrith Women's Health Centre does a sterling job. I acknowledge the support given to the continuation of that project by the Minister for Family and Community Services. The Penrith Panthers and a number of its players, particularly Clint Newtown, have also done a lot of work in raising the profile of domestic-related violence and ensuring that men understand that violence against women will not be tolerated.

Reductions in crime have been seen right across the Penrith local government area. The statistics also show that non-domestic related assaults are down by 14.5 per cent, motor vehicle theft is down by 13 per cent, stealing from a retail store is down by 19.4 per cent, and malicious damage to property is down by 5.5 per cent. The Penrith local government area is serviced by two local area commands: the St Marys Local Area Command, under the leadership of Superintendent Ray Filewood; and the Penrith Local Area Command, under the leadership of Ben Feszczuk. Those officers and the police officers in their respective local area commands do a fantastic job to ensure the safety of those who live in my electorate, and these figures are testament to that hard work.

I was recently privileged to meet with the five new recruits to the Penrith police station and my colleague Tanya Davies met with the new recruits to the St Marys police station—more recruits were assigned to St Marys than to Penrith. In New South Wales when it comes to tackling crime the runs are on the board and more police are being seen on the beat. In the lead-up to the last election, the now O'Farrell Government made a commitment to increase police numbers. We now have about 400 more police on our streets than we had under the previous Government. That is a clear indication of the Government's commitment to law and order issues. It is committed to ensuring a high police presence right across our local communities.

These Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures indicate how police are performing in tackling crime. Good results such as these—double-digit reductions in crime over a 24-month period—show with absolute clarity that police are doing their job. Day after day and night after night police place themselves in risky and dangerous situations. As a local member of Parliament, I am extremely appreciative of the efforts of the NSW Police Force. It is fundamental that members recognise work being done by our police, particularly when it is backed up by such positive statistical analysis. Crime is down in Penrith: the Penrith police are doing a fantastic job.

COOGEE-WAYS SLEEP OUT

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [6.24 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about the second annual Coogee-WAYS Sleep Out held on Friday 31 August as an initiative of my office in conjunction with Waverley Action for Youth Services, also known as WAYS. After the success of last year's sleep-out, I was eager to continue running the event annually to make sure that the issue of homelessness is not forgotten in my electorate. Currently it is estimated that around 105,000 people every night sleep rough on the streets. At 26 per cent, the leading cause of homelessness is domestic and family violence. Once a person becomes homeless for one reason they are exposed to a range of further risks, including poverty, mental and physical illnesses such as hypothermia, crime and sexual exploitation. These issues can result in people getting stuck in a cycle of homelessness.

The cold weather on the evening of 31 August made it the perfect night to fully appreciate the hardships that homeless people face every day. We heard from numerous local, metropolitan and national organisations that offer services for the homeless, give homeless people a safe place to sleep and assist them in getting back on their feet. I will mention a few of the people and organisations that were represented. Andrew Everingham, co-director of Sydney Homeless Connect, spoke of his initiative that runs once a year at Sydney Town Hall and is supported by the member for Sydney and Lord Mayor of Sydney. I attended the event this year, where homeless people are offered services such as internet access, doctors, free clothing and even hairdressing. Rebecca Mullins talked about the work that Bondi Youth Accommodation does as a specialist homelessness service offering housing services for disadvantaged youth.

Angela Bainbridge from Caretakers Cottage also attended. Caretakers Cottage is a not-for-profit charity that offers crisis and medium-term accommodation to homeless children and young people in Sydney. Kate Witherdin, of Options Youth Housing, provides accommodation for up to 19 months for people aged between 16 and 25-years old, as well as employment, education, financial and other support. Nicole James has recently opened a community cafe in Bondi Junction that offers disadvantaged youth the opportunity to work in the cafe and contribute to society. They are also taught how to be a barista. Beck Ronkson attended on behalf of Milk Crate Theatre, a community theatre company that provides people who have experienced homelessness or marginalisation with the opportunity to express themselves creatively and foster a sense of fulfilment. Attendees also heard from Gavin Dengate, the Superintendent of the Eastern Beaches Local Area Command, who offered an insight into homelessness from a law enforcement perspective. It is important that government and non-government organisations work together with the police to identify local trends in homelessness. Superintendent Dengate has worked in five local area commands and he has a wealth of experience in working with communities.

Swags for Homeless generously lent two of their "backpack beds" to the sleep-out. Tony Clark, founder and chairman of Swags for Homeless, is passionate about eradicating homelessness. He invented the "backpack bed"—an innovative, award-winning sleeping bag as an interim crisis measure. It is also the world's first and only fire retardant swag. Barry Gobbe, a volunteer for Swags for Homeless, told attendees of the work they do, including spending time with the homeless and providing the homeless with backpack beds free of charge. Swags for Homeless believe that by giving someone a comfortable way to sleep at night they will have a better chance of getting back on their feet. Swags for Homeless was awarded the 2011 Australian Human Rights award for the best community organisation.

I thank Tony Waller, Karen Beale, Craig Howie and the executive of the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club for their hospitality in allowing us to host the event at the surf club. I also thank the Coogee Blueys, the club's youth program, and all other participants for their support on the night in promoting greater awareness. In particular, I thank Russell King, the Chief Executive Officer of WAYS, for his help in organising the sleep-out again. Waverley Action for Youth Services, WAYS, offers a range of youth services for teenagers and young adults in the eastern suburbs, and it has always been a pleasure to work with them. I hope that the event assisted in fostering a broader understanding of the issue of homelessness and how we can combat it. There is still so much work to be done but I am encouraged to know that many great organisations are working towards solutions. I look forward to hosting the sleep-out again next year.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.29 p.m. until
Tuesday 18 September 2012 at 12 noon.**
