

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 20 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.

CLASSIFICATION (PUBLICATIONS, FILMS AND COMPUTER GAMES) ENFORCEMENT AMENDMENT (R 18+ COMPUTER GAMES) BILL 2012

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

APOLOGY FOR FORCED ADOPTION PRACTICES

The SPEAKER: I inform members and visitors to the public gallery that this House and the other place will be considering a motion of apology for forced adoptions at 10.30 a.m. Pursuant to resolutions of the House, I shall now leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell at 10.27 a.m.

[The Speaker left the chair at 10.11 a.m. The House resumed at 10.32 a.m.]

APOLOGY FOR FORCED ADOPTION PRACTICES

The SPEAKER: I formally welcome visitors to the public gallery today and inform them that, pursuant to resolutions on 12 and 19 September 2012, the House will now consider the motion of apology for forced adoption practices. The Legislative Council will also now be considering a similar motion.

I welcome to the Chamber today a representative of mothers whose children were taken for adoption. Lyn is a mother whose child was taken for adoption in a regional area of New South Wales in earlier years. Lyn is an advocate for many mothers and while no experience can ever be the same as that of another there are common threads. Lyn has written independently to Ministers about the need for an apology and what an apology would mean. I now call on Lyn to address the House and invite the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women to escort her to the microphone.

[Lyn was conducted by the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women onto the floor of the Chamber.]

LYN [10.33 a.m.]: The words of this poem are my words and they were written on my journey to heal. I hope it reaches out to those mothers who have experienced the same issues and processes that I have been through. My poem reads:

The Child You Stole Was Mine
I can pinpoint where the pain had begun
When I "relinquished" my son
The pain is deep within
A lifelong price to pay for my sin.
Some may say I could choose
But wait until *they* lose
Someone so profound
Then they stand on the same shaky ground
For nothing will ever equate
To a loss so great.

I need you to understand
 On such a scale so grand
 How the pain can feel
 As our feelings reveal
 Nerve endings it can tear
 As memories fill us with despair.

Many tears tumble like rain
 They keep falling again and again
 Trying to muffle the sound
 I feel I could drown
 In the torrent of tears that overwhelm.
 For no-one stands at the helm
 To steer or guide *this* ship
 As into oblivion I slip.

I cannot find the words to address
 What I feel and I must confess
 The pain doesn't ease or go away
 Realistically it is there to stay
 A reminder of when my son was born
 A son for whom I truly mourn.

Our time together ever after they stole
 Demanding we become whole
 Did they understand what they asked?
 As they took us to task
 "Get on with your lives" they said.
 By manipulation and lies they led.

We cannot take back a single minute
 Our child's story, where do we begin it?
 When they took the children from our womb
 Telling us "In this world there is no room
 For *anyone* of *your* ilk.
 We take your child; dry up your milk
 Replace his existence so easily
 And build *him* a new identity
You have no rights, no say"
 That was until the apology in WA.

Don't *ask* me to wipe away my tears
 Don't ask me to stifle my fears
 For now, years later as God planned,
 My son, a man, now stands
 I lost the child for whom I grieve
 It wasn't my plan for him to leave.

You forced us to live apart
 How do a stranger and I start
 To cover the intervening years
 And the reason for all those tears
 One thing I need you to know
 Pain everlasting does not show
 Something I will never forget
 Nor will others, you can bet
 To the outside world there is no sign
 But *the child you stole, was mine!*

Thank you.

The SPEAKER: On behalf of the House I sincerely thank Lyn for her very moving address.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [10.34 a.m.]:
 I move:

That:

- (1) this House acknowledges the traumatic effects of the forced adoption practices of the past that have echoed through the lives of tens of thousands of mothers, fathers, people adopted as children and their families; and
- (2) all members of this House, with profound sadness and remorse, say to those living with the ongoing grief and pain of forced adoption practices that we are sorry.

The trauma induced by the forced adoption practices in the past has reverberated through the lives of tens of thousands of mothers and their children who were removed. It has affected fathers who were never given a say, as well as the families who never knew the truth of what went on with the brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews or grandchildren they lost. It caused years of pain and grief for many, instead of the joy and delight that parenthood might reasonably have been expected to bring. Today in this Australia's first Parliament we acknowledge the terrible wrongs that were done and with profound sadness and remorse say to those living with ongoing grief and pain, we are sorry.

We have come to know about this shameful episode of our history because of the courage, commitment and strength of many individuals: mothers, fathers, people adopted as children, who refused to stay silent about the injustices they suffered. Their mistreatment was first publicly acknowledged by this Parliament in the December 2000 report, entitled "Releasing the Past", of an inquiry into those past adoption practices. During its inquiry, the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues received more than 300 written submissions and heard testimony from fathers, mothers and those who were taken for adoption. Committee members heard distressing accounts of actions taken to secure—or not secure—a mother's consent to the adoption of her child. They heard of women routinely denied access to their babies in the hours and days after the birth.

This year's Senate committee report on former forced adoption policies and practices also recorded evidence of events last century that led to the babies of many young, single women being taken for adoption. The Senate committee concluded that it was incontrovertible that forced adoption practices were commonplace. It is hard to fathom how these practices were allowed to occur when today in the twenty-first century we celebrate motherhood and family in all its forms. In communities everywhere the image of the expectant mother is one of great joy and hope for the future. But mid last century society did not look kindly on the young, pregnant single woman. Rather, these women usually faced the disappointment of their parents and the disapproval of their community. They were made to feel ashamed. In that time, and with those prevailing attitudes, adoption was believed to offer the perfect solution—a "clean break", a "chance for a fresh start". It was considered to be in the "best interests" of everyone. But the problem was that this policy ignored the fundamental bond between mother and child and the lifelong trauma caused when that bond is prematurely and brutally severed.

In the lead-up to today's apology, the Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward, met with many mothers and fathers and people adopted as children to hear their personal accounts of how the experience of adoption had affected their lives. They were heartbreaking stories of loss and grief. These deeply personal and moving recollections reinforced the Senate committee's conclusion that forced adoption practices were wide-ranging and common. One mother told of being lied to about the death of her baby and the torment of living with that lie until she finally learned years later that her son was in fact alive. Another mother spoke of being drugged and sedated to impair both her judgement and her memories of giving birth, and others recounted further dehumanising treatments. An adopted man told of uncovering a desperate and anguished letter from his mother to authorities pleading for her son to be returned to her. A father spoke movingly of the disenfranchisement of his fatherhood as authorities steadfastly ignored his wishes to parent his child.

All felt their basic humanity had been violated, trampled, ignored. Some women felt they had been coerced into giving consent and that their right to refuse or revoke consent was deliberately concealed from them. Although no two experiences were the same, they all shared a single claim: all were extremely vulnerable and in great need when they were denied the care and support they deserved. As a parent, I find it almost impossible to comprehend the pain caused by such treatment—and equally incomprehensible is the resilience of those who lived and continue to live with the wounds inflicted. For some, it remains a constant struggle. We know that others have already succumbed and will never know of this apology. One woman described to Pru the "ice in her chest" and her battle with feelings of "pathological grief". This heartfelt and honest testimony helps to explain the trauma that was experienced as a result of these past practices and why this apology is owed to those who suffered.

Publicly acknowledging these terrible wrongs and their tragic consequences is important, but acknowledgement alone is not enough. Today, on behalf of the people of this State, the Parliament of New South Wales expresses its sorrow and remorse for the lasting damage these past practices caused to the lives of so many. We are sorry you have had to wait so long for this apology. We know that you live with the consequences of those practices every day. We are sorry for the forced adoption practices that severed the fundamental, life-giving bonds between a mother and her child. We apologise to the mothers who were not asked or listened to and who were never given a choice about the future of their children. We apologise for

making you feel ashamed and unfit to care for your babies. We say sorry for treating you cruelly and insensitively when what you most needed and deserved was care and support. To the women who have carried the pain of loss, grief and separation throughout their lives we say sorry. We apologise to the people forcibly adopted as children for taking them from their mothers at the moment of birth. You grew up never knowing the truth of your birth or how much you were wanted and loved by your mothers, and for that we are also sorry.

We apologise to the fathers whose wishes were ignored and who were excluded from any arrangements for their child's future. Many fathers were carelessly written out of the lives of their children and for that we are also sorry. We apologise to the families who suffered as a result of forced adoption practices. We are sorry you were denied the opportunity to build the loving and lasting relationships with the brother or sister, niece, nephew or grandchild you were never allowed to know. We recognise the partners and children who have watched loved ones struggle with the traumatic effects of these adoption practices, often without knowing or understanding the gravity of past wrongs. To those whose relationships suffered as a result of these practices of the past, we say sorry. We know that saying sorry can never change what has happened. But it is our great hope that this sincere and heartfelt public apology will offer healing and comfort to those who have suffered because of the practices of the past.

For many, this apology will rekindle sad and unsettling memories and stir deep longings for resolution and peace. But hopefully and helpfully this apology may also bring a liberating sense of release from the shame and secrecy of the past. We hope that all of you who receive this apology, whether present or not, can feel assured that, finally, we understand the silent struggle you have endured. Today and into the future we honour your strength and resilience and your determination for the truth to be revealed in the hope that such injustices never again happen.

A striking feature of many of the mothers who have spoken out about past adoption practices is that above anything they seek for themselves from this formal apology, they wanted solace for the children taken from them. They want their adult children to know that they were loved and not abandoned. We hope this apology helps adopted people make that journey. Nothing today is critical of adoptive parents who are committed to the wellbeing of their children. This apology is focused on what this Parliament's 2000 inquiry called the "unethical and unlawful" practice of forced adoptions and its impact upon those involved.

Today, more than mere words, we want mothers, fathers, those who were adopted and their families to know through concrete measures that we are sincere about redressing the wrongs of the past. Many people affected by adoption have spoken about the excessive costs they incur as part of their search for family. To help lessen financial barriers to family reunion, the Department of Family and Community Services will waive the fees it charges for the authority a parent or adopted person needs to obtain adoption information from other State government departments. We also know that today's apology may raise buried or unresolved feelings of grief, loss and trauma for many people affected by forced adoption practices.

The Post Adoption Resource Centre has been offering information, counselling and other support services to people affected by adoption since 1991. We will increase funding to this valuable service with a particular focus on the delivery of services to those in rural and regional areas who are affected by past forced adoption practices. I would like to express my gratitude to the men and women who have shared their deeply personal experiences, whether in writing or in person, with the Minister, with me and with members of this Parliament. Your insights have been moving and invaluable. I also want to thank the many people who travelled from across our State to be here today to receive this apology. I thank all of you for your generosity of spirit in listening to our words of regret, sorrow and remorse—words that are long overdue. I hope your journey of recovery and healing is made easier by what you have heard and will hear today.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [10.48 a.m.]: Today is the day we as a Parliament finally acknowledge the truth. Today is the day we look into the eyes of a mother, the face of a son or daughter and see the ingrained hurt and pain, the profound grief at what has been lost. Then we look deep into ourselves and ask: How would we feel if what was done to you happened to us? For more than three decades thousands of mothers across Australia had their babies forcibly removed. Sadly, we will never know the exact number in New South Wales. But we do know that these practices were widespread and sanctioned by government policy.

There can be no excuse; there can be no justification. Today we must step forward and take responsibility. This single barbaric act that frayed the sacred bond between mother and child changed lives and, in many cases, destroyed them. On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I join the Government in saying clearly and unequivocally to all those affected by the policy of forced adoption: We are sorry. Today's

apology has been a long time coming. We should acknowledge the many people, both inside and outside this Chamber, who worked so hard to make this watershed happen. I also respect and acknowledge the many mothers who feel deeply that an apology without recompense does not go far enough.

As far back as 1998 mothers whose children were forcibly removed came to this Parliament and testified about their experiences. Around Australia other jurisdictions have held their own inquiries, culminating with the report handed down by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee in February this year. Today we honour every mother who bravely came forward with her story. We also honour those who remain too traumatised to speak and those who took their own lives because the grief proved too great. Decade after decade our society expected these women to suffer in silence. The forced removal of children in State-run and church-run hospitals occurred at a time when there was no more crippling stigma than being an unwed mother. Many of these women were ostracised by their families and placed in maternity homes for the duration of their pregnancies. They were subjected to physical and emotional abuse. They were encouraged not to think of their children as their own.

At a time when these women were at their most vulnerable and lonely, at a time when many cried out for support, our system betrayed them and, in some cases, perpetrated crimes against them. They were crimes not just against the standards of contemporary times but also against those times. There can be no excuse and there can be no justification. Today all of us in this place have to step forward and take responsibility. As the years have passed, the picture that many mothers have painted of their birth experience is truly horrifying. Some were tied to the bed as their babies were induced. Some were drugged. Some were buried under a mountain of pillows. People around them heard their screams but few heeded them. Many never saw their babies before they were taken away. Some were even fed lactation suppressants to dry up their milk. It has become the norm to describe what these women experienced as forced adoption. However, the mothers to whom I have spoken feel that the word "adoption" is too sanitised for what happened to them. What they endured was more akin to an abduction or a kidnapping.

Let us be clear. It is not consent when the letters "BFA"—baby for adoption—are stamped on a pregnant young mother's medical records due to the fact that she is unwed. It is not consent when a young mother signs away her rights because she is terrified that the police will be called, or her child will be put into a State-run orphanage. It is certainly not consent when a young mother is not even asked for her signature. Today we think of all the mothers who awoke in the middle of the night, wondering where their children were, wondering whether they were safe. We think of all the lost times—a mother's joy at witnessing her baby's first smile, hearing her baby's first words, or being there for the first day of school. We think, too, of all the children: those placed with foster parents or institutions; those who may have experienced difficult upbringings or abuse; the children who, even if cared for in loving homes, grew up confused about why they were put up for adoption because they were deprived of the maternal bond that is owed to all human life.

Today these children, as adults, endure across our State. In the face of great obstacles, many have gone on to lead resilient and productive lives, even if they feel that something is missing. They may have gone on to love, to trust and to rear their own children even if that care was denied to them. If they are listening to this broadcast or they read *Hansard* I hope they will take one thing away: that they were loved right from the start. Their birth mothers did not abandon them; the stain of abandonment was ours. The words of apology we have spoken today will not of themselves change lives; they must be backed with actions. Labor will always support the services to assist victims of trauma as announced by the Premier today. Words may not be enough but they are a vital step in the healing process. They remain etched in the record, a permanent witness, long after all of us are gone. Today we speak the truth. We step forward as one and we take responsibility to prevent a similar tragedy occurring again in New South Wales. On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, today we say sorry.

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [10.55 a.m.], I seek leave to table the commemorative certificate that will be given to all those attending today's apology.

Leave granted.

Document tabled.

Today we acknowledge and regret the trauma and pain of people who experienced forced adoptions in New South Wales, and today we acknowledge past mistakes. It needs to be repeated that this Parliament's 2000 inquiry called the practice of forced adoptions unethical and unlawful. It would be wrong to dismiss forced adoptions as yet another instance of outmoded conventional wisdom when mistaken deeds were done for the best of all possible motives. The policy of forced adoptions was not so simple, or forgivable, because the babies

were removed by ignoring and even opposing the mothers' wishes. The moral ends justified the means. This may be seen as of little consequence then, but it is crucial to our acknowledgment of wrong in 2012. That is why we apologise in this Parliament because it was of consequence and it remains of consequence today.

It is often said that those who do not learn from the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them. This applies particularly to the misuse of power. So long as the institutions of State and, in particular, of government, do not publicly acknowledge and regret their wrongs, the liberty and the rights of the people remain at risk. It is true that thousands of young women in New South Wales were persuaded or manipulated to accept that adoption was in the best interests of their children, but there are an unknown number for whom the persuasion became coercion. They are part of this apology. There are those who have told of signing adoption papers under heavy sedation when they did not understand what they were doing. Others have claimed they were browbeaten over days or their signatures forged or not even collected. Some have said they were told their babies had died, only to find out years later it was all a lie. They are part of this apology. There are those mothers and fathers who do not seek an apology. However, the price of the grief, the guilt and the loss paid by other mothers and fathers is incalculable. For this we are sorry.

Women have told me they were called sluts and ever since have felt like outcasts, and for this we are very sorry. For the secrets they hid and continue to hide, we are sorry. For the babies we left in institutions when there was a loving mother denied the chance to care for it, we are sorry. For the wrong that kept on being wrong, we are sorry. Remember, there were mothers who found their children years later only to be spurned and told they had not fought hard enough to keep them. The years of secrecy meant that even their own children did not believe them. For the mothers who lost their babies once and then lost them again, we are sorry. To the brothers and sisters born later—children who did not understand their mother's secret sadness but who saw and still feel its signs and scars—we are sorry. To the fathers we never told they were fathers and to those who tried to claim their children but were denied, we also say sorry.

I have had the privilege of meeting some of these women, men and their children, and many of them are here today. They are scarred by a grief which we cannot imagine but which every parent must fear. They did not ask for much; they did not thump the table for money; they did not demand that we bring their children back to them. Their requests were much more simple. They wanted acknowledgement of the wrongs done to them by the charities, the hospitals and the State. They wanted us to acknowledge the brutality of separation and the agony of begging to see a baby and being denied or having the child taken away without farewell. They wanted us to see them for what they are—people just like us, ordinary people, placed in impossible positions, not different, not outcasts but one of us.

They do not want our sympathy; they want our empathy. They want us to feel with them, not for them. They have carried their burden alone for long enough. Many of these mothers are now middle aged or older and the words of one will always stay with me: "Let our last 20 years be years of peace and acceptance", she asked. What do they want of today—the day when the leadership of the State formally apologises on behalf of the people of New South Wales? Again, it is simple. It ends as it began with their lost and stolen children and the legacy they leave. In the words of one, "I want to walk out of Parliament House with my son feeling the best about me that he can and the best he can feel about himself." They want their children to understand them, to know that they do love them and that they did not give them up willingly but were forced into adoption by a misguided system that did them wrong. Today we must give them that comfort. We acknowledge and regret these wrongs and we pledge not to repeat them.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [11.04 a.m.]: "I do think the truth hurts, but nothing hurts more than secrets," said the writer Tatiana de Rosnay. Today we are talking about hard truths and exposing practices that for too long were denied and concealed. As Desmond Tutu said, "In the end, only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing." For those here today and around our State who had babies and children taken from them in the most terrible of circumstances, we bring into the light shameful practices of the past which often were kept quiet, which thrived in secrecy, which were illegal, immoral and unethical and whose repercussions continue today. In doing this we are seeking to remove shame from those who did not deserve it. The wrong was done by governments, churches, hospitals, charitable organisations and bureaucrats. We acknowledge that thousands of our citizens suffered greatly because of policies debated and upheld in this very place.

More babies were taken in New South Wales than in any other State and the law was used as a mechanism to legitimise theft. What happened seems unbelievable and for many decades was not believed. We are here today to say that it is true. Indeed, many of the events described today took place in our own lifetime. To the mothers whose children were taken, we say sorry. When your files were stamped with "BFA"—baby for adoption—your fate was sealed. Your babies were marked for adoption before they were born. You became

pawns in what psychiatrist Geoff Rickarby called "a well-oiled and systematic machine so much bigger than yourselves". Despite your pleading, so many of you were not allowed to see your babies. You were coerced and manipulated at the most vulnerable time of your life. The lies had a logic that you could never win. You were told you were selfish wanting to keep your children and that you were hindering what was best for them, but then you were asked what type of mother would give up her child. The worst lie of all was reserved for those who were told that their baby had died.

Today's apology will not give back what was taken away—the chance to raise your children as you wanted, to teach them and to love them. Instead, many of you have been forced to stumble through life carrying a burden of unending grief, living in the shadows and questioning your own sanity. Your pain did not stop after the birth; you were left silenced and traumatised. Your isolation was intense, compounded by a system which depersonalised you further and which refused to give you either information or support. Some of you are still looking for your children; some of you are still looking for your parents. We justified our actions by stereotyping you as bad and wrong and shameful. By setting you apart from us, we lost any sense of compassion and any sense of mercy. In doing this, we not only took from you your humanity but we forfeited our own.

To the children taken, we are sorry. You are wanted, longed for, searched for, and you are loved. To the fathers and families, we are sorry. We accept that all those affected will have differing responses to this apology. Words are easy, talk is cheap. Undoing the damage is not. We must acknowledge here in this place that what happens next is of the utmost importance. The sincerity of our words depends on the actions we take to support them. The research is very clear: Those who suffered need assistance and access to information and independent trauma services. The mechanisms set up to support you must take into account your lived experience and demonstrate that you have been listened to, heard and believed.

We recognise the courage of all those who have come here today, all those who are watching and all those who will read these words. We acknowledge those who pushed for and participated in the 2000 New South Wales inquiry when these practices were first brought to light. While it was an important first step, we are so sorry that the apology has been such a long time coming. We hope that in some small way today will be a part of the healing process. By telling the truth and by saying "Sorry" through words and actions I hope that all those involved are brought out of the shadows and into the light.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Legislative Assembly will now, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, formally adopt the motion of apology for forced adoptions. I believe it is the sincere wish of all members in this place that the apology be accepted in the spirit in which it is offered—in a spirit of genuine concern for the suffering of the innocent and acknowledgement of the pain and suffering experienced by mothers, fathers and children who were affected by past practices. I will now put the question and ask members to carry the motion by standing in their places silently for one minute.

Question put.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places.

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Order! Copies of the commemorative certificate of apology, as tabled in the House today, will be available in the Strangers Dining Room.

[The Speaker left the chair at 11.12 a.m. The House resumed at 11.55 a.m.]

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

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

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARD RECIPIENT PETER ROGERS

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Peter Rogers of Jeff Hort Engineering at Orange on receiving the Best Individual Contribution to Workplace Health and Safety Award at the Safe Work Awards held in Canberra in April 2012.
- (2) Notes that Mr Rogers' award commends his planning and implementation of workplace health and safety strategies in his role as the health, safety, quality and environmental superintendent at Jeff Hort Engineering.
- (3) Recognises the importance workplace safety plays in ensuring that workers return home to their families safely each day.

CABONNE COUNCIL GENERAL MANAGER ANDREW HOPKINS

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Andrew Hopkins on his appointment as general manager for Cabonne Council.
- (2) Notes that Mr Hopkins brings to the job experience in managing local governments in Queensland and establishing systems of local governance in Abu Dhabi.
- (3) Welcomes Mr Hopkins and his family to the Orange electorate and wishes him every success in his new role with Cabonne Council.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENT GRAEME FLEMING

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates former Cabonne Council general manager Graeme Fleming on receiving the Public Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2012.
- (2) Notes that Mr Fleming retired from Cabonne Council in August 2012 after 25 years of managing the council.
- (3) Recognises that Mr Fleming was described as one New South Wales' outstanding local government administrators and wishes him well in retirement.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK FORD

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of Patrick Ford, a boxing legend from Orange's CYMS Boxing Club.
- (2) Notes that Mr Ford was the Australian and Empire lightweight champion from 1951 to his retirement in 1955 with a record of 21 wins from 26 boxing matches.
- (3) Notes that Mr Ford helped establish the PCYC in Orange where he stayed involved with boxing as a trainer.
- (4) Offers condolences to Mr Ford's family.

TRIBUTE TO LEO ROBINSON

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of Mudgee's oldest resident Leo Robinson at the age of 104.
- (2) Notes that Mr Robinson had a diverse career including: working on the Sandy Hollow railway line, rabbiting and ringbarking, and with New South Wales Railways from 1949 until he retired in 1975.
- (3) Notes that Mr Robinson was honoured by the Mudgee Dragons rugby league team, of whom he was an ardent supporter, at their first home game played at the new Glen Willow complex.
- (4) Offers condolences to Mr Robinson's family, including his three children, 17 grand-children, 27 great-grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren.

ADAM ELLIOTT AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLBOYS RUGBY UNION TEAM SELECTION

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Adam Elliott on his selection to the Australian Schoolboys rugby team.
- (2) Acknowledges that Adam has been selected as captain of the team.
- (3) Notes that Adam attends St Gregory's College, Campbelltown and is a wonderful ambassador for his school and the community.
- (4) Wishes Adam all the best in his role as captain of the Australian Schoolboys rugby team and in his rugby career.

ROSTRUM PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION FINALIST DOMINIC ANDREW

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dominic Andrew on his participation in the national final of the Rostrum public speaking competition where he finished seventh.
- (2) Notes that Dominic attends St Gregory's College, Campbelltown and is a wonderful ambassador for his school and the community.

MACARTHUR WINTER SLEEPOUT

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates all the participants of the Macarthur Winter Sleepout, organised by the Homelessness Steering Committee and supported by the *Macarthur Chronicle*.
- (2) Notes that the Homelessness Steering Committee is made up of representatives from the following organisations: Department of Human Services, St Vincent de Paul, Campbelltown City Council, Hume Community Housing, Housing NSW, Ingleburn Rotary, Uniting Care Burnside, Macarthur Mental Health Services and Sector Connect.
- (3) Notes that the event raised \$17,000 that will be donated to support homeless people in the Macarthur region.

NARELLAN LIBRARY CLICK CLACK AND YAK GROUP

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Narellan Library's Click Clack and Yak group on its participation in the tenth Wrap with Love Knit In.
- (2) Acknowledges that the Narellan Library group knitted seven blankets on the day, bringing their total to 251 blankets, that will be distributed by Wrap with Love to people in need throughout Australia and worldwide.
- (3) Notes that the Click Clack and Yak group provide a valuable community service.

JOHN McDONALD BUILDING SERVICES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates John McDonald Building Services on its success at the recent Master Builders Association Awards.
- (2) Notes that John McDonald Building Services won in the three categories they were nominated in.
- (3) Wishes the team at John McDonald Building Services all the best for their future.

MAWARRIORS GIRLS SOCCER TEAM

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Mawarra Public School' senior girls soccer team, the Mawarriors, on progressing to the regional level of the New South Wales Primary Schools Sports Association soccer knockout competition.
- (2) Acknowledges that the team has had great success in matches leading to their inclusion in the knockout competition with consecutive 11-0 and 9-0 victories.
- (3) Notes that the Mawarriors are coached by Sharon Kynaston.
- (4) Acknowledges that the girls participating in the Mawarriors are wonderful ambassadors for their school, community and their team.
- (5) Wishes the Mawarriors every success for the knockout competition.

CRICKETER BAILEY DICKINSON

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bailey Dickinson on his selection to the Australian boys under 12 years cricket team, to tour South Africa in September 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges that Bailey has been selected in the Australian all-star team for the previous two years, and the Australian national team for the previous three years.
- (3) Notes that Bailey plays for the Camden Cricket Club and is a wonderful ambassador for his team, club, school and the community.
- (4) Wishes Bailey all the best for his tour of South Africa, and in his cricket career.

COMMUNITY OF SCHOOLS SHOWCASE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates all the students who participated in the Community of Schools Showcase, held at Elizabeth Macarthur High School during Education Week in 2012.
- (2) Notes that students from Narellan Vale Public School, Narellan Public School, Harrington Park Public School and Leppington Public School participated.
- (3) Acknowledges the effort of all students and teachers who performed, choreographed and assisted to make this day a success.

CAMDEN DOWNS RETIREMENT VILLAGE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Camden Downs Retirement Village on its thirtieth anniversary.
- (2) Acknowledges that Terry and Lana Belleville, who manage the village, help create the village's friendly community environment and maintain the village's facilities.
- (3) Wishes Camden Downs Retirement Village all the best in the future.

RIVERINA MURRAY WORLDSKILLS TEAM

Mr GREG APLIN to move—

That this House congratulates the Riverina Murray WorldSkills team on its outstanding success in winning the Evatt Shield for the best overall score at the WorldSkills Australia national competition held in Sydney in September 2012.

COUNCILLOR JOHN ROSS CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the 11-year contribution of Councillor John Ross to local government, since being elected to the former Culcairn Council in 2001.
- (2) Congratulates Councillor Ross on his dedication to his local community and wishes him all the best in his retirement from Greater Hume Shire Council.

COUNCILLOR AMANDA DUNCAN-STRELEC CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Councillor Amanda Duncan-Strelec's 16-year contribution to local government, including her election as Albury City Council's first female and youngest mayor.
- (2) Wishes Amanda Duncan-Strelec all the best in her retirement from Albury City Council.

RETIREMENT OF JOHN BABBS

Mr GREG APLIN to move—

That this House congratulates John Babbs on his 52 years of service and contribution to Corowa Shire Council in his role as Director of Engineering Services, and wishes him all the best in his retirement.

COUNCILLOR JAN DOYLE CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN to move—

That this House recognises Councillor Jan Doyle's four years of service on Corowa Shire Council and wishes her all the very best in her retirement from local government.

COUNCILLOR BILL BOTT, AM, CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Councillor Bill Bott's 35 years outstanding service on Corowa Shire Council, which included roles as Shire President for six years and President of the NSW Shires Association for two years.
- (2) Wishes Councillor Bott all the very best in his retirement from local government.

COUNCILLOR BILL McDONALD, OAM, CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN to move—

That this House recognises Councillor Bill McDonald's 50 years continuous service to his community on the Hume Shire and the Greater Hume Shire Councils and wishes him all the very best in his retirement from local government.

COUNCILLOR KEN SCHEUNER CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN to move—

That this House recognises Councillor Ken Scheuner's 12 years service with the Culcairn and Greater Hume Shire Councils and wishes him all the very best in his retirement from local government.

COUNCILLOR JOAN EVANS CIVIC SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN to move—

That this House recognises Councillor Joan Evans' four years service with the Greater Hume Shire Council and wishes her all the very best in her retirement from local government.

COOLAMON FISHING CLUB

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates members of the Coolamon Fishing Club for their work for the community.
- (2) Recognises that club members have raised in excess of \$58,000 for charitable organisations and sporting organisations in the Coolamon district.
- (3) Acknowledges that the club's latest contribution was a donation of playground equipment to Kindra Park in memory of two young community members, the late Damien Piltz and the late Kate Furner.

JENNIFER DIXON ACT OF BRAVERY

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 11-year-old Jennifer Dixon for her bravery in rescuing her 8-year-old brother from an irrigation canal.
- (2) Commends Jennifer for her quick action in making the rescue.

MURRUMBIDGEE LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT STAFF

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI to move—

That this House congratulates Murrumbidgee local health district staff for their work and, in particular, Jenny Tyrrell, Nursing Development and Capability Manager at Griffith Base Hospital, for redesigning the hospital's admission forms to simplify and streamline patient admissions.

TOURNAMENT OF MINDS COMPETITION

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates students Breanna Macey, Thea Stephenson, Alice Yeng, Harrison Babister, Andrea Farrugia, Corey Gibson and Nicola Lombardi of Smith's Hill High School, representing the New South Wales south coast, on winning the maths engineering section of the Tournament of Minds held at the University of New South Wales on 9 September 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges that the Tournament of Minds competition enables students to participate in a major intellectual challenge with over 355 schools and 680 teams participating.
- (3) Notes that the Australasian Pacific final will take place in Perth between 18 and 21 October 2012.

GYMEA MIRANDA UNITING CHURCH SECOND CHANCE OPPORTUNITY SHOP TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the GyMEA Miranda Uniting Church Second Chance Opportunity Shop on its twentieth anniversary of service to the community.
- (2) Commends the Second Chance Opportunity Shop for raising funds that are donated to community organisations in need.
- (3) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the volunteers at the Second Chance Opportunity Shop and thanks them for their contribution to the community.

SHOALHAVEN MAYOR JOANNA GASH

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Joanna Gash on being popularly elected as the new mayor of Shoalhaven City Council on 8 September 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the experience Mrs Gash will bring to the mayoralty following her 16 years as the Federal member for Gilmore.

HUNTER FOOTBALL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Supports athletes and their contribution to Hunter sport and Hunter football.
- (2) Acknowledges both the Lambton Jaffas and Adamstown Rosebud football teams promotion of soccer within the Hunter and New South Wales.
- (3) Congratulates Lambton Jaffas, its coaches and support crew on finishing top of the first division in the NewFM Football League.
- (4) Congratulates Scott Carter and Mathew Paul, who added class and experience to the Adamstown Rosebud team.
- (5) Wishes the best to all players in the NewFM first division and NBN football leagues in 2013.

NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends Newcastle City Council on the completion of new skate parks at Wallsend and Maryland.
- (2) Notes that the new facilities in Newcastle's western suburbs will enable teenagers and children to make the most of their school holidays.
- (3) Notes that the Council is also preparing to officially open a \$425,000 bowerbird-themed playground at Blackbutt Reserve.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER NEW ENGLAND HEALTH STROKE RESEARCH

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that a multi-disciplinary team from the University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health has made a genetic discovery that will help towards pre-determining the risk factors for stroke.
- (2) Recognises the commitment and dedication of chief analyst and lead author, Dr Elizabeth Holiday, PhD student on the project, Dr Jane Maquire, Professor Chris Levi, Professor John Attia and Professor Rodney Scott, in making this discovery.

HUNTER PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Hunter medical researchers are studying new ways to screen for prostate cancer.
- (2) Notes that Newcastle Knights captain, Kurt Gidley and the Old Boars Motorcycle Club, are set to ride on 15 September 2012 for nine days around the Hunter/New England region in support of the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance.
- (3) Commends Hunter residents Barry and Rose Preston, who run the Cessnock Prostate Cancer Support Group, for their ongoing commitment and dedication in the provision of support and information to sufferers of all types of cancers.

JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the importance of the vital services provided by the neonatal intensive care unit at John Hunter Hospital.
- (2) Congratulates the Humpty Dumpty Foundation, which raises money for medical equipment for children's hospitals, and Orica, on the donation of a specialised crib valued at \$56,200 which provides heat, light and other functions to help keep premature babies alive.

LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lambton High School soccer team on winning the New South Wales club knockout.
- (2) Commends coach Steve Bland's hard work and dedication to the team.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to the team in future knockout competitions.

LIAM WOOD DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS SELECTION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Liam Wood on his selection to represent New South Wales at the 2011 and 2012 Australian Age Diving Championships.
- (2) Extends its best wishes to Liam in his future diving endeavours.

YOUTH ROCKIN' THE BLACK DOG ORGANISER AMY VEE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Amy Vee for her coordination of the Youth Rockin' the Black Dog event, which provides a platform for emerging musicians to raise awareness of mental health issues amongst Hunter youth.
- (2) Commends Ms Vee for her ongoing dedication and commitment to the event.

DISCUS CHAMPION STEPHANIE SCIGALA

Ms SONIA HORNER to move—

That this House congratulates Stephanie Scigala, of Maryland, for breaking the discus record in the 12 to 13 years girls category with a 39.70 metre throw at the 2012 Hunter Primary Schools Sports Association championships at Hunter Sports Centre, Glendale.

BOB WESTBURY CIVIC SERVICE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bob Westbury on his retirement from Port Stephens Council.
- (2) Commends his service as a Port Stephens councillor since 2004 and as deputy mayor of Port Stephens Council and mayor of Port Stephens Council.
- (3) Thanks Mr Westbury for his tireless hard work for the Port Stephens community and his continued passion and promotion of Port Stephens over many years.

CARMEN ALLEN FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN to move—

That this House congratulates Carmen Allen, of Karuah, for her fundraising initiatives in the Let's Scrap Against Slavery fundraising day where she raised \$4,500 to be donated to the International Justice Mission.

RAYMOND TERRACE ART SHOW

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the Raymond Terrace Art Show on a successful event that attracted close to 300 entries.
- (2) Notes that the art show has been continuously running for 45 years thanks to the dedication of successive volunteer organising committees.
- (3) Recognises that the funds raised by the event are donated to Irrawang Public School, Raymond Terrace Public School and Grahamstown Public School.
- (4) Thanks the organisers for the promotion of local artists in the Raymond Terrace community.

LOWER NORTH COAST SURF LIFE SAVING BRANCH

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Surf Life Saving New South Wales Lower North Coast branch for winning the initiative of the year award at the Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence.
- (2) Notes that the branch's introduction of a rapid response jet ski and pontoon, operated from the Forster marina, was found to be cost effective and allows for one operator to provide a timely initial response to an aquatic emergency.
- (3) Commends the Lower North Coast branch of Surf Life Saving New South Wales on partnering with the community of Forster-Tuncurry to provide the equipment.

SURF LIFESAVER JORDAN CONNELLY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jordan Connelly on his selection in the New South Wales Country Surf Life Saving under 19 years team.
- (2) Notes that Jordan is a member of the Black Head Surf Life Saving Club from the Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast branch.
- (3) Notes that Jordan will be touring New Zealand with the New South Wales Country Team in 2013.

SURF LIFESAVER JACK NICHOLSON

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jack Nicholson on his selection in the New South Wales Country Surf Life Saving under 16 years team.
- (2) Notes that Jack is a member of the Black Head Surf Life Saving Club from the Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast branch.
- (3) Notes that Jack will be touring New Zealand with the New South Wales Country Team in 2013.

KIMBRIKI TENNIS CLUB SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Kimbriki Tennis Club and its members on celebrating the club's sixtieth anniversary.
- (2) Notes that the club has recently installed a new synthetic grass tennis court which has replaced the old hard surface court that had been in use for more than 30 years.
- (3) Notes that the club provided \$8,000 in funding and many hours of labour to assist in the installation of the new court.
- (4) Commends the Kimbriki Tennis Club on being the centre of their community and for having the inspiring motto: "Having fun and it's for everyone".

TOUCH FOOTBALLER JOEL MINIHAN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Joel Minihan, a year six student at Old Bar Public School, on being selected in the New South Wales Primary Schools Sports Association touch football team.
- (2) Notes that Joel will play in the New South Wales team in the Australian championships in Brisbane in late October 2012.
- (3) Notes that Joel has played touch football from the age of eight and that he also plays as fullback for the under 12 years Old Bar Pirates rugby league team.

TAREE HIGH SCHOOL METALWORK TEAM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the members of Taree High School's year 8 metalwork class on winning the New South Wales secondary challenge held at Sydney's Eastern Creek raceway.
- (2) Notes that the team members are Josh Hammond, Jai Hughes, Ryan Poulton, Ruby Young, Breana Webster, Jacob Hawkins, Randell Herps, Cameron McKenzie, Max LeMessurier, Lachlan Nesbitt and Harry Wallis under the direction of their teacher, Bob Weller.
- (3) Notes that the team worked on the project for six months in the design, material sourcing and construction stages.
- (4) Commends the team for also winning the Secondary Road Safety Award for the North Coast Region.

TAREE CITY BULLS UNDER 18 RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Taree City Bulls under 18 years rugby league team on winning the 2012 Group 3 premiership.
- (2) Notes that the Bulls defeated Camden Haven 24-22 in the grand final to register the Taree City Bulls first premiership in any grade since 2007.
- (3) Notes that the result of the match was in doubt until its final seconds and that Bulls' second rower Izaak Soloman was named player of the match.

BULAHDELAH CENTRAL SCHOOL VOLUNTEERING AWARDS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Commends students from Bulahdelah Central School for winning the Secondary Road Safety Award for the North Coast Region, and for volunteering in the school's volunteer scheme.
- (2) Notes that volunteering makes a real and positive difference in the community, with benefits for both the recipient and the volunteer.

- (3) Notes that the awards are given to students who reach hourly milestones in their volunteer records, including bronze (20 hours), silver (40 hours), gold (60 hours), diamond (100 hours) and opal (150 hours).
- (4) Congratulates the following winners:
 - (a) Opal award—Jayden Lilley.
 - (b) Diamond award—Kyra Gregory, Mitchell Blanch, Hayley Follett and Jodie Harragon.
 - (c) Gold award—Cordel Murphy, Arlee Francis-Neiswandt, Emily Kirkpatric and Tahlia Dee.
 - (d) Silver award—Arlee Francis-Neiswandt, Ruby Keys, Emily Kirkpatrick, Jayden Utley, Bradley Kirkpatrick and Dan Matthew.
 - (e) Bronze award—Meagan Markham, Marley Mezi, Emma Miller, Katelyn Sibert, Sally Tennyson, Brodie Warren, David Dodd, Daniel Sahyoun, Courtney Agett, Eryn Cameron, Ellie Gooch, Tia Nganwoo, Kari Price, Gemma Bland, Sofie Dorney, Casey Gooch, Mary-Anne Gooch, Jacob Ison-Walker, Lauren Schultz, Adele Winn, Samantha Clouten, Brodie Donovan, Elizabeth Martin and Ellen Mathieson.

MID NORTH COAST PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL COMPETITION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the five semi finalists in the 2012 Mid North Coast Premier League competition.
- (2) Notes that the Taree Wildcats, Macleay Valley, Wallis Lakes, Port FC and Port United will contest the semi finals.
- (3) Notes that the Taree Wildcats lost just one game during the regular season and go into the semi finals as favourites to win the Premier League title.

PARALYMPIAN MADDISON ELLIOTT

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Maddison Elliott, aged 13, of Gillieston Heights on winning four medals at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London and becoming Australia's youngest ever Paralympic medallist.
- (2) Notes that Maddison won bronze medals in the women's 100 metre and 400 metre freestyle S8 finals, a silver medal in the women's 50 metre freestyle S8 final and a gold medal as a member of the Australian 4 x 100 metre freestyle team which won the final in a world record time of 4 minutes 20.39 seconds.
- (3) Wishes Maddison all the best with her future sporting endeavours.

MAITLAND RELAY FOR LIFE

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Maitland organising committee of the 2012 Cancer Council's Relay for Life fundraiser at Maitland sportsground.
- (2) Thanks the 870 participants for their involvement in this fundraising event.
- (3) Notes that a new fundraising record for the event has been set with proceeds expected to total \$175,000.
- (4) Notes that the funds raised will be donated to the Cancer Council to assist in its efforts to defeat cancer.

RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL AEROBICS TEAMS

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Rutherford Public School on its success at the National Championships of School Aerobics.
- (2) Notes the Rutherford Public School years 5 and 6 girls' team, the "Pink Jets", won a gold medal, their second successive national title.
- (3) Notes that the Rutherford Public School year 3 and 4 team, the "Rookies", won a silver medal.
- (4) Wishes the school's aerobics teams all the best in future competitions.

CASINO REGIONAL LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Casino Regional Livestock Exchange (Casino Saleyards) on its thirtieth birthday.
- (2) Acknowledges that the saleyards have been rated on many occasions by Meat and Livestock Australia as one of the top five cattle saleyards in New South Wales.

- (3) Acknowledges that in the 2011-12 financial year 120,000 head of cattle went through the Casino saleyards.
- (4) Acknowledges the economic and social importance of the saleyards to the economy and community of the Richmond Valley.

SLEEK GEEKS SCIENCE EUREKA PRIZE WINNER BRANDON GIFFORD

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Brandon Gifford on winning the Sleek Geeks Science Eureka Prize for the second year in a row.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and commitment shown by the year 11 Casino High School student in taking out this prestigious award for his video entry called The Legendary Lizard.
- (3) Acknowledges the skills shown by Brandon in scripting and editing the video, as well as catching and handling the 30 different lizards shown in the video.
- (4) Wishes Brandon well with his goal of one day owning his own zoo.

PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD WINNER ADAM HOURIGAN

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Adam Hourigan on his achievements at the 2012 Australian Professional Photography Awards.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and commitment Adam has shown to his chosen profession.
- (3) Acknowledges this is the fourth year in a row Adam has successfully competed in the awards and wishes him well for the 2013 awards.

CASTLE HILL PAWS IN THE PARK FUN DAY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the annual Castle Hill Paws in the Park festival will be held on November 2012 and is an opportunity for dog owners to come together and share, learn and enjoy each other's company.
- (2) Congratulates the festival's major sponsors, the Hills Private Hospital, for its support.

CASTLE HILL POLICE RETIREMENTS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the 60 or more retired police officers who gathered at the Castle Hill Community Centre in September 2012, for their years of service to the local community.
- (2) Recognises 82 year old Laurie Orchard who joined the Police Force in 1956, served for 18 years and retired after being shot in the line of duty at Ashfield police station.

CASTLE HILL POLICE

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Welcomes four new police officers to the community in Castle Hill—Michael Lefel, Tony Stocker, Scott Darwick and Ryan Bruckard.
- (2) Congratulates these new officers on their hard work and wishes them well as they approach their careers with energy, integrity and dedication.

NETBALLERS KRISTINA BRICE AND PAIGE HADLEY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET to move—

That this House congratulates Hills netballers Kristina Brice and Paige Hadley for their selection in the under 21 years Australian netball team and wishes the pair all the best as they prepare to tour the Caribbean in November 2012.

REACH FOR THE RAINBOW RUN FOR THE HILLS CHARITY FUN RUN

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Reach for the Rainbow, which supports early intervention services for babies and preschoolers with a disability or learning delay, for arranging the inaugural Hills News Hills M2 Run for the Hills charity event on 7 October 2012.
- (2) Wishes all runners the very best as they raise funds for an excellent cause.

PARALYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST ANDREW PASTERFIELD

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET to move—

That this House congratulates Castle Hill swimmer Andrew Pasterfield on winning gold and setting a new Paralympics record in the men's 4x100 metre freestyle relay at the 2012 Paralympic Games and wishes Andrew all the best in his swimming career.

PROJECT FUTURES CAMPAIGNER STEPHANIE LORENZO

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Hills resident Stephanie Lorenzo, chief executive officer of Project Futures, in her battle to put an end to human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- (2) Supports the 2012 Project Futures campaign, Stella Fella, to increase awareness of the global issue of human trafficking and forced sexual servitude.

CASTLE HILL WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET to move—

That this House congratulates the Castle Hill Women's Bowling Club on being runners up in the New South Wales Pennants Playoffs competition, held at Tuncurry in August 2012 and wishes the club all the best in future competitions.

MURRUMBIDGEE LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT STAFF

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Murrumbidgee Local Health District staff for their work.
- (2) Congratulates Lee Clout and other health workers based in Narrandera and Leeton for their efforts in setting up an in-home rehabilitation program to improve the quality of life for older people.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER GARRY McKEOWN

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Father Garry McKeown from St Mary's Catholic Church Parish at Mudgee on the occasion of his fortieth anniversary in the priesthood.
- (2) Notes that Father Garry first served the Mudgee parish from 1982 to 1984 and returned to Mudgee as parish priest in January 2005.
- (3) Recognises the important work that Father Garry performs in supporting and encouraging parishioners in their daily lives.

TAWARRI GROVE OLIVE OIL GOLD MEDAL

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Rosslyn and David Kemp from Tawarri Grove on their gold medal win at the Royal Canberra Extra Virgin Olive Oil Show.
- (2) Notes that the winning extra virgin olive oil was produced from olives planted near the Pinnacle, and in difficult growing conditions caused by a mild summer, which resulted in lower yields.

ABILENE GROVE OLIVE OIL

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lorraine and John Milla of Abilene Grove at Borenore on achieving second place at the Royal Canberra Extra Virgin Olive Oil Show.
- (2) Notes that their success encourages local growers to exhibit their oils to improve the appreciation of the oils that are produced in Australia.
- (3) Wishes Abilene Grove every success in exhibiting its oils at future olive oil shows.

NEW ENGLAND WOOL ULTIMATE CLIP COMPETITION WINNERS DARYL AND IRENE CROAKE

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Pyramul wool growers Daryl and Irene Croake on winning the 2012 New England Wool Ultimate Clip competition.
- (2) Notes that Mr and Mrs Croake have been preparing wool clips for competition for almost 50 years.
- (3) Recognises the importance that wool expositions play in maintaining the quality for which Australian wool is renowned.

BANKSTOWN SPORTS WOMEN'S CRICKET CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Bankstown Sports Women's Cricket Club has been operating for more than 30 years and competes in the Sydney Cricket Association Women's Competition.
- (2) Notes that women's sport remains significantly underfunded in Australia.
- (3) Congratulates the Bankstown Sports Club on its support of the Women's Cricket Club.
- (4) Congratulates the players in the Bankstown Women's Cricket Club, as well as the coaches Rob Mack, Max Macleay and Byron Hackshall.

BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Bankstown City Netball Association is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in September 2012.
- (2) Notes that there are sixteen netball clubs involved in the 2012 competition.
- (3) Notes that more than 2,000 players participate in the Association's competition.
- (4) Congratulates former president Betty Moore on her more than 20 years of service, acknowledges the first president Irene Robinson and congratulates the current president Margaret Stefanoff and secretary Simone McDonald.
- (5) Congratulates the current and former executives, volunteers, umpires, coaches and players on their ongoing efforts and on this magnificent achievement.

BASS HIGH SCHOOL MULTICULTURAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Bass High School held its Multicultural Day celebrations on 31 July 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges that Bass High School currently has close to 800 students, of which a large number are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- (3) Notes that the purpose of the Multicultural Day was to celebrate the achievements, talents and cultural heritage of the school community.
- (4) Congratulates Bass High School's principal, Mr David Horton, Parents and Citizens president, Ms Ingrid Winter, the teachers, staff and students on their efforts to celebrate multiculturalism.

MEALS ON WHEELS SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that national Meals on Wheels Day celebrated its sixtieth anniversary on 29 July 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work of thousands of volunteers across the nation including the 175 Bankstown Meals on Wheels volunteers who deliver close to 2,000 meals each day.
- (3) Congratulates Bankstown's former and present volunteers on 46 years of dedicated service to enhancing and supporting the lives of so many in need.

COUNCILLOR GLENYS FRANCIS CIVIC SERVICE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Councillor Glenys Francis on her retirement from local government.
- (2) Commends her continuous service as a Port Stephens Councillor since 1995 which included two terms as deputy mayor and acting mayor of Port Stephens Council.
- (3) Notes that Mrs Francis has been awarded Freeman of Port Stephens for her community service which includes her involvement in 17 community committees and was also awarded a Centenary Medal for her contribution to the Centenary of Federation celebrations.
- (4) Thanks Mrs Francis for her continued passion for the area and tireless hard work for Raymond Terrace community organisations including Tidy Towns, the Raymond Terrace and District Historical Society, the Senior Citizens and Community Centre and the Men's Shed.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

BULLI HOSPITAL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [11.56 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates all the staff of Bulli Hospital;
- (2) condemns the Government for closing the emergency department at the hospital and not allocating additional funding for the proposed urgent care centre;
- (3) calls on the Government to allocate funding and commence construction on the \$9.4 million Integrated Primary Care Centre before any changes to the emergency department take place; and
- (4) condemns the Government for misleading the Northern Illawarra community by not keeping its election promise to upgrade services at Bulli Hospital.

This motion is important because it will enable the Government to clearly articulate its plans for the emergency department at Bulli Hospital.

Mr Mark Coure: You created the mess.

Mr RYAN PARK: This is an extremely important issue to the entire northern Illawarra community. Let us be clear—in response to the interjection to the member for Oatley—that those on this side of the House clearly acknowledge that this should have been fixed many years ago, but it was not done. It must also be acknowledged that before coming to office those on the other side regularly visited Bulli Hospital, and barely a month went by when they did not promise increased services to Bulli Hospital. The O'Farrell Government has now delivered two budgets, and despite a commitment by the former Labor Government to allocate just under \$10 million to Bulli Hospital, no money has been allocated to that facility. This motion is important because it comes on the back of some of the largest cuts or "efficiency gains"—as those opposite prefer to call it—that this State has seen in the past 20 years.

I do not care what bureaucrat or staffer uses that term, an "efficiency saving" is a cut, and the people of the northern Illawarra are concerned that the entire regional community will suffer as a result. This motion is not only about Bulli Hospital, it is also about health services in the Illawarra region. It is about services in the electorate of the member for Wollongong and it is about services further south in the electorate of the member for Shellharbour, as well as the northern Illawarra. The population in the Illawarra is growing and that growth includes a particularly high ageing demographic. This represents a challenge for health services. It is not easy for those who live in northern Illawarra to attend Wollongong Hospital. The member for Wollongong has often informed the House about the challenges faced by Wollongong Hospital—

Mr Mark Coure: And failed to deliver.

Mr RYAN PARK: That is incorrect. The problem with the Government's approach to Bulli Hospital is simple: the more Bulli Hospital is downgraded, the greater the pressure on Wollongong Hospital. The greater the pressure on the Wollongong Hospital—a hospital that caters for the whole region, not just Wollongong—the more resources it will need. The people of the Illawarra do not expect an emergency department at Bulli Hospital equal to that of Wollongong Hospital. Despite the comments of the member for Heathcote, the people of the Illawarra have never said we need a new hospital. The community has said that it needs an upgraded emergency department, one that will be open around the clock to treat people who do not require the same level of care as that provided at Wollongong Hospital. The people of the Illawarra understand that such a facility will take enormous pressure off Wollongong Hospital.

The people of the Illawarra also understand that those living on the northern beaches of the Illawarra right up to the Royal National Park have access to an adequately resourced and serviced hospital. In the summer months and during holiday periods the population of the Illawarra increases significantly. People from Western Sydney and from all over New South Wales come to the area to swim and enjoy the beautiful Illawarra, particularly the northern coastline. However, Bulli Hospital has insufficient funding to cater for the increased demand for services that brings. The Minister for Health should tell us once and for all what her plans are for the Bulli Hospital. The Minister should tell us once and for all if she will honour the commitment that she and the Liberal candidate for Keira gave in the lead-up to the last election. That commitment was specific and clear: an upgrade of services for Bulli Hospital. The community is in no doubt about what was said and they now want to see that commitment turned into action.

When the Minister for Health was the Opposition spokesperson on Health she was a frequent visitor to Bulli Hospital. Tragically, that frequency of her visits has died down over the past 15 or 16 months. That has been noted by the community and, more importantly, by the residents of the Illawarra region. Members opposite know that the residents elected them to deliver on their election commitments. We are now asking members opposite to honour those commitments and improve services so that the people of the Illawarra have access to the level of health care they need and access to a hospital at Bulli that can cater for their needs and the demand for health services in the region.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I welcome all visitors to the Speaker's gallery this morning, especially the members of Shell Cove Probus Club, guests of the member for Kiama.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [12.03 p.m.]: I congratulate the hardworking staff of Bulli Hospital. However, I condemn the member for Keira for attempting to use those workers to score political points. I cannot believe that the member had the gall to talk about allocations of funding for Bulli Hospital. Everyone knows that the Labor Government ran the hospital into a state of disrepair. The member acknowledges that his party has admitted that. Labor failed the people of Bulli for almost two decades with regard to the hospital. The Labor Party failed to upgrade the facility, maintain it or allocate funding for future restoration.

Ms Noreen Hay: What are you doing about it?

Mr LEE EVANS: For the benefit of the member for Wollongong, we have had 16 months, compared to 16 years under Labor.

Ms Noreen Hay: What are you doing about it?

Mr LEE EVANS: I have been working behind the scenes; we are working on it. The member for Wollongong should not worry about that. No doubt she will talk about the elusive \$9.4 million that the former Government supposedly set aside for Bulli Hospital. I have investigated the \$9.4 million that the former Government set aside. When the books were handed over in March last year I looked for the \$9.4 million allocated for Bulli Hospital. There was no such animal; it was gone. Once again we got smoke and mirrors from the member for Keira, who said that there is \$9.4 million in the bottom drawer. I am sorry, but it is not there. It was empty promises and hollow words from the failed Labor Government, which had nothing left but empty promises; nothing but an economy in distress and crumbling infrastructure.

The O'Farrell Government is looking seriously at improving services at Bulli Hospital and providing a better standard of care. The member for Keira cannot stand the fact that action is finally being taken. The Government is currently spending \$16 million to cover the net cost of services for Bulli Hospital. The member cannot stand the fact that we are doing something. Our Government will actually manage to fix Bulli Hospital. He cannot stand that we are taking a calm, sensible and considered approach to improving services, as opposed to the panicked, knee-jerk reaction of his party, which just threw a non-budgeted, empty promise of cash at the issue. This was not about improving services; it was a desperate attempt to lessen the punishment members opposite knew they would be dealt at the election.

It was a poor attempt to make people forget that Labor had done nothing for Bulli Hospital for almost two decades. For more than two decades the members representing the Bulli area failed. The talk of the member for Keira about misleading the people of the Illawarra is the height of hypocrisy. The member is misleading the public, whipping up fear and anxiety to serve his own political purposes. He wants the elderly residents of the Illawarra to panic unnecessarily. He wants the people to think that the sky is falling because it suits him politically. The member well knows that the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District is committed to ensuring that Bulli Hospital meets the needs of current and future generations of residents of the northern Illawarra. He knows that the district is engaging in extensive—

Ms Noreen Hay: Show us the money.

Mr LEE EVANS: I will repeat that because members opposite are not listening. The member for Keira knows that the district is engaging in an extensive clinical services planning process across the entire district that will determine priorities for the provision of clinical services for the next 10 years. That is happening now. The member does not seem to realise that the district is engaged in ongoing talks with the Bulli Hospital advocacy group, and the group has been invited to make submissions directly to the board. If the Government's plan has not been finalised and the district is actively working with the advocacy group, why is the member for Keira

condemning the Government? Why is he undermining the planning and negotiation process? The member is acting against the interests of his constituents. The answer is that he thinks it will suit his political ends. He does not care about the process or achieving the best results. He only cares about getting his face in the paper, looking like he is fighting for something.

Mr Ryan Park: You missed the bus on this one.

Mr LEE EVANS: I believe there are more important things than appearance, such as delivering better services, improving infrastructure and ensuring that constituents get the best value for their hard-earned tax dollars. The planning process is essential not only in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Local Health District but in local health districts and speciality health networks across the State to ensure that the valuable public funds that we are entrusted with are spent wisely and where they are most needed. Following the establishment of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District in 2001 a statement of strategic intent was prepared as a blueprint for the district's vision and the provision of health services into the future. The statement of strategic intent suggests a number of changes to realign the services, not only in the northern Illawarra but across the district. It includes realignment of services at Bulli Hospital, including enhancement and consolidation of aged care and rehabilitation, services to make Bulli Hospital a centre of excellence for aged care.

It also suggests some changes in the way emergency services are provided at Bulli. This gave us the first look at where health services in the region might progress into the future. The current planning process for the Illawarra Shoalhaven Health Care Services Plan 2012-22 is based on the hard facts, consisting of data analysis and projections. It is based on several rounds of consultations, both with the clinicians who will be providing the services locally and the community receiving these services. Despite the claims of the member for Keira, there has never been any intent at any stage to close Bulli Hospital. The draft of the health care services plan supports the earlier vision of enhancing aged care rehabilitation at Bulli Hospital. It turns it into a centre of excellence for the future. The member for Wollongong doth protest too much. She has failed across her electorate. The member for Keira is mesmerised by my electorate. He should stick to his own electorate and look after his own people.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind members that it is the practice of this House that members be heard in silence—that applies to members from both sides. I understand that the motion is emotive. The member for Oatley may think he is helping, but I warn him that I am happy to put any member of this House on a call to order.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.11 p.m.]: I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Keira, who, as we have heard in this place many times, has been fighting to achieve the continued funding necessary to keep open the emergency service department at Bulli Hospital. The member for Heathcote gave a very entertaining but unbelievable speech. I do not think even he believed what he was saying. He talked about action, but most educated people will tell you that self-promotion is no recommendation. The fact that you would get up today and try to defend diminishing resources for a hospital in your own electorate is a disgrace. Do you really believe the things you said in this place today? My question to you is: Why did you not say those things in the run-up to the election?

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order: Pursuant to standing order, I ask that the member direct her comments through Chair and not to members opposite.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Wollongong that she must address her comments through the Chair.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I ask the member for Heathcote why he did not say one word about that in the run-up to the election. What can be considered a more appropriate time to debate this slash-and-burn mentality of the Coalition Government to vital services in the New South Wales health system?

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Oatley will come to order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I moved a motion in October 2011 that highlighted the under-resourced, over-stretched and struggling emergency department of Wollongong Hospital. Now further pressure is being placed on it—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I warn the member for Oatley that if he continues to interject I will place him on a call to order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: —following the announcement of the closure of Bulli Hospital emergency department. The facts lie far. Along with that we have the Government cutting \$3 billion from health services in New South Wales. You know it and I know it.

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order: The member opposite is flouting your ruling by not directing her comments through the Chair. She is pointing and inciting those opposite. She is trying to disrupt the House with her disorderly behaviour. I ask you to direct her to adhere to your ruling.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I uphold the point of order. I again ask all members to direct their comments through the Chair. Once again, I ask all members to refrain from interjecting on the member with the call.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I should ask for additional time because I have not addressed any comments to a member since your last ruling. I spoke generally, using "you" in the general sense. The facts are that \$3 billion is being cut by this Government from the New South Wales health system. This will place more pressure on Wollongong Hospital in my electorate that it can ill afford. The hospital has the worst trolley block it has ever experienced. Before the election, the Minister criticised the former Labor Government over trolley block and said that she was going to fix it. Instead, she has made it steadily worse and now cuts \$3 billion from NSW Health and closes Bulli Hospital emergency department.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I call the member for Oatley to order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: The Minister is adding more pressure on the services provided by Wollongong Hospital. I commend the member for Keira for continuing to fight to try to get the funds needed to keep the emergency department open.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [12.15 p.m.]: I also join in welcoming my friends from the Shell Cove Probus Club who are in the Gallery today. We are debating a motion that has been brought forward by my good friend the member for Keira on health care and the provision of health services.

[Interruption]

As the visitors can see, those opposite interject even when I am saying something nice about them. Just be quiet and you might learn something.

Ms Noreen Hay: Stop saying nice things.

Mr GARETH WARD: I take exception to the suggestion that I have ever said anything nice about the member for Wollongong. This motion gives us the opportunity to talk about things that are important to our communities and I commend all members—particularly the member for Keira—for having moved this motion. However, I need to re-educate the member for Keira, which is why I have come to speak on this motion. We have the member for Macquarie Fields in the Chamber and I ask the member for Macquarie Fields, who is a former doctor, to get out his stethoscope—

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The member for Kiama is now flouting the ruling you made twice by addressing his comments to individuals on the other side of the House instead of through the Chair.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Kiama directed his comments through the Chair. I ask all members to take the emotion out of the debate. Whilst robust debate is expected in this Chamber, I ask members to try not to be so emotive and to get on with the debate.

Mr GARETH WARD: I ask the member for Macquarie Fields—a current general practitioner—to take out his stethoscope and diagnose those opposite with an acute case of political amnesia. They have forgotten the 16 years that they were in Government when they had every opportunity to do the things that they were talking about in relation to Bulli Hospital. Did they invest \$25.8 million to provide 600 extra spaces at Wollongong Hospital for car parking? No they did not. Who is doing that? It is this Government. Did they provide the funds that were needed to get on with the job of establishing the cancer care centre at Shoalhaven

Hospital? No, but this Government is getting on with it. We said we would establish area health services and local health districts with local representatives. Those people, working at the local level—doctors, nurses, and clinicians—will ensure that the issues that they are seeing on the wards are relayed back to the bureaucrats who are making important decisions about health choices.

They will be local decisions, made by local people, not by a head office a long way from the health district. The decisions will be made by clinicians—not politicians. It is important that decisions in relation to services provided locally are made by the people who are on the front line. Labor members always talk about inputs and not outputs. They talk about buckets of money being shovelled into the health system, without aiming at a positive outcome. How many extra patients are being cured? How many extra doctors and nurses do we have on the wards? The Government has put record numbers of nurses on the front line. That will be of assistance to people right across New South Wales and particularly in the Illawarra. We are proud of that achievement. We in this place need to continue to ensure that we do the right thing for the people of New South Wales. When we inherited these benches, we inherited a \$5.2 billion deficit from those opposite.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The member for Kiama is about misleading the House.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: It seems members opposite want to forget about the debt they left with this Government. We are now making tough decisions in order to resolve those issues. Running a government is like running a household because if your expenditure continues to be greater than your revenue tough decisions need to be made. Because those who sit opposite did not have the nous or the intestinal fortitude to make them, we are getting on with the tough job of rebuilding New South Wales.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [12.19 p.m.]: At some time people in Bulli will read these speeches, so I need to translate the rhetoric of those opposite into plain English. When it comes to Bulli Hospital it is all about money. The reason this Government is going to close Bulli Hospital's emergency department is simply that it does not want to pay the money to keep it open. I spent 39 years working in the hospital system and I know that it is eminently feasible to keep Bulli Hospital's emergency department open. We now have an excellent medical school in Wollongong and the medical workforce shortage that has been a problem in the past will soon be gone. I spent 20 years working one day a week at Camden Hospital and four days a week at Campbelltown Hospital. There are a large number of clinicians at Wollongong who would love to be able to spend a day a week at Bulli as it would enable them to practise emergency care, albeit in a slightly different setting.

The reason the locals want Bulli Hospital kept open is that they know exactly what it can provide. I have visited Bulli emergency department and know that it provides very effective emergency department care for people who have illnesses that usually do not require them to be admitted to hospital but sometimes do. Bulli Hospital acts as a very useful entry point into the New South Wales health system, as do such hospitals worldwide. Bulli has useful services such as X-ray, pathology and, as the member for Port Macquarie would say, nurses. It is very handy having qualified emergency nurses in the emergency department.

What we have heard from this Government is a bunch of weasel words. The Minister for Health said in a press release on 1 June 2009, "It's time John Della Bosca started being honest with the people of Bulli and surrounds and told them of his real plans for the local hospital." Those opposite have had plenty of time to inform the people of Bulli of this Government's real plan for their hospital. They have kicked the ball into the long grass and said, "We will put Bulli on the backburner due to current budget restrictions." In plain English that means they plan to close the emergency department at a time when it will cause the Government least political pain.

The Minister for Health also said, "Front-line health services are vital for local families." She also said, "The NSW Liberals and Nationals plan for local health districts will give locals a greater say in their community's health services." That was on 26 September 2009. The Minister knew exactly what the issues were at Bulli Hospital. She has had adequate time to listen to the wishes of the local community. This is all about money. She also said, "Not having a doctor physically present is an obvious risk to patients who may be taken to Bulli Hospital", and, "Not bothering to have a doctor in the emergency department is dangerous for patients." Those were her words on 5 October 2010. They say it all. Since 2010 over 16,000 patients have been seen at Bulli and 120,000 at Liverpool. Those 16,000 patients will now have to go to Wollongong, which is clearly not

coping due to the increased demand. We have just had the busiest winter ever in the New South Wales health system. We know that Bulli can run a functional emergency department. All it needs is political will from those opposite.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.23 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Wollongong, Kiama, Heathcote and Macquarie Fields for their contributions to this important debate. I look forward to raising this issue in this House frequently and regularly. I remain committed to trying to work with the Government to obtain a positive outcome for the people in the Illawarra.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 17

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

Noes, 64

Mr Anderson	Mr Fraser	Mr Provest
Mr Annesley	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 Hazzard	Mr Smith
Mr Bromhead	Mr Holstein	Mr Souris
Mr Brookes	Mr Humphries	Mr Speakman
Mr Casuscelli	Mr Issa	Mr Spence
Mr Conolly	Dr Lee	Mr Stokes
Mr Constance	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Torbay
Mr Cornwell	Mr O'Dea	Ms Upton
Mr Coure	Mr Owen	Mr Ward
Mrs Davies	Mr Page	Mr Webber
Mr Dominello	Mr Parker	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Doyle	Ms Parker	Mrs Williams
Mr Edwards	Mr Patterson	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Elliott	Mr Perrottet	Mr Maguire
Mr Evans	Mr Piccoli	Mr J. D. Williams
Mr Flowers	Mr Piper	

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

VALEDICTORY SPEECHES

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [12.40 p.m.]: This is my final contribution in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. In a career spanning 24 years, I have represented inner Sydney as an Independent initially as the member for Bligh and, following the 2007 boundary changes, as the member for Sydney. The seat, in its various forms, with the harbour as its northern boundary, has extended as far east as Point Piper and Bellevue Hill, as far west as Ultimo Pyrmont, and as far south as Redfern and Darlingtown. During my time as a member there have been seven Premiers of the State and five Speakers of this House.

I am being forced out of Parliament because of legislation enacted by the O'Farrell Government, with the support of the Shooters and Fishers Party and Fred Nile's Christian Democratic Party which bans the holding of elective positions in both State and local government. I have held both the State and local elective positions since 2004 by majority popular vote but my recent election as Lord Mayor of Sydney for a third term means that I have to resign my State seat following the passage of the Government's legislation. This decision had previously and properly been the choice of the people, since the beginning of representative government in this State in 1856. I note that in the recent local government elections the people voted overwhelmingly for Joanna Gash as the mayor of Shoalhaven in the full knowledge that she is also a sitting member of Federal Parliament.

The negative implications of this legislation include the unchecked manipulation of our democratic rights by the Liberal-Nationals Government using its parliamentary majority to further its own political interests at the expense of our democratic rights. Worse still is the worrying precedent of the removal by Parliament of a sitting member elected by the people. There was no referendum, the Government's intention was not flagged prior to the 2011 State election, and the vice-regal office shockingly has no role in defending our basic democratic rights against predatory political parties. It would seem that it is merely a rubber stamp for majority governments. Independents and minor parties with progressive and reformist agendas will always be in the crosshairs of the major parties, vested interests and some elements of a cowardly and bullying media fighting to resist change in their efforts to maintain the status quo.

I came into politics as a mother with two small children who wanted improvements to my inner Sydney neighbourhood. Redfern was run-down with fast moving traffic in almost every street, few facilities and neglected parks with rusty play equipment. My only tenuous connection with politics was a great grandfather, James McInnerny, a farmer from Gundagai, who was appointed a country Labor member of the Legislative Council but who died before taking up his seat. I am independent. I have never belonged to or been associated with a political party, and in State elections I have never allocated preferences to any party or candidate. My early dealings with local and State representatives were an eye-opener, and I believed that their responses could and should have been much more helpful.

I wanted grass in my local park, but I was told by my ward alderman that the existing asphalt made it easier to sweep up broken glass. I got equally unhelpful responses from State politicians when I moved on to tackle one-way speeding traffic in Bourke and Crown streets. I was told I needed 500 signatures on a petition, so I walked the streets, pushing a pram and holding my young daughter by the hand and got the signatures. I formed a community group, which met in my living room, and when local elections came round I stood for council when I could not find anyone else to do it. I became an alderman and finally got grass in that park. In my first election after my area was amalgamated into the City of Sydney—which had a representation of three councillors for each ward—I got two people out of three on the council to represent the once all-Labor Redfern ward.

I stood for election to the State Parliament in 1988 after the Unsworth Labor Government sacked the city council in 1987 out of fear of an Independent majority and my then candidacy for lord mayor. I scraped in against the tide and I am still here 24 years later. I am now being ousted by Parliament, not by the people. Ironically, 17 years later in 2004 similar circumstances sparked my unintended return to local government when the Carr Labor Government re-amalgamated the city with South Sydney in a cynical grab for power and my supporters encouraged me to run as lord mayor, which I did successfully. It is comforting to know that political skulduggery is most often sooner or later countered by voter retribution.

I took my grassroots principles to all levels of government based on direct and active representation, hard work and a free voice for people's aspirations and concerns. Using the Ted Mack model—and I note that Ted is in the gallery today—I produced and distributed regular newsletters using fundraisers to pay for them. The first newsletters were pretty amateur and included my husband's sketches. However, they established all-important contacts with my constituents, and that is still the case today. In the early days press releases were delivered by hand to commissioners at the *Daily Telegraph* in Holt Street and at the *Sydney Morning Herald* offices in Broadway. It was a breakthrough when we got the after-hours use of a fax machine owned by a designer in Cleveland Street.

I came to local and State government with a number of issues and concerns that included: equal rights and opportunities for all constituents; resident amenity, including the reduction of through traffic in residential areas and a better deal for public housing tenants; defending the public estate, especially the ongoing alienation of the public; development excellence and saving and renewing the best of our heritage; increasing facilities for a growing city population; and addressing the urban problems of homelessness and drug law reform. I remember

when I went to see John Hatton—who is also in the gallery today—when I first considered contesting the seat of Bligh as an Independent. He told me, "I have a good feeling about you". He became my mentor and pushed the importance of accountability and transparency in government and always maintaining grassroots support.

I also acknowledge my Independent colleague Peter Macdonald. Together with John Hatton, we held the balance of power between 1991 and 1995. Our groundbreaking charter of reform included the introduction of four-year fixed parliamentary terms and greater independence of the judiciary. We achieved the royal commission into police corruption, introduced whistleblower legislation, increased the independence of the Ombudsman and Auditor-General and established a legal services commissioner. These reforms were described as the most progressive in any Westminster system in the twentieth century. They are reforms that no major party will initiate without being forced to do so.

I also acknowledge the support over the years of a number of strong Independents, including Greg Piper, Richard Torbay, David Barr, Dawn Fardell, Peter Draper, Rob Oakeshott and Peter Besseling. While we have not always voted together, we share the desire to represent our electorates and to be accountable to them without the intervention of a party machine or vested interests. At a time when governments are afraid to lead and are increasingly focused on day-to-day polls in marginal seats, strong Independents are essential to pressure governments to do what is right for the wider public good and our future. I have been an active member of this Parliament and I am proud of the goals I have achieved with the support of my community.

When I came into this Parliament homophobia was rife and homophobic slurs were common. My 1993 Anti-discrimination (Homosexual Vilification) Bill, which became law, made it illegal to incite hatred of gay men and lesbians. I remember the pathetic scene of Fred Nile leaving hospital in his pyjamas in a wheelchair so that he could vote against the bill. That bill stemmed from recommendations of the Anti-Discrimination Board report on HIV/AIDS-related discrimination. I was a member of the committee established to oversee that report. The early to mid 1990s were tough—I lost many close friends to AIDS. I held forums in Parliament to discuss discrimination and the availability of drugs and during 1992 I lobbied the Minister for Health, the St Vincent's Hospital Board and finally the Premier to achieve six new AIDS beds at St Vincent's Hospital because patients were suffering in the overcrowded casualty ward.

I saw my friends die from AIDS and suffer discrimination even in death when family members failed to honour their wishes over their estate or their request to be buried with their partner. I introduced my Significant Personal Relationships Bill in 1997 to protect all relationships. While it did not pass this Parliament, it became a model for Tasmanian and Victorian legislation and was the basis for a register in New South Wales introduced by the former Government. After funding cuts in the mid-1990s saw bed numbers cut at a time when emergency admissions were increasing, I campaigned with the community to get the Government to maintain a minimum level of funding that saved St Vincent's Hospital from closure. In 2002, with demand for its services increasing, a new state-of-the-art hospital was opened. In 2010 I introduced the Adoption Amendment (Same Sex Couples) Bill, having failed to get these changes passed in 2000. The bill passed in a nail-biting conscience vote that many members will remember, and now children can be adopted by both their parents if they are in a same-sex relationship.

My 1993 Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust legislation guaranteed public ownership of the former showground site by transferring control to the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. With this Government withdrawing funding from the park complex, the Fox Studio lease of the site now provides vital trust revenue. My 1994 Local Government (Boarding and Lodging Houses) Amendment Bill defined "boarding houses" as residential premises instead of business premises, thereby reducing their council rates, and my land tax legislation led to the Government extending boarding house land tax exemptions to low-income rental properties.

I saw a dramatic and positive transformation in the Northcott public housing estate, which was accredited as a safe community by the World Health Organisation. Northcott had experienced murders, suicides and high rates of violent crime and many tenants had suffered extreme isolation and were afraid to leave their units or speak to neighbours. I worked closely with dedicated tenants to improve safety and amenity and lobbied to get a community development worker, who helped to turn the situation around—he also is here today. Northcott had two shows in the 2006 Sydney Festival called *Stickybricks*, which was a collaboration between tenants, the arts organisation Big hART and artists, which greatly lifted the spirits of this often troubled community.

My 2007 Liquor Amendment (Small Bars and Restaurants) Bill, which provided for small bars and which was supported overwhelmingly by the community, was included in the Government's liquor bill which

led to the establishment of intimate and eclectic bars in Sydney and across the State. Backpackers no longer use Victoria Street in Kings Cross as a de facto car sales yard following the passage last year of my Local Government Amendment (Roadside Vehicle Sales) Bill. The Potts Point local community, led by Jenny Green, now an Independent councillor at the City of Sydney, worked with the City of Sydney and helped to lobby the State Government to obtain outcomes. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

My Freedom of Information (Open Government—Disclosure of Contracts) Bill made government contracts with private companies open to public scrutiny. The catalyst was the secrecy associated with the Cross City Tunnel contracts. At the 1999 Drug Summit my motion led to the establishment of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Kings Cross in my electorate. After an exhaustive 10-year trial, including public consultations, it was judged a success and made permanent in 2010. After years of advocacy former Premier Iemma funded a Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre on the St Vincent's Hospital campus providing integrated mental health and drug and alcohol care. My South East Forests Protection Bill 1993 was passed in the Legislative Assembly but blocked in the Legislative Council again by—guess who?—Fred Nile, but it was used by Premier Carr following a change in government as a model for far-reaching forest protection legislation for important old growth forests.

I acknowledge the brilliant contribution of Jeff Angel and the Total Environment Centre on this and many other environmental issues. I led community campaigns that kept the former Sydney Showground in public hands and stopped the takeover of Moore Park by the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust. Council is still fighting to get the last remnants of car parking off public parklands. I successfully campaigned with local communities to save the Woolloomooloo Bay Finger Wharf and maintain public access for half its length; turn the Pyrmont Water Police site into the wonderful public park it is today; provide public access to Seven Shillings Beach at Point Piper; open up former navy foreshore land at Rushcutters Bay; and so far have been successful in restricting excessive marina development at Elizabeth Bay, which is also the subject of an Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry.

I leave as the longest serving woman and the longest serving Independent in the New South Wales Parliament. And the one thing above all for which I pride myself in both State and local politics is that after research and consultation I have carried my convictions through to action, I have not been diverted or put off by bullying press and raving shock jocks, and ultimately I have been supported by the people. I was a very early supporter of gay and lesbian rights and the first member of the Legislative Assembly to march in the Mardi Gras. I was the only member of Parliament willing to support the trial of the supervised safe injecting room in my electorate and I brought my community with me on my journey to understand why it was needed—to save lives, to get users into treatment and to take injecting off the streets.

I successfully promoted small bars legislation after years of intransigence by the major parties in the grip of the Australian Hotels Association and I rode the disgraceful and manufactured opposition to separated cycleways to victory at the recent City of Sydney election. Governments need guts if they are to achieve reform that is needed now and for the future. I thank my staff, who over the years have shared my dedication to the community and have supported my values. Special thanks go to Tammie Nardone, my parliamentary research officer; Roy Bishop, my senior electorate officer, who has been with me for more than 10 years; and Leanne Abbott, my electorate officer, who established close ties with public housing tenants. Without their support I could never have achieved what I have achieved and they were so much a part of my electoral success over the years. They also are the collateral damage caused by this odious legislation, as are those in the community who have come to rely on the electorate office as a place of help and hope.

We are all very sad about what is happening. I also thank the other dedicated staff members who have worked with me in the electorate office and at Town Hall, especially James Zanotto, Bec Wilson and Larry Galbraith. Thanks go also to Frank Littlewood, Anne Fraser, Tessa Whittle, John Fraser, Robyn Attuell, Kay Vernon, Richard d'Apice, Gerard Gooden and my wide pool of reliable volunteers who deliver newsletters, stuff envelopes, make phone calls, draft correspondence, conduct research, and file my work. I thank also the many student interns, especially from Boston University, who I hope learnt from my busy inner city electorate office. Special thanks go to the army of volunteers who have come out and supported me at 12 successful elections, with key roles played over many years by Leone Joy, Sheba Greenberg, Bruce Druery, Peter Morris, Dennis Halloran and Eleanor Sydney-Jones. I thank the wonderful Parliament House staff.

Mostly importantly I thank my family members who have not only tolerated but also supported my enthusiastic commitment to public office and serving the community. My work has dominated our lives. Peter took his long service leave and we mortgaged the house for the first Bligh campaign. It was probably difficult

for Sophie and Tom growing up with a mother in the news—they probably found that no-one else's mother was in the Mardi Gras or standing on a milk crate with a megaphone! And to Thomas, who is here: Thank you, Tom. My work over 24 years has been archived thanks to Ann Pederson and Elaine Spicer, for which I thank them.

I am leaving Parliament with important things that are yet to be achieved. Despite my efforts this Parliament has failed to achieve the more humane treatment of animals. I hope my Independent successor will continue the fight for a better life for both companion and farm animals. The prevailing head-in-the-sand attitude to climate change threatens the very survival and prosperity of future generations, as governments continue to put protection of what is left of our natural environment before short-term profits. There has to be a highest and best use test for land use. I hope this Parliament achieves a modernised planning system that retains the principles of the 1979 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act of community involvement and environmental protection. Sydney, our global city, urgently needs a modern, state-of-the-art, efficient mass transit system.

We must address recidivism rates, homelessness, affordable housing and marriage equality, as well as alcohol-related violence, and we urgently need to reform strata laws and enact container deposit legislation. State Parliament must become a progressive place that works towards a vision of a better State that is sustainable and equitable. In closing, I thank my supporters and my communities for sharing my view of progressive politics and choosing me to represent them for 24 years in State Parliament and 15 years in local government, including 8½ years ongoing as Lord Mayor of Sydney. I look forward to a cooperative and productive relationship with the State Government for the good of our city and its future. I wish every success to my successor and conclude by saying that I hope Sydney retains its independence.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report: 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

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

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [1.00 p.m.]: This is the first report of the Committee on Children and Young People in the current Parliament. The report fulfils the committee's statutory functions to oversee the functions of the Commission for Children and Young People and examine any report of the commission. The committee examined the 2009-10 and the 2010-11 annual reports of the commission as well as the 2009 annual report of the Child Death Review Team and a special report of the Child Death Review Team entitled "A preliminary investigation of neonatal SUDI in NSW 1996-2008: opportunities for prevention."

The conducting of annual report reviews as the first item of business for the committee was beneficial as it gave the committee an opportunity to learn further about and understand the work done by the commission. As part of the review the committee sent a number of questions to the commission and also invited the commissioner to appear before the committee at a public hearing, where further questions were asked regarding the work of the commission and that of the Child Death Review Team. During the review the committee learnt that this is a period of significant change for the commission. Two of the main changes affecting the commission involve the Child Death Review Team and the Working With Children Check.

Last year, responsibility for the Child Death Review Team was transferred to the NSW Ombudsman. This was followed by the transfer of oversight responsibility from this committee to the Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and Police Integrity Commission. This explains why the committee's review deals only with those reports of the Child Death Review Team that were tabled before this transfer of responsibility. Despite this transfer, the committee is pleased to see that the commissioner remains an active member of the Child Death Review Team. The committee examined the reports of the Child Death Review Team from 2009 through a series of questions to the commissioner before, after and during the hearing. The work of the Child Death Review Team remains relevant to the committee and the commissioner's presence on the team will enable the committee to stay informed about the work of the team.

Another significant change affecting the commission is the new Working With Children Check. The Working With Children Check plays an important role in protecting the children of New South Wales by reducing the risk of abuse in the workplace. Following a review of the Commission for Children and Young People Act, Parliament passed the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act earlier this year. This Act makes a number of improvements to the Working With Children Check for the benefit of children and young people in New South Wales. The commission now has the responsibility of performing all Working With

Children Checks. Currently the commission is working with the Government to develop the particulars of the new check and how it is to be conducted. It is assumed that the majority of applications will be made online, but the commission will remain the central point of contact for child-related employers or those workers requiring a Working With Children Check.

The new legislation also incorporates recommendations made by the Auditor-General of New South Wales. The committee was pleased to see the commission working towards implementing these and other recommendations made by the Auditor-General and notes that this was echoed by the Public Accounts Committee during its recent examination of performance audits. The committee has made two recommendations arising from this review. Firstly, the committee had anecdotal evidence that the work of the commission was not widely known, especially amongst children and young people. To attempt to improve this situation the committee recommends that the commission gives more prominence to its online presence and research the most effective methods to reach children and young people. The young people of today are extremely technology savvy. They are comfortable in the online sphere so it is important for the commission to make full use of options such as Facebook, Twitter, and other methods. Pushing information out to interested clients is just as important as maintaining a clean, easy-to-use website and hoping that people find it themselves.

The committee's second recommendation relates to the commission introducing key performance indicators. By introducing and reporting on key performance indicators in future annual reports, the commission could set definable goals and highlight their successes in these areas or identify areas that require further attention. They may also help the commission to overcome certain difficulties, which they outlined regarding the level to which advice they provide to government and non-government agencies is acted upon. Finally, I thank the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Megan Mitchell, and other staff at the Commission for Children and Young People for their cooperation throughout this process. I also thank my fellow committee members—several of whom are present in the Chamber—for their hard work. I commend this report to the House.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [1.06 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the first report of the Committee on Children and Young People in the current Parliament. The report includes a review of the 2009-10 annual report and the 2010-11 annual report of the Commission for Children and Young People and the 2009 reports of the Child Death Review Team. At the outset I acknowledge and thank the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Megan Mitchell, and her staff for their hard work. I also acknowledge and thank the committee secretariat for its hard work. I thank the member for Charlestown, Mr Andrew Cornwell, for his chairmanship of the committee. He has a strong interest in the wellbeing of children and the inclusion of young people in decision-making. Other committee members include the Hon. Jan Barham, the Hon. Niall Blair and the Hon. Greg Donnelly from the other place, Mr Andrew Gee, the member for Orange, and Dr Andrew McDonald, the member for Macquarie Fields—the only committee member to have previously served on the Committee on Children and Young People. Dr McDonald's guidance and corporate knowledge have been very helpful to the committee.

The committee's terms of reference are tight. They include the monitoring and review of the exercise of the commission's functions and the transcript of its public hearings demonstrate how it achieves that. The terms of reference also require the committee to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children—recommendation No. 1 of the report responds to that. The committee has recommended that the commission give more prominence to its online presence and research the most effective methods to reach children and young people. We need to engage young people at their level and in ways that are accessible to them. The commission's website is helpful but it is effective only when children log on to it. Better ways need to be found to make young people aware of what the commission offers and what the benefits will be to them. The best way to do this—and the commission is cognisant of this—is to ask them what works for them.

Yesterday several members of Parliament, including Andrew Cornwell and I, attended the launch by Commissioner Mitchell of *Citizen Me! Engaging children and young people in your organisation*. The publication is about engaging children and young people in decision-making. It is also about asking children and young people about their opinions and bringing them to the forefront. I attended a session the commission held on how to engage with children in the built environment. For example, the publication encourages councils to ask children about what they want in a new park, what will engage them—in other words, what works. To get the best benefit from something, those who will use things need to be asked what they want. That seems easy but it is rarely done. Now that the local government elections are over I encourage the commission to contact the various councils to ensure that the new councillors are aware of the commission and its suggestions about the built environment.

We need to focus on how to reach young people and how to engage them. This recommendation will help to bring a focus to that. When Sutherland council's Youth Committee was reinvigorated about eight years ago the young people wanted to ensure that their voices had been heard, their opinions had been taken into

account and their time was valued. Generation Y wanted faster decisions and results than the wheels of local council were used to. That is still a challenge eight years on. It is my hope that the council will benefit from some of the learning and guidance offered by the committee. I have also been interested in the work undertaken by the commission in the area of children in the middle years. Pleasingly, some 337 people attended one or all of the three seminars offered by the commission relating to this issue. I attended the seminar in the parliamentary theatre and found it interesting to hear the opinions of the people who offer a voice for these children, including one of my local groups, Shirewide Youth Services. I was impressed with how our emcee, Wendy Harmer, summed up the opinions in the room and kept the options, opinions and ideas going.

The commission's role has been changing recently but the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are still the primary objectives. The amendments to the Working With Children Checks will have an impact on daily operations, but I believe the changes are vital to ensuring the safety of children. The legislation transferring the responsibility for the Child Death Review Team from the commission to the NSW Ombudsman will see the commission remain as a member of the review team. Once again, I thank the committee members, the committee staff and the commission for their work and effort on this report.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [1.10 p.m.]: People in New South Wales have the second longest life expectancy in the world. A child born today will probably have a shorter life expectancy than those who are still alive if current trends are to be maintained. That is why this committee is important. The Commission for Children and Young People was set up to ensure that every piece of government policy or legislation is child focused. I pay tribute to Megan Mitchell in her role as Commissioner for Children and Young People and to the member for Charlestown, the chair of the committee. Never has the commission had a more difficult job because as budgets get more and more strained shortcuts are taken and often the people who suffer the most are the children. A good example is planning: the first thing that goes is usually things such as parks for children to play in or, if they are provided, the equipment is often inadequate and sometimes dangerous.

The roads in many developments in outer Sydney are too narrow for children to safely play on, which is why we have a sedentary group of children who are at greater risk of developing lifestyle diseases in adulthood than previous generations. This is the last committee that will look at the Child Death Review Team annual reports because the responsibility for that team has been moved to the Ombudsman. I did not want to go over past ground, but the reality is that only 7 per cent of all child deaths are reviewable by the Ombudsman and 93 per cent are not. I would have thought the wider issue of childhood mortality should stay with the Commission for Children and Young People.

The 2009 report indicates that there were 565 deaths, and most of those were from disease and most were aged less than one. This is all about prevention. Sudden infant death syndrome has a lot of high-risk behaviours such as tobacco smoking, co-sleeping and inappropriate positioning of the child. Many deaths in older children are associated with enduring familial difficulty and often are associated with risk-taking behaviour and far too often with drugs and alcohol. Never has the gradient of mortality in socioeconomic classes been greater. That is something that the commission is focusing on but without the ability to supervise the Child Death Review Team it removes a significant amount of its leverage.

The changes to the Working With Children Checks are most necessary. The process for checks needs to be streamlined because there are still areas where people with access to children are not checked and other areas where people receive numerous checks, for example, when moving from child-related employment to supervising sports teams. Upgrading the Working With Children Checks needs to be maintained. Finally, I urge the Government not to have any staff freezes. I know that there is a staff freeze on non front-line staff. The number of staff in the commission is quite small and those staff members are all on the front line, even if they are not designated as such. I urge the Government to maintain funding to the commission.

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

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 25/55

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

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.14 p.m.]: As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee I take this opportunity to comment on the recent Legislation Review Digest tabled on 18 September 2012. This is the twenty-fifth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth

Parliament. As required by sections 8A and 9 of the Legislation Review Act, the Legislation Review Committee identifies issues in proposed legislation and regulations. The twenty-fifth digest examined the two bills introduced in the sitting week commencing 20 August 2012. The bills considered were the Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012 and the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Costs) Bill 2012.

The Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012 makes changes to the regulatory scheme that governs the placement of coastal protection works on beaches and sand dunes. The bill also reduces the maximum penalties for offences related to coastal protection works and removes the regulation-making power from the principal Act. The committee noted that the bill is to commence by proclamation. The Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Costs) Bill 2012 repeals an uncommenced amendment to the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 that, if commenced, would remove the power of the Workers Compensation Commission to make costs orders in compensation claims and would provide that each party is to bear that party's own costs. The bill also provides that costs are not to be awarded against a worker unless the worker's compensation claim was without arguable merit. The committee did not raise any concerns in relation to this bill under section 8A of the Legislation Review Act.

In preparing the digest the committee also reviewed 28 regulations and did not make an adverse comment in relation to those regulations. The committee reviews regulations during the disallowance period for each regulation for the information of members. The committee prepares the digest to assist the members of this place and the other place in their consideration of bills. I thank the members of the committee, namely, the member for Swansea, the member for Rockdale, the member for Bankstown, the member for Parramatta and our colleagues in the other place, Mr Moselmane, Dr Phelps and Mr Shoebridge, who consider the bills and issues relevant to the committee as required by the Legislation Review Act during the committee's deliberations.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.17 p.m.]: I speak in debate of the twenty-fifth report of the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament and acknowledge my fellow members of the committee: the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Parramatta, the member for Rockdale, the member for Swansea and our colleagues in the other place, Mr David Shoebridge, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. As always, I acknowledge the hardworking committee staff. This week's digest reviewed two bills, the Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012 and the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Costs) Bill 2012. One would think that after 16 years in opposition the Government would be keen to review and amend much more legislation. It shows that the Government is clearly satisfied with the majority of the legislation that was passed by the former Government. With respect to the Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012, the committee considered the issue of the inappropriate delegation of legislative power and noted:

The Committee will always be concerned where commencement of an Act is delegated to the Executive, once passed by the Legislature. However, the Committee notes the implementation of this Bill will require certain administrative arrangements to be implemented by the Government and Local Councils. In these circumstances, the Committee does not consider there to be an inappropriate delegation of legislative powers.

The second bill reviewed by the committee was the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Costs) Bill 2012. The committee made no comment on the bill with respect to the issues set out in section 8A of the Legislation Review Act 1987. I understand that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile moved an amendment to the costs regime in relation to contested workers compensation claims and the Government supported that amendment. The amendment provide that injured workers cannot recover legal costs incurred in commencing and prosecuting their workers compensation claims, even in the event that they are successful. This is an unacceptable outcome and, fortunately, this provision has not yet been proclaimed. Following the passage of this legislation the New South Wales Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales wrote to the Hon. Greg Pearce outlining the unfairness of this new costs regime. The Minister's written response was extraordinary. He replied:

As you are aware, the Government does not have a majority in the Legislative Council. The amendments to the cost provisions were introduced by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. In seeking to engage further on the issue, I would encourage you to discuss such matters with the Christian Democratic Party and the Shooters and Fishers Party.

That is called buck passing. Following that letter Mr Michael Daley wrote to the Minister asking him to reconsider that position and he outlined that he and Mr Adam Searle were prepared to work with the Government to arrive at a fair costs outcome for injured workers. I understand that the Minister has not yet replied to that letter. In summary, this bill seeks to repeal the current unproclaimed costs provision. It then provides that if the commission makes any order as to costs the commission is to order that the costs follow the event unless it appears to the commission that some other order should be made as to the whole or any part of the costs or as the regulations otherwise provide. The commission may only order the payment of costs by a

claimant if the commission is satisfied that the claim was without any arguable merit. No other bills are being reviewed by the committee. It was a nice long committee meeting—of four minutes. I commend the digest to the House.

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

Report noted.

[Acting-Speaker (Ms Sonia Hornery left the chair at 1.22 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.)]

MITOCHONDRIAL DISEASE

The SPEAKER: I remind all members that this is Mitochondrial Disease Awareness Week. They may wish to visit the table in the Parliament's foyer displaying material relating to mitochondrial disease.

MEMBERS' STAFF RESIGNATIONS

The SPEAKER: I make special mention of Miss Ingrid Jansons from the office of the Leader of the House and Mr Mitchell Wilson from the office of the member for Maroubra. Today marks their last day in the New South Wales Parliament as they depart on opportunities overseas. Despite rumours to the contrary they will not be travelling together. I am told that Mitch may come back, but maybe he will find a better offer. Miss Jansons will be travelling to Siberia, which she thought was a better option than working for the Leader of the House—and I agree with her. On behalf of all members I thank them both for their service to the Legislative Assembly and wish them well in their future endeavours.

RETIREMENT OF GREG KELLY, DEPUTY SERJEANT-AT-ARMS

The SPEAKER: Today marks the final time Mr Greg Kelly, the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, will see service in the Chamber prior to his retirement on 28 September 2012. This morning Greg carried the Mace into this Chamber for the last time. I am sure that all members have signed a card that is circulating the Parliament that suggests that when Greg leaves he will be taking the Mace with him. Greg commenced work with the Parliament of New South Wales on 13 April 1981 when he was employed by the Legislative Council, rising through the ranks to the position of Parliamentary Officer—Table. On 4 November 1991 he joined the Legislative Assembly as Parliamentary Officer—Table. On 27 June 1995 he was appointed Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, a position in which he has made a mark in his unique style.

Greg's absolute dedication and passion for his work and for this institution and this place are well known. In fact, when he started with the Legislative Assembly one of his primary responsibilities was oversight of the *Questions and Answers Paper*. I am led to believe he took that job so seriously that on one sitting day he worked through the night until 7 o'clock the next morning to make sure the *Questions and Answers Paper* was ready for the next day's sitting. That is typical of Greg's commitment. It is a feat that has entered the annals of legend of the Department of the Legislative Assembly. In relation to his other talents, and he has many, sources have informed me that whilst employed by the Legislative Council Greg was quite a famous proponent of hallway cricket during late-night sittings.

Many members would also be aware of Greg's sporting prowess in tackling disorderly members of the public who have jumped from the gallery from time to time—I trust the current visitors in the gallery will not do that—and also escorting disorderly members who were removed from the Chamber to take time out. Included among those members on several occasions was the current Leader of the House. Miraculously, the current Speaker, the member for South Coast, was never removed. On behalf of every member of the House I wish to thank Greg for his exemplary service to the Parliament. Greg leaves this place much loved and highly respected, and he will be sadly missed, not only by members, but by all the staff of the Parliament. Thank you Greg for a wonderful, wonderful period of service.

TRIBUTE TO DR ANDREW PENMAN, AM

Ministerial Statement

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.23 p.m.]: Madam Speaker, it is a day of farewells. I remind the House that every day a hundred people are diagnosed

with new cases of cancer across New South Wales. For the past 54 years the New South Wales Cancer Council has been there to assist in a variety of ways, through funding research and services, advocacy, and programs across this city and the region. For the past 14 years Dr Andrew Penman, who is in the gallery today, has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Cancer Council. Dr Penman is retiring. I did not want the moment to pass without paying tribute to a fantastic servant to the people of this State, someone who is not an elected official, someone who has worked with both sides of this House to achieve good health outcomes, and someone who has led an organisation that has demonstrably reduced the number of deaths from cancer in New South Wales.

On a day on which many people are being farewelled I note for the record the extraordinary work that Andrew Penman has done in the past 14 years. I wish him well. On behalf of all members I extend appreciation for the many things the Cancer Council does, among them Daffodil Day, which starts early at most of our railway stations. Daffodil Day always seems to be observed on the coldest day. I remember that until I became Premier I had very few photographs of me in this Chamber. At one stage the taking of photos was prohibited in this Chamber. However, on a sideboard in my office is a framed photograph of Andrew Penman and me with our faces painted half blue for Blue September, another cause supported by the Cancer Council. On behalf of all members of the House, I say thank you, Andrew, for everything you have done, thank you for the leadership you have given to the Cancer Council, and we wish you well for the next stage of your life.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [2.25 p.m.]: I too wish Dr Penman all the best in his future endeavours. He has been a staunch advocate for so many issues associated with this cause. I first had the opportunity to meet Dr Penman when the former Government was announcing a ban on smoking in pubs and clubs. I remember attending the announcement. That great campaign, which was led by the Cancer Council, has resulted in the complete transformation of our pubs, clubs and restaurants. It is extraordinary now to think that not that long ago people were smoking in restaurants, pubs and clubs. This result was achieved through no small effort by the Cancer Council, under the leadership of Dr Penman. It is one of the council's great success, among, I am sure, many others.

Dr Penman has done so much to raise the profile of cancer, to change the way we think about it, not only as a medical disease, as it obviously is, but also as a social issue. The Cancer Council has helped to change the way that members of this Chamber and the wider community think about cancer. It has medical consequences and implications, but it also has social impacts across our community. We can take action to alleviate the effects of cancer. Under Dr Penman's great leadership, the research that continues is supported by the Cancer Council. My son did a week of work experience at the Cancer Council and he found it to be a fulfilling experience. Through his experience at the Cancer Council he was motivated to study medical science at Macquarie University. Dr Penman, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours. I am sure our paths will cross in the future.

QUESTION TIME

[*Question time commenced at 2.27 p.m.*]

HEALTH BUDGET

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given that the Minister has said that local area health networks will decide where the \$3 billion to cuts in hospitals will come from, how can the Minister possibly guarantee that front-line services will not be affected?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Members opposite clearly do not listen to any answers given in this place, but I am not surprised. Yesterday's *Hansard* shows that there were many interjections from members opposite when I was answering a similar question. They clearly did not want to hear the answer. If they had listened, they would know that there has not been a \$3 billion cut to the health system. There has been absolutely none. In fact, there has been extra money transferred to the front line to increase front-line services, and that has come from the 5.4 per cent increase in the Health budget provided by Treasury—a 5.4 per cent increase—and an additional \$2.2 billion over four years that has been converted from wasteful operations in health to the front line. This very year the Government will be providing 50,000 extra emergency attendances, 30,000 extra overnight stays and 2,000 extra elective surgeries. We have already employed 2,900 extra nurses, and we will continue to employ more. We have record numbers of interns and other doctors, record numbers of allied health professionals and record numbers of staff helping them on the frontline.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members of the ruling I gave earlier in the week relating to the taking of points of order.

Mr John Robertson: I remember, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! Points of order should be succinct.

Mr John Robertson: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. I asked how the Minister could guarantee that front-line services would not be affected; I did not ask her to debate the \$3-billion budget cut.

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the Minister back to the leave of the question.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I will guarantee that this year an extra 50,000 emergency attendances will be dealt with and that there will be 30,000 extra overnight stays.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: How can I guarantee that? I can guarantee it because it is in the signed service agreements entered into with every local health district and every chief executive officer. I guarantee that there will be increases, just as there were last year. Dr Penman, who is in the public gallery, knows that it is important that I thank every—

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —doctor, every nurse and every allied health professional who work their hearts out in our hospital system. I apologise for the revolting behaviour of members opposite, who are calling into question their commitment to providing these extra front-line services. It is absolutely shameful that members of the Opposition are scaring people unnecessarily by suggesting there is a \$3-billion budget cut.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting or they will be removed from the Chamber immediately for the rest of the afternoon. The member for Kogarah will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I find it offensive that members opposite do not want to know about the efficiencies that, as I pointed out yesterday, were introduced by the Labor Government. They signed off on them in May 2009 as a means of ensuring that we had new models of care, better ways of treating patients and improved patient outcomes, and at the same time saved money so that services could be directed to the front line. It is all spelled out on the NSW Health website.

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

[Interruption]

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: They obviously think they can win the argument by screeching. The reality is that these are increased front-line services.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Wollongong and the member for Kogarah to order for the third time.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I will tell members about the new models of care that are enabling us to use some of these resources to employ extra nurses and doctors to provide care for more patients in our hospital system.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member that points of order should be succinct.

Dr Andrew McDonald: The question was about front-line services.

The SPEAKER: Order! I know what the question was about. The Minister is being relevant to the question asked.

Dr Andrew McDonald: The Minister is talking about something different from front-line services.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is another spurious point of order from the member for Macquarie Fields. I have ruled on the point of order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am astonished that I have to give the shadow Minister for Health, who is a doctor, a lesson about front-line services. Front-line services are extra attendances in emergency departments, extra elective surgery, extra overnight stays, extra nurses and extra doctors. Get your act together, man. The member for Macquarie Fields should act responsibly.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: I direct my question to the Premier. What is this Government doing to improve educational standards in Aboriginal communities?

Ms Noreen Hay: Nothing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Wollongong that she is on three calls to order. I remind the member for Kogarah that she also is on three calls to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Broken Hill for his question and his concern about his Indigenous constituents. The member for Wollongong got it wrong—it was the Labor Government that did nothing. The former Government is responsible for one of the most shameful statistics in this State. Less than 50 per cent of Aboriginal people between the ages of 15 and 24 are in full-time training or full-time study. That is the result of the Labor Government's policies. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister for Education and I announced in May this year that we would try to change that by implementing the Connected Communities strategy.

Ms Anna Watson: It's called bipartisanship.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Shellharbour calls it bipartisanship after the interjection from that disgrace the member for Wollongong. The Connected Communities strategy is all about driving improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people across New South Wales. Importantly, it is not a top-down strategy implemented by experts or so-called political experts sitting here in Sydney. It is about ensuring the delivery of the Government's commitment to devolve responsibility. I congratulate the Minister for Education, who has worked hard not only to support the goals that the ministerial task force has put in place but also to ensure that the program is properly resourced and properly run.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Canterbury that she is already on a call to order. The member will cease interjecting.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: This is an Australian first.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time. The member will cease interjecting.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It will be delivered through 15 schools in some of the State's most complex and disadvantaged communities. Recruitment is now underway to select the very talented, very committed and very experienced executive principals who will lead the Connected Communities programs at schools in Boggabilla, Toomelah, Wilcannia, Walgett, Menindee—which is in the electorate of the member for Murray Darling—Bourke, Brewarrina, Moree, Coonamble, Taree, Moree and Tamworth. These new executive principals will be given unprecedented authority to tailor education to student needs. This Government understands that when it comes to delivering education in these particularly challenging communities one size does not fit all.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I think the Government is tackling a problem that was deteriorating when members opposite were in office despite the fact that they shovelled more money at it without focusing on the outcome. As a result of the Labor Government's policies, only one-third of Aboriginal children—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —who start year 7 go through to year 12.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Maroubra demonstrates his stupidity. No-one should take any comfort from these appalling statistics. As I said at the outset, only half of Aboriginal young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are in full-time study or full-time training. For the benefit of the member for Maroubra, that includes TAFE.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting. This is not an opportunity to argue.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The executive principals will be given unprecedented authority to tailor education to student needs in their communities. Where they see a need in their community they will be empowered to address it. Schools will become community hubs that will deliver a range of services from birth, through school to further training and employment. As well as having specially selected executive principals, these schools will have a community partnership leader, a community member endorsed to teach Aboriginal languages and culture and, in line with the Government's commitment, an advisory council. This is a new approach that recognises that one size does not fit all and that we must do things differently, especially after 16 years of government by members opposite. It is a first step in achieving a generational change to give Aboriginal children the same educational opportunities and the other opportunities that all students across this State expect.

As we know, schools are usually the largest physical asset in a community. Therefore, it makes sense that they be better utilised as a hub for the delivery of a range of services. The principals in these schools will be the most highly paid principals in New South Wales and their roles and responsibilities will extend far beyond the usual parameters that apply to principals. The schools will work closely with the community to development and implement strategies to help students to achieve better outcomes. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Today I take great pleasure in announcing and congratulating eminent Aboriginal educator and leader Michele Hall on her appointment to the new position of Executive Director Connected Communities. Those people opposite appear to be bored. We actually think that Michele Hall should be celebrated and encouraged, not yawned at by those opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira, the member Canterbury and the member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Ms Hall was previously the Director of Aboriginal Education and Training. She has a vast background and extensive experience in a range of senior roles.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease arguing across the table. The Premier has the call.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I also announce that \$3.3 million has been set aside for the Connected Communities Program. I further announce that thanks to the great effort of the Minister for Education in

ensuring that his department better manages its capital works program, \$10 million in capital funding will be made available to these communities so they get the facilities they need to produce better results. The approach taken by the Minister in relation to capital works in his department is a million miles away from the approach taken by those opposite when the Building the Education Revolution money was on offer from the Federal Government. We are committed to putting infrastructure and key services—

[Interruption]

For the benefit of member for Canterbury, the Building the Education Revolution report, commissioned by the Prime Minister, shows that in the non-government sector 92¢ to 95¢ in every dollar found its way into bricks and mortar. The same report showed that at a State level between 62¢ and 65¢ found its way into bricks and mortar because of the mismanagement of those opposite. It is a great record those opposite have. We are committed to putting infrastructure and key services on the front line where they can have the greatest impact. Unlike Labor, we will learn from the mistakes. Connected Communities is our best chance to redress a crisis that needs smart thinking, comprehensive planning, resources and endless dedication. If we are ever going to achieve reconciliation, giving Aboriginal kids the same education outcomes is one of the goals we need to meet.

HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

Mrs BARBARA PERRY: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given that the Minister has only allowed for an extra 50,000 emergency department attendances this year, which has already been exceeded, what will the Minister do to deal with the resulting bed block?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: This is clearly a question from somebody who does not know what it means to provide for extra emergency department attendances.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The reality is that there are more than 2.6 million emergency patients attending our emergency departments.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Last year there was an increase, and we managed to meet the needs of an increase in emergency department attendances with a 5.4 per cent increase in the budget last year, plus efficiency savings that have been rolled over in the local health districts to provide for these extra services. This is something that the former Labor Government did, and we continued it. When those opposite were on this side of the Chamber—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: What did you say about it when you were in opposition?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: At the time we did not criticise. At the time we said this was a much more efficient way to deliver health care. I congratulate the former Government and the former Minister on introducing the efficiency savings plan.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not an opportunity for the Opposition to argue with the Minister.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Less than perfect services are now being rolled out as improved services. The other day I was fortunate enough to attend Sydney Hospital when the Clinical Excellence Commission highlighted another tool that it has developed to help patients with sepsis, which is an infection which, if unaddressed and unidentified, can cause a person's health to deteriorate and ultimately cause death. The hospital now has a sepsis program that is preventing deaths and other serious outcomes for patients who suffer from it.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: This program prevents patients from having to go back into hospital for further occasional services—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question is about emergency department numbers. While sepsis is very interesting, the question was about budgeting for the increase in emergency department demand and bed-block.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have listened carefully to the Minister's answer and she is being relevant to the question asked.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: A patient with sepsis in an emergency department, when that sepsis is not identified and not treated, will take up a lot more time in the emergency department and furthermore in the hospital, create a lot more work and require a lot more effort to treat. The patient may well die. I am surprised the doctor on the other side does not know that. These wonderful new models of care are freeing up resources so that more patients can be treated in emergency departments, and avoid staying in hospital for long periods, becoming sicker and ultimately having to be readmitted. Under the Labor Government the unintended readmission rate was out of control. These are some of the wonderful new programs being developed, mostly from clinicians on the front line. I particularly congratulate people such as Professor Malcolm Fisher, who is soon to retire and who, along with his colleagues, devised a program called Between the Flags, which was introduced at the tail end of the life of the former Labor Government. The sepsis program has come out of that—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: The question was about—

The SPEAKER: Order! Is this the same point of order?

Dr Andrew McDonald: Yes. It is relevance under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on that point of order. The member will resume his seat. I remind the member for Macquarie Fields about my ruling on taking points of order simply to waste time. The Minister has the call.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I believe the member for Macquarie Fields is wasting time because those opposite do not want to know the answer. They do not want to congratulate clinicians and others who are devising these wonderful new models of care that are freeing up the capacity of our hospital system so that more patients can be treated in the emergency department. I know the member for Macquarie Fields has not worked in an emergency department and perhaps does not support the work of doctors who are devising these wonderful new models of care. He does not see the stress and strain they are under every day to treat more and more patients.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: That is why clinicians are so very happy to support what we are doing.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I could read onto the parliamentary record quotes about how clinicians are better able, through new models of care and efficiency savings, to treat their patients better, and free up capacity at hospitals so that they can treat more and more patients. As I said previously, I congratulate everybody working in the health system and all my colleagues on this side of the Chamber who have been so supportive of the work of hospitals. Shame on the Opposition for failing to acknowledge that hard work.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Mr PAUL TOOLE: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government improving the performance of the New South Wales economy and driving economic growth in regional New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Bathurst for a very good question. Let no-one be in any doubt that this Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to ensuring the recovery of the New South Wales economy after 16 years of neglect under Labor. There are encouraging signs that our State's economy is, indeed, rebounding as a result of our strong economic policies and responsible fiscal management. Indeed, with State final demand, the New South Wales economy rebounded strongly in the June quarter, growing by 1.5 per cent in the quarter and by a healthy 3.4 per cent over the past year. I know that those opposite are not interested, but New South Wales now has the strongest growth of the non-mining States on a quarterly and yearly basis. By contrast, under Labor in the decade to March 2011 our State final demand grew at a slower average annual pace than other non-mining States. The unemployment rate in New South Wales at 4.8 per cent remains the second lowest of any State, with more than 30,000 jobs created since this Government came to office.

There are other very positive signs on the other economic indicators, including private sector investment. Private business investment in New South Wales in the June 2012 quarter grew above the 10-year trend. At 3.6 per cent, New South Wales has the second-largest rate of growth in private business investment behind only Queensland. Growth in 2011-12 was also strong at 5.6 per cent. This is well above the target set by the Government in NSW 2021—its 10-year plan—of a 4.0 per cent annual average trend in growth. In absolute dollar terms, New South Wales lies behind only the two mining states of Western Australia and Queensland. Growth in New South Wales new engineering construction was strong in both the quarter and over the year, underpinned by the strength of the mining sector.

New engineering construction continues to be the biggest contributor to growth in New South Wales business investment. The Government has made it clear that one of its primary goals is to improve the performance of the New South Wales economy. NSW Trade and Investment, my agency, has been central in delivering on this commitment. Over the 2011-12 year NSW Trade and Investment directly assisted in attracting more than \$1.2 billion investment in the New South Wales economy and a further \$319 million in regional activity. NSW Trade and Investment also assisted in generating a forecasted \$460 million in export revenue and provided assistance to more than 7,300 investors and exporters. Forecasts indicate that our activity will create almost 9,000 jobs, and more than 3,000 of those jobs will be in regional New South Wales.

But there is other positive news for regional employment. Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last Thursday showed a strengthened regional New South Wales labour market. The regional New South Wales unemployment rate remains very close to its record low in April 2012. The statistics suggest, when read alongside statistics from recent months, that employment has stabilised and is starting to trend upwards. The strongest growth in regional employment between July 2012 and August 2012 occurred in the Richmond-Tweed, mid North Coast and Murray-Murrumbidgee regions—good local members. With strong growth in private sector investment and strengthening employment conditions, the diversified New South Wales economy remains strong in the face of difficult global economic conditions. This Government will continue to work hard to make New South Wales the first State in which to do business and will continue to grow the State economy.

HEALTH WORKERS

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I direct my question to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister guarantee that when front-line workers, including speech pathologists, cleaners and clinical support officers, resign or retire from our hospitals that they will be replaced with an equivalent trained staff member?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The member for Murray-Darling will come to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Macquarie Fields was the Parliamentary Secretary for Health in the former Labor Government that presided over a health system that was—according to Justice Peter Garling who reviewed the acute services in our hospitals—"at the brink". Our health system was at the brink of total collapse and failure not because there were not wonderful clinicians working in our hospitals and other community health services, but because the system had been run down by the former Labor Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order. This is not the time for the member to argue with the Minister.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: That is why the O'Farrell Government has put such a lot of effort into establishing a devolved structure with local health districts and boards. The representatives of those organisations will have a real say in how those and other services are to be run. It is timely to inform the House that the Government recently completed an advertising process in which people were invited to apply for reappointment to local health districts and boards—a number of those positions are due to be reconsidered at the end of this year. Hundreds and hundreds of applications were received. This is an endorsement of what the Government has done to ensure that locals will have a much greater say in how their health services are run. The locals and chief executives will have a much greater say in how the Government will provide these front-line services. It is nonsense to suggest that there will be no increase in front-line services. Members should know that not one person is turned away from our public hospital system.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: That is the public health agreement under Medicare. Every patient who turns up to our hospitals is treated—every single one. That is absolutely fundamental to the Government's position.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: I have allowed two minutes for the Minister to get to the point of my question, which was about whether speech pathologists, cleaners and clinical support officers would be replaced.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I find it extraordinary when someone says, "I have allowed". Do members think that is arrogant? I can inform the House that the services delivered by our front-line clinicians are very much supported by the local health districts—

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —that have signed up and negotiated service agreements with the Director General of Health as to how those services will be delivered. I could read to the House the various media clips since Friday when the erroneous headline appeared about a so-called \$3 billion cut to Health. Indeed, local health districts are giving commentary to their local papers saying that they will not be putting off front-line staff; they are going to be employing more front-line staff to care for the patients in our hospital system. As I have said, the Government has already employed 2,900 extra nurses and it will continue to employ more nurses. The O'Farrell Government has employed front-line allied health professionals—speech pathologists, physiotherapists and others—in greater numbers since being in office.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Those numbers will be revealed in the annual reports—as they always are. Those numbers have gone up and they will continue to go up. Perhaps the numbers have not always been reported. When those opposite were in government they did not report a whole lot of stuff. Things were shrouded in secrecy because they did not want people to know anything. Those opposite never had any accountability or transparency. The Health website, particularly local health sites, shows exactly how much money and exactly how many staff—

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: These service agreements will be posted on the internet and everyone will be able to see where the extra money will be spent on providing more treatments and where the extra nurses and others will be employed—nurses, of course, are exempt from any cuts anywhere. I can assure the House that the focus will be on providing greater front-line services and cutting inefficient waste not only in the back line but also through models of care that will be replaced by the better treatment of our patients.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Mr STUART AYRES: I address my question to the Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the reformed WorkCover Scheme helping the most seriously injured workers?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and for his sterling work in the Penrith community. The member for Sydney is not present in the Chamber, but I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work she has done in this Parliament. The Government thanks the member for Sydney for her work and looks forward to working with her in a leadership capacity in this State for the city we love. I also acknowledge Greg Kelly and thank him for the work he has done in this place. Members will feel much less safe not having Greg here.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is great to be part of a government that is making decisions in the long-term interests of those who need it most—the people of New South Wales. When the Government came to office and looked at the Workers Compensation Scheme it realised that the scheme was in serious trouble: It was in deficit to the tune of \$4 billion and was losing \$9 million per day. That is not sustainable. While those opposite may argue, if the scheme was not financially sustainable then in the long term it would not have had the capacity to look after any injured workers. That is the truth.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We remember that premiums were to increase by 28 per cent to businesses across this State unless action was taken.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We remember that the Business Chamber estimated that jobs were going to be lost across this State unless action was taken. We also remember the Leader of the Opposition standing up at the Labor conference—where a great time was had by all. What did he say in his first speech? He said:

The first act of Labor in government will be to scrap Barry O'Farrell's workers' compensation laws.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It would be a disaster for injured workers across the State, businesses, the economy and, in particular, the 940 severely injured workers who, thanks to reforms to the scheme, have seen their weekly benefits substantially increased this week.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We always said that we wanted to return the scheme to a sound financial footing.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We wanted to enable injured workers to get back to work and we wanted to improve the benefits and support to the most severely injured workers. That is what we tried to do.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: For some reason, members opposite do not like this and they do not want this.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As of last Monday, the 940 injured workers most in need—those who have been assessed as having a whole body impairment of 30 per cent or more—are now receiving an increase of up to 70 per cent in weekly payments. In many cases this is an increase of \$304, up from the statutory minimum of \$432 a week. The response from some workers has been incredible, as one would expect. When told of the increase the workers said things such as, "That'll make things a bit easier ... it's been difficult—that's great". Another said, "Terrific, that's great. I'm battling on what I was getting. Thank you very much." Another said, "Thank God, I feel like I won Lotto. I can't believe it. You can't imagine the financial stress."

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those 940 severely injured workers, and any workers who suffer a severe injury in the future, would lose that massive increase under Labor, because the Leader of the Opposition said that he would scrap the reforms. He would take the money away from the workers who need it.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is an example of a government being responsible with the challenges before it. We want to give the money to those who need it the most and that is what the workers compensation scheme is doing. What is lost on members opposite—time and again we hear it from them—is that if they oppose the tough decisions they are working against the interests of those who they are supposed to be protecting. A scheme that is not financially sustainable ultimately means that injured workers cannot be supported in the long term.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is why today the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is proud to say that the decisions we are making are putting the funds where they are needed most—with the most severely injured workers in the State.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is part of the reform and a continuing agenda in this State of looking after those who most need it, putting the long-term interests first.

SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE

Mr NATHAN REES: My question is addressed to the Premier. Given today's Supreme Court decision on the Liberal Party State Council, does the Special Minister of State still enjoy the Premier's full confidence?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Yes.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICES PROGRAM

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I again remind several members that they are on three calls to order. The member for Swansea has the call.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. What is the Government doing to assist people struggling with cost of living pressures?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. The member for Toongabbie will come to order. The Minister has the call. I will give no more warnings this afternoon. Members who continue to interject will find themselves out of the Chamber.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for Swansea for his question, and I applaud his keen interest in helping the people of our State through these tough and difficult economic times. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is committed to assisting New South Wales residents to deal with increasing cost-of-living pressures—living pressures that have been brought about by 16 years of disastrous governance by members opposite. It was my pleasure last week, on behalf of the Government, to commit more than \$18 million in funding over three years for the Financial Counselling Services Program. Under the program, NSW Fair Trading provides grants to community-based organisations to assist those suffering financial hardship.

The program provides individuals, mums and dads and their families with information, advocacy and education in relation to budgeting and managing debt. It is with great pleasure that I inform the House that, despite the constant budget pressures under which the Government is forced to operate, we have been able not only to maintain but also to expand the program. Under this program, nearly 40,000 people accessed financial counselling services in the past financial year alone. The \$18 million that the Government has committed is a clear demonstration of its belief in this service. I remind members that this is an increase from the \$2 million per annum allocated by members opposite as recently as 2007.

We listened to the people of New South Wales and we acted to develop a new funding model that distributes funding under the program according to equity and socio-economic need. I do not need to remind members that a key goal of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government's NSW 2021 plan is to better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage. The Financial Counselling Services Program goes to the heart of this commitment. Indeed, I am pleased to inform the House that some areas of high need will see a significant increase in the funding available.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The member for Canterbury, the member for Menai, the member for Smithfield and the member for Campbelltown will be pleased to know that over the three-year funding period south-western Sydney will be provided with nearly \$1.6 million—almost double the current level of funding.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The member for Baulkham Hills, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Riverstone, the member for Londonderry and the member for Hawkesbury will be able proudly to inform their constituents that north-west Sydney will see an increase to nearly \$1.1 million—almost double the current level of funding.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The member for Newcastle, the member for Maitland, the member for Port Stephens and the member for Charlestown can tell their residents that Newcastle-Lower Hunter will receive more than \$1.35 million—double the current amount. It would be remiss of me not to mention that the illustrious member for Tweed and his compatriots in Lismore, Ballina and Clarence can inform the people of the far North Coast that they will receive more than \$720,000—an increase of more than half.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The members in the Illawarra—the member for Heathcote, the member for Kiama and the member for Wollongong—will be delighted to hear that more than \$795,000 will be provided to the Illawarra—more than 2½ times the amount that is currently available. This is what it looks like when the Government delivers, particularly for the people of Wollongong. It has taken a Liberal-Nationals Government to deliver. We are making the tough decisions and getting on with the job. The review also analysed Aboriginal populations and identified nine locations in the State—

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: —where targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services would provide most benefit to our Indigenous communities. As a result, the model will provide targeted services to communities in Penrith, Blacktown, Campbelltown, Newcastle, the Illawarra, Dubbo, Broken Hill, Moree and Tamworth, with more than \$750,000 allocated over three years. [*Extension of time granted.*]

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will contain themselves for the next two minutes.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: One important difference in the revised funding model is the creation of 24 regions covering the entire breadth of New South Wales. Previously, areas of the State had no access at all to these services. Some of those areas had the most vulnerable members of our society within them and therefore had a tremendous need for these services. Under Labor, the areas in Sydney without access to the Financial Counselling Services Program were Holroyd, Liverpool—see what happens when you break through the communist reign of terror—the inner west and the Hawkesbury, and in regional New South Wales, Bellingen, Queanbeyan, Bourke, Cobar, Dubbo, Blayney and the Snowy River. They now all have access to services that they have never had before.

The revised funding model will be implemented for the 2012-15 funding round, which commences on 1 December this year. Many people in the communities served by this Parliament are struggling with a variety of cost-of-living pressures. By implementing the Financial Counselling Services Program, the O'Farrell-Stoner Government has demonstrated a concrete commitment to assist those people to get back on their feet and out of financial difficulty. This is a government that listens, a government that reforms and a government that delivers for the people of New South Wales.

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE LANDSCAPES PTY LTD

Mr GREG PIPER: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage. With a long history of odours and fumes from the Australian Native Landscapes operation at Cooranbong affecting the amenity and health of surrounding residents, will the Minister investigate the conditions of the operating licence and make appropriate changes so that offensive odours are identified and controlled?

Ms ROBYN PARKER: That is a good question from a good local member. I acknowledge the member for Lake Macquarie who at the last council elections stepped down as mayor of Lake Macquarie.

Mr John Robertson: Because you made him.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: A decision, he tells me, he made some time ago.

Mr John Robertson: He was not happy to.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: Do those opposite want to hear about the achievements of the member for Lake Macquarie as mayor? Those of us who live in the Hunter respect and acknowledge his achievements in improving the environment of Lake Macquarie during his time on council. The member served as a councillor from 1991 and has held the position of mayor since 2004. He was elected in 1991 on an environmental platform. Lake Macquarie was struggling and suffering from industrial run-off. In relation to environmental improvements, he campaigned extensively and worked with governments of all persuasions, and he brought a cohesive council along for the ride. He also took action in relation to lead pollution and run-off from industrial areas around Boolaroo. We all appreciate the guidance he gave in his role as mayor of Lake Macquarie.

Mr Greg Piper: I think I will get you to write my valedictory speech.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: I acknowledge the member's interjection. I hope the incoming councillors and mayor do. The operations of Australian Native Landscapes at Cooranbong have been a matter of concern for some time. Since 2010 the member for Lake Macquarie has been trying to get the former Government to take action on this matter. The old Environment Protection Authority took little or no action. However, a new Government and a new and invigorated NSW Environment Protection Authority are working to address those concerns. Since July, seven odour surveys have been conducted on the Australian Native Landscapes site in response to concerns surrounding its operations.

The Environment Protection Authority has required the company to implement measures on its site in relation to odour management. The measures include covering compost stockpiles, improving waste water storage and upgrading truck wash facilities to prevent dust and dirt from leaving the site. The Government has reformed the Environment Protection Authority to ensure that it is a strengthened regulator that the community can trust. Officers of the NSW Environment Protection Authority and Lake Macquarie City Council met on 14 September to discuss residents' concerns about the scale of operations at the site. I assure the member for Lake Macquarie that the authority will continue to work with the community to resolve this issue once and for all.

INVOLUNTARY DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT PROGRAM

Mr ANDREW GEE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales. What is the Government doing to make sure the State's most severely drug- and alcohol-dependent people receive the treatment they need?

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: I thank the member for Orange for his question and also pay tribute to the community of Orange. One part of the legacy that the Liberal-Nationals will leave behind in years to come in Orange is the largest inland integrated health facility in the Southern Hemisphere. Whether that is inpatient acute care, mental health care or community health, I congratulate the people behind that facility, as well as the member for Orange for his ongoing support. When people ask me what I consider is the most important thing I can do as Minister for Mental Health, I say it is to help the most marginalised and vulnerable people in our communities. This Government is guided by principle and compassion. At the heart of the many mental health and drug and alcohol reforms that we have implemented since coming to government is a commitment to help those who most need it but cannot help themselves.

It is my pleasure to announce today that the Government has committed to a new program that will help many of the State's most severely drug- and alcohol-dependent people receive additional treatment. The statewide Involuntary Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program has been designed to help severely substance-dependent people who are at risk of serious harm. The people who will come through this program are some of the most at-risk people in our communities. They are people who have unsuccessfully tried most methods of treatment and whose addictions are so bad that they pose a real threat to themselves. For too long, people in this situation have been thrown in the too-hard basket. They have been bounced in and out of the health and justice systems and have not received the help they need. This will no longer be the case.

Under this program, the Government will increase assistance to severely substance-dependent people who are at risk of serious harm and are unable to consent to treatment, particularly in cases where no other appropriate help is reasonably available. Through two new treatment facilities, at Royal North Shore Hospital and Orange, it will be easier to provide treatment to people who have refused it when treatment is absolutely necessary in order to protect them from harm. With treatment at one of these facilities, they will be able to stabilise, rebuild their physical health and begin the journey to recovery. I acknowledge my guests in the public gallery who have been intimately involved in the establishment of this program. I welcome Dr Glenys Dore and

Ms Robin Murray, together with the first person to graduate from the trial program—somebody who is getting his life back on track. After seeing question time today, he probably thinks involuntary care at one of those facilities is not a bad thing.

When I visited the new facility at Royal North Shore Hospital yesterday I was struck by the dedication and professionalism of the staff. They are doing a fantastic job. I also visited a number of other drug and alcohol treatment centres yesterday. Wherever I went, people wanted to thank the new Government. The former Labor Government implemented one of the most chaotic planning regimes that this State has ever known, which particularly impacted on the building of a world-class tertiary and acute care hospital. The project has had an embarrassing history but the facility is now back on track and is a credit to the Minister for Health and her team. Let me outline the reasons for the establishment of the Involuntary Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program. This program will replace a system operating under the Inebriates Act 1912.

The Inebriates Act 1912 gave magistrates the power to order people with severe substance addiction to be detained in an involuntary mental health facility for up to 12 months. There was no required community follow-up—an extremely important part of successful rehabilitation. This Act is exactly 100 years old. It has been strongly criticised in recent times as inconsistent with contemporary values as it failed to reflect our modern-day understanding that mental health facilities are not appropriate places to detain people with significant drug and alcohol problems. The new program replaces that system with one better focused on the rights of individuals to ensure the best treatment outcomes for those people with an addiction who have lost the capacity to make decisions about their substance use and personal welfare. We know that this approach works. [*Extension of time granted.*]

A recently concluded two-year trial of the Involuntary Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program at Nepean Hospital found it had a wide range of benefits for patients, including improved social relationships, reduction in mental health symptoms and a decreased likelihood of relapse following discharge. Importantly, a review of the trial found that 80 per cent of involuntary patients take up post-discharge voluntary after-care. Providing this level of after-care is an extremely important component in reducing the risk of relapse and adverse events following discharge from inpatient involuntary care, as well as restoring the person's capacity to make decisions about his or her substance abuse and personal welfare. This is not a government that is prepared to stand by while the most vulnerable in our community suffer. I am pleased to announce today that the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government is reaching out to the most marginalised and vulnerable in our communities through this program. This is something of which we can all be proud.

Question time concluded at 3.21 p.m.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Reference: Follow Up of the Auditor-General's Performance Audits April to September 2011

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: I inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 299 (1), the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the follow up of the Auditor-General's performance audits for April to September 2011, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Report

Mr Jonathan O'Dea, as Chair, tabled the report of the Public Accounts Committee dated September 2012 entitled, "Report on the Examination of the Auditor General's Performance Audits September 2010—February 2011."

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

PETITIONS

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

Gosford Foreshore Development

Petition opposing the proposed development "The Landing" at Gosford, as it will alienate public land and restrict public access to the Brisbane Water foreshore, received from **Mr Chris Holstein**.

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

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

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**.

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**.

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

Petition requesting the ban of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, 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**.

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**.

The Clerk announced that the following Ministers had lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Robyn Parker—Container Deposit Levy—lodged 21 August 2012 (Mr John Williams)

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mike Baird, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [3.24 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012 is to maintain legislation governing taxes and grants administered by the Office of State Revenue. The bill continues the practice of regular revision of State revenue legislation to address anomalies, respond to court and tribunal decisions, and deal with changes in business practice. While some of these amendments are minor or technical, it is important to keep pace with changes to the commercial and legal environment and to adopt best practice from other States. The bill makes substantive amendments to four Acts as well as amendments in the nature of statute law revision. I will deal first with the amendments to the Duties Act 1997. The Duties Act contains provisions intended to ensure that dealings in partnership interests are subject to duty where the partnership holds dutiable property such as land in New South Wales.

If a partner retires but the partnership continues, it is common for the retiring partner to be paid out the value of his or her interest, and the retiring partner's interest in the partnership assets is effectively transferred to the continuing partners. Although the partnership interest is dutiable property for the purposes of assessing duty,

doubt has now been cast on whether these transactions are subject to duty. This is because the retirement or death of a partner or the admission of a new partner affects a technical dissolution of the partnership even when the continuing partners agree that the partnership will not be dissolved. The bill addresses this uncertainty by providing that the retirement, death or admission of a partner will be deemed to affect a transfer of a partnership interest. The bill also extends the provisions allowing a credit for duty paid on a related transaction over partnership land. If a separate transfer of land held by the partnership is also subject to ad valorem duty, the duty payable on the partnership interest will be reduced to the extent necessary to prevent double duty.

The amendments to the partnership provisions are, in part, the result of a High Court decision, and the bill includes two other duties changes that have resulted from court decisions. In the first matter, the High Court held that mining tenements were not interests in land for the purposes of the Western Australian duties provisions. While mining leases and mineral claims are specifically included, by definition, as interests in land in New South Wales, the decision has cast doubt over whether that includes plant affixed to the land subject to the mining leases or claims. The bill therefore clarifies the definition of land to provide certainty.

The second matter relates to transfers of property from the trustee of a wholly owned sub-trust of a managed investment scheme to a custodian for the trustee of the scheme. A Victorian appeal court judgement has created uncertainty as to the application of the concessional trust provisions to these transfers. The bill therefore provides for concessional duty of \$50 on these transfers. The Duties Act currently provides certain concessions in relation to entities listed on the Australian Securities Exchange [ASX] or on other members of the World Federation of Exchanges [WFE]. The New Zealand Exchange is no longer a member of the World Federation of Exchanges, and as a result transactions in entities listed on the New Zealand Exchange are potentially liable to duty rates higher than those listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. The bill provides for entities listed on the New Zealand Exchange to be treated as listed entities.

Another amendment to the Duties Act is an exemption from duty for the purchase of new heavy vehicle trailers. This amendment is part of a broader suite of government measures to help ease the financial pressure on road freight operators in New South Wales brought about by increases in national registration charges. The amendment is, however, principally designed to encourage New South Wales-based transport operators to purchase and then register new truck trailers in their home State. The application of stamp duty on new trailers in New South Wales is a key factor that encourages heavy vehicle operators to purchase and register their vehicles in other States, notably in Queensland and Victoria. Heavy vehicle operators are legally entitled to purchase trailers in other jurisdictions provided they meet certain conditions. An interstate-registered truck must spend at least two days travelling outside New South Wales every 90 days, otherwise the prime mover and any trailers must display New South Wales licence plates.

However, as most people know, heavy vehicle operators have a degree of flexibility when it comes to registering and using their trucks and trailers because many own depots in multiple States. Despite the fact that 50 per cent of all road freight in Australia uses New South Wales roads for at least part of its journey, and 75 per cent of all interstate freight travels through New South Wales, the State does not receive its fair share of national heavy vehicle charges. This is due to the low number of trucks and trailers currently registered in New South Wales relative to Queensland and Victoria. The stamp duty exemption for new trailers aims to help reverse this trend and remove a barrier that discourages operators from registering trailers in New South Wales. The exemption will see New South Wales come into line with Queensland and Victoria, which for a number of years have charged less or no stamp duty for heavy vehicle trailers.

It must be stressed that the duty exemption does not mean more truck movements on the State's road network. It means more business opportunities for New South Wales-based truck trailer building companies and more registration revenue to help bolster the State's bottom line. The bill also contains two minor amendments to provisions in the Duties Act dealing with the declarations of trust over marketable securities and transfers of company title dwellings. Both amendments are made in anticipation of the abolition of duty on marketable securities transactions from 1 July next year, but they do not alter the substantive effect of the provisions. The bill makes amendments to the Health Insurance Levies Act 1982 as a consequence of changes to the publications of the Australian Statistician. The current provisions require annual adjustment of the health insurance levy on 1 February each year based on statistics published by the Australian Statistician concerning changes in the consumer price index for Sydney and average weekly earnings.

In future, average weekly earnings statistics are to be published on a biannual basis, rather than on a quarterly basis, and the amendments reflect this change. The annual adjustment of the levy has to be delayed because the Australian Bureau of Statistics will not publish the annual weekly earnings figures for the December quarter until February each year. In the case of future changes to the way in which the Australian Statistician

publishes these statistics, the amendments also permit the annual percentage change for a particular year to be prescribed by order of the Governor if the Minister certifies that it is necessary to do so because the statistical information required to calculate the health insurance rate is not available.

The bill contains three amendments to the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act 2011 to clarify and extend eligibility for the grant. The Regional Relocation Grant was established to implement the Government's election commitment to provide financial assistance to people who relocate from the metropolitan area to regional New South Wales. The grant is payable when, among other things, the applicant disposes of a home in the metropolitan area that was used and occupied as the applicant's principal place of residence and purchases a home in a regional area to be used as the applicant's principal place of residence. Various provisions in the Act acknowledge that the metropolitan home and the regional home will not necessarily be owned solely by the person who lives there, and it was intended that the grant is payable if at least one of the purchasers is eligible. Cases have arisen where an applicant is ineligible because not all the joint owners are relocating from the metropolitan home.

The bill corrects this anomaly by providing that only one applicant must comply with the relocation requirement when there are multiple applicants. The second amendment will extend the grant to the purchase of vacant land on which the purchaser intends to build a home. The grant currently applies to the purchase of a completed home or to a purchase off the plan but does not extend to the purchase of vacant land, even if the applicant intends to build and occupy the home immediately after purchase. Consistent with duties concessions in relation to new homes, the value of the vacant land must not exceed \$450,000, as opposed to the maximum value of \$600,000 for completed homes, and the laying of foundations for the home must commence within six months of completion of the land purchase or such longer period as is allowed by the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue.

Thirdly, the bill extends eligibility for the grant to persons acquiring a regional home under a long-term lease. The grant was initially limited to people who will be owners of the land which is the site of a regional home. However, a person who purchases a home in a retirement village often only acquires a long-term lease, usually for a consideration substantially equivalent to the purchase price that would be payable to acquire the freehold. The bill therefore extends the types of transactions that are eligible for the Regional Relocation Grant to include the purchase of a long-term lease that the Chief Commissioner is satisfied provides a degree of permanency and security of tenure equivalent to ownership. The Chief Commissioner will consider matters such as the term of the lease and the consideration payable for the grant or transfer of the lease when determining whether the lease is eligible.

The amendments to the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act will apply retrospectively from commencement of the grant scheme on 1 July 2011. The Office of State Revenue has been administering the scheme in anticipation of these amendments to ensure that earlier applicants are assessed for their entitlement to the grant on the basis of the proposed amendments. The bill also includes an amendment to the Taxation Administration Act 1996 to clarify the Chief Commissioner's power to make a compromise assessment of a tax liability as part of a settlement of a dispute that is subject to an objection or an appeal to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal or court.

Such settlements can avoid costly and time-consuming litigation in cases where there is uncertainty about relevant facts or about the application of the legislation to the facts of the particular case. Finally, the bill contains statute law revision amendments to the Land Tax Management Act 1956, the State Owned Corporations Act 1989 and the Taxation Administration Act 1996, including updating references to various offices, departments and authorities. The amendments contained in the State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012 were the subject of consultation with industry and professional bodies. The amendments will provide greater clarity and certainty for taxpayers in complying with State revenue legislation and will extend eligibility for the regional relocation grant. I commend the bill to the House.

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

HUMAN TISSUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 19 September 2012.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.53 p.m.]: I support the Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. It has been a huge problem for New South Wales and, indeed, Australia for many decades that the number of

donated organs required has not been achieved. Donated organs are required by the many people who are on transplant waiting lists. As the Minister indicated earlier in this debate, in 2010, 87 people donated their organs; that is a rate of 12.5 per one million of the population. By 2011 that rate had dropped and it continues to languish.

Although we have an opportunity to record our willingness to donate our organs on our driver licence, families often intervene in the decision after we have departed this world. That is not an unusual situation. After someone has passed away, our nearest and dearest are sensitive and concerned. Those who are left behind must have a clear understanding of the wishes of the individual who has died. One issue that has not been canvassed in this debate relates to who has the right to make decisions about the use of a body after a person has passed away. It is generally considered that the immediate family has that right. However, the law is it is the deceased person's testamentary trustee, as set out in the will, who makes that decision. Once life passes from the body, the body comes under the management and control of the trustee. As a result of all these complex circumstances, we are not achieving the number of organ donations that is required.

I strongly support the Minister for Health in her endeavours to ensure that this situation is addressed. I note that we are just over 16 months into the O'Farrell Coalition Government and this legislation is already before the House. It has been through a consultation phase and a discussion paper phase and is now before the House in an attempt to address a serious need in the community. Often those of us who register as an organ donor on our driver licence do not see our wishes carried through. The amendments in the bill to the Human Tissue Act 1983 and the Anatomy Act 1977 will clarify this situation. The move to one single national register, which registers the names of those who have determined to be donors, will also clarify the situation in the event of death. Without casting aspersions on the former Government, all other State governments moved to the national register back in 2003.

It has been nine years since the other States and Territories moved to the national register. The Labor Government obviously did not appreciate the need to make that move. I strongly support this legislation. I thank the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research for taking a leadership role in ensuring that this vital legislation was presented to the House. It will assist families to deal with the anguish that occurs when a loved one dies because his or her wishes will be clear and will be recorded on the national register. I encourage everyone to include their names on the register because they or someone close to them may ultimately benefit.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) [3.42 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their support for the Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, and particularly those who contributed to the debate: the members representing the electorates of Heathcote, Keira, Myall Lakes, Lake Macquarie, Northern Tablelands, Blue Mountains, Cabramatta, Riverstone, Charlestown, Cronulla, Mulgoa, Macquarie Fields, Coogee, Port Macquarie, Granville, Menai, Oatley, Londonderry, Penrith, Hornsby, Rockdale, Murray-Darling and Wakehurst. Some remarkable personal stories were shared with the House demonstrating the human side of organ and tissue donation. The fact that so many members from both sides of the House have contributed to this debate demonstrates the level of interest in and support for this important legislation, which underpins the O'Farrell-Stoner Government's commitment to bring the rate of organ transplantation in this State into line with the targets set in the rest of the country.

Some of the stories that were told in the debate are worth mentioning. The member for Heathcote told us of his father's decision to donate his brain to science to help his wife who was suffering with dementia. The member for Myall Lakes has a staff member who received a kidney and was given a second chance at life. The member for Cabramatta told the House about a doctor in his community who is working to raise awareness of organ donation among his culturally and linguistically diverse community, and particularly in the Vietnamese community in south-west Sydney. A family friend of the member for Charlestown was the longest-standing dialysis patient at the Wansey Dialysis Centre having had treatment there for 30 years and having undergone three failed kidney transplants. He also told the House about a university colleague whose tragic and unexpected death meant another chance at life for a number of complete strangers. I have visited the Wansey Dialysis Centre and I am proud that the Government has been able to increase the facility's capacity so that more people can be treated at this beautiful community-based centre.

The member for Macquarie Fields spoke about Tijani, a young girl who had a heart transplant after much bravery and a long wait. The member for Menai gave a moving speech a few weeks ago about a former colleague Mark Lees who donated a kidney to his wife, and Paul Bourke, whose wife died unexpectedly but whose wishes regarding donation were respected. I met Paul Bourke at the release of the Government's organ donation policy. Many people were there to support the Government's new policy and they were most eloquent

about what it meant to them. There were people whose loved ones had died but because they knew that they wished to donate their organs they were able to honour them, believing that giving life to others gave some comfort and meaning to a senseless death. I particularly recall the five-year-old who had a transplant when she was five months old. She was bouncing around the room full of life and vigour. I presented her with a large bunch of flowers and suggested that her mother might like to carry them. Not on your life! She would not let that happen; she wanted to carry her special flowers. There is a wonderful nurse in the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital transplant unit who had a transplant 30 years ago.

They are the wonderful, inspiring stories that have motivated me to work very hard with the community after the release of the discussion paper to come up with the policy and now this legislation, which will allow for the implementation of these new measures. The member for Londonderry shared his experiences at Child Flight and the member for Hornsby told the House about his constituent Anne Gilberthorpe who received a liver and a new lease on life and who is participating in the Transplant Games in Newcastle. I feel very privileged that I will be attending the opening ceremony of the Games on 30 September. I look forward to seeing the joy of the participants and the pleasure that it brings to their families to see the benefits of someone's generosity.

The Human Tissue Legislation Amendment Bill is an important part of the Government's plan, which includes both the amendments contained in the bill and the various policies and procedures that are aimed at increasing organ donation rates in New South Wales. This is an important goal and I know that it has the support of all members and the community. As leaders in the community, we have a responsibility to encourage people to discuss organ donation with their families and loved ones. During the recent launch of the Transplant Games held at Parliament House we invited members of Parliament and staff to put their names on the Australian Organ Donation Register and the response was amazing. More than 35 members of Parliament filled in forms indicating that they wished to be placed on the register. That is a great expression of the generosity of those members—and I note that they are in the Chamber. I congratulate them on making that decision. Of course, I hope that they are not in a position to donate their organs, but if that does happen the fact that they have made their views clear will give their families and loved ones some comfort.

Members have articulated the importance of transferring to the Australian Organ Donation Register. It will mean that people will make a proactive, considered decision that hopefully they have discussed with their families. In the event of their death their wishes will be clear. That is one of the major barriers to organ transplantation. Families override a deceased person's wishes because he or she had not discussed the issue. Doctors have told me that even though they know that a patient wishes to donate his or her organs they will not go ahead with a transplant if the family does not consent. This is an important measure and we must communicate the necessity of having that discussion to the broader community. Organ donation is one of the wonders of modern medicine; it saves lives and livelihoods.

However, unlike other great medical advances, organ donation involves more than the health practitioners and support staff who provide their lifesaving skills and expertise to transform lives. Organ donation requires the generosity of individual members of this community. It requires individuals and their families to give life to another at a time of death; to give another family hope at a time of grief and suffering; and to give up a part of themselves or their loved ones to save a stranger. There can be no greater generosity. Organ donation saves lives only because of the generosity of those experiencing their darkest hour at the time of the death of a loved one. The community owes a debt of gratitude to those generous individuals and their families who choose life in a time of death and who expect nothing in return. Without them the wonder of organ donation, and the saving of lives as a result, would not be possible. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mrs Jillian Skinner 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.

COASTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2012**Second Reading****Debate resumed from 13 September 2012.**

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [3.50 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012 which will amend the Coastal Protection Act 1979. The objects of the bill are as follows:

- (a) to make changes to the regulatory scheme governing the placement of certain coastal protection works (such as sandbags) on beaches, or sand dunes adjacent to beaches, to mitigate the effects of wave erosion on land, and
- (b) to reduce the maximum penalties for offences relating to the placement, maintenance and removal of such coastal protection works, and
- (c) to remove the regulation-making power from the Principal Act, and repeal existing regulations, relating to the categorisation of certain coastal land by reference to the level of the risk that the land will be adversely affected by coastal hazards (such as beach erosion, shoreline recession and coastal inundation).

The Opposition opposes the bill. Community members have significant and differing opinions and views about coastal erosion, and there is controversy about how best to deal with it. Everyone accepts that coastal erosion poses a significant problem for the State, local councils, communities and homeowners to respond to and deal with. As a former Minister for Climate Change and the Environment I remember the challenges that the Labor Government faced when dealing with coastal erosion, which affected people living along the Central Coast and at Belongil Beach. The Opposition does not believe that the Government's approach to addressing coastal erosion—by amending the Coastal Protection Act—is a sensible step forward.

As the Minister said in her second reading speech, approximately 200 homes are affected by coastal erosion. Since the 1940s we have lost an estimated 40 homes to coastal erosion. I believe that the former Labor Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, Frank Sartor, did some good work in establishing a regulatory framework for managing coastal erosion. The current Government is seeking to roll back the good framework that was established by Minister Sartor. I do not believe these are sensible reforms and they will do nothing to address this difficult and vexing issue.

I remind members that the former Government worked hard to strike a balance between the interests of private landholders and the public. Landholders are concerned about the risk to their biggest asset and, understandably, are keen to build protection for their homes. The former Government's legislation provided them with an opportunity to put in place emergency protection works—an opportunity that they did not have prior to the enactment of that legislation. Members of the public seek an assurance that their shared assets—the beautiful coastline and beaches of New South Wales—are not compromised. Neighbours also seek an assurance that the work that is done on one person's property does not make the situation worse for surrounding properties.

The former Government's 2010 framework legislation did not seek to solve erosion problems at individual locations. I appreciate that this Government is seeking merely to amend that legislation and not to change it completely. Nonetheless, the Opposition will not support these amendments. We believe that the changes we introduced in 2010 improved coastal planning arrangements and ensured that long-term emergency planning was able to be carried out faster and more appropriately with the rigorous safeguards expected by the community. For example, under the legislation enacted by Labor, landholders who wanted to build emergency works to protect their properties could lodge development applications. They had the additional option of placing sand or sandbags on their properties, under strict supervision.

We made clear our preferences. Any works carried out to protect their properties had to be planned and receive the necessary approval, but we recognised their need to respond in emergency situations. The Government's proposed amendments will change those provisions and result in any proposed emergency works being unregulated for two years, which could undermine public safety. The Government's proposed amendments will result in the construction of emergency works without proper approval and those works can remain in place for two years. The Opposition cannot support these amendments as it is concerned about public safety as such structures might lead to additional erosion.

Sandbag structures erected by landholders who have no knowledge of engineering could pose a risk in inclement weather. Sandbag structures designed by someone who does not understand tidal movements or the

management of water could create more problems than they solve and could lead to bitter neighbourhood battles, which is what has occurred in the past. The proposed amendments to this legislation could result in landholders taking action that might impact on other landholders. We do not believe that these amendments will provide the rigorous protection that was in place under legislation introduced by the Labor Government.

I refer to the proposed changes relating to coastal risk ratings on section 149 certificates. The former Government made changes to section 149 certificates. The Minister referred in her second reading speech to the problems that could be encountered in relation to section 149 certificates but the Opposition does not believe she made out a strong enough case. The Labor Government's legislation required councils to manage erosion and to provide details of land that was vulnerable to erosion. Those details were to be listed on section 149 certificates to help future purchasers better understand the erosion problems associated with certain parcels of land. I recall representations being made to me by people who had purchased properties but who were not aware of the danger of coastal erosion and its impact on their properties. This change was made to try to ensure that future purchasers understood the risks.

The Minister's logic is not entirely clear but, as I understand it, it relates to a belief that the climate change science is unclear. However, we believe that that is not necessarily the case. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made dire predictions about what is likely to happen to sea levels. The Minister referred to regional differences and said that because of them the reference in the legislation to section 149 certificates had to be removed. Even if we were to accept that argument, removing the mandatory State level zonings for coastal zone risk categories is no solution. This bill will remove any obligation to include the State's coastal zone risk categories from section 149 certificates but it does not replace those categories.

It has some vague notion of support for councils to come up with individual zonings. When Labor was in government councils said they were not in a place to do that adequately and they needed additional legislative underpinning, which we provided. I can well remember the robust debate when Labor introduced the amendments. At the time Opposition members were peddling many rumours and myths, particularly coastal members, about what would happen once the legislation was introduced. I have no doubt that those members made commitments and promises to their constituents and the Minister for the Environment is now delivering on those commitments and promises.

I remind the House that the role of the environment Minister is to ensure that he or she is the chief advocate for the protection of this State's environment. The environment Minister must ensure that if landholders put measures in place to protect their properties from coastal erosion they should do it in such a way that it does not impact adversely on the landholder next door or the environment, and they should do it in such a way that it does not impede public access to our beautiful coastline. The amendments proposed in this bill do not achieve those goals. While the amendments may well deliver on the aspirations and commitments of the member for Wyong, the member for Terrigal and others in this place, they are contrary to the role of the Minister for the Environment—that is, to be the chief advocate for the protection of this State's environment.

Mr Darren Webber: Speak to our residents.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: I have spoken to the member's residents. When I was Minister for Climate Change and the Environment I spoke to them. Labor responded to their issues but did it in a balanced way. We did it in a way that gave landholders a greater capacity to put in place works to protect their properties but at the same time we protected the interests of the broader community and the interests of the environment. The amendments proposed in this bill do not continue in that vein; they undermine a balanced approach. Labor will not support these amendments.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [4.02 p.m.]: Every word uttered by the member for Marrickville was utter rubbish. It is utter rubbish to suggest that people do not have a right to protect their homes. The shadow Minister said she visited the Central Coast when Labor was in government and it was a beautiful place. She said she consulted with residents; she clearly did not listen to them or to the councils. The section 94 certificates on people's properties were costing them their assets and they were unable to expand on those assets. It was also creating uncertainty.

Before the last election I met a young couple from North Entrance who told me that they had bought a brand new block—their first block of land. They wanted to build a house. They submitted their development applications to council only to be told that in order to comply with sea level rise they were required to build a certain height off the ground. In order to comply with council's height restriction they had to build below a

certain height; in other words, they could not build anything at all. What a ridiculous situation. More than 10,000 properties in the Wyong shire were issued with a warning that sea level rise would take their homes away. This whole situation which has been fuelled by The Greens—Labor's watermelon mates—has been blown out of proportion.

On 27 July 2011 the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Federal Minister for Human Services and Minister for Social Inclusion, was interviewed on Radio 2GB by Ben Fordham. I quote from that interview. Ben Fordham said, "I have an email from a listener who pointed out to me that you've been warning that the Central Coast of New South Wales faces the greatest risk from sea level rise in New South Wales." Ms Plibersek responded, "Well I was on the Central Coast recently and I was talking to some pensioners and retirees up there—the Central Coast does have some low lying areas that would be subject to inundation if sea levels rise. I'm not sure that I was making a particular point about the Central Coast but any coastal area and any area that's got those low lying housing ...".

He cut Ms Plibersek off and said, "Can I tell you what you said? You said, 'The science shows us that the Central Coast has the highest risk from sea level rise in New South Wales.'" Ms Plibersek said, "I don't recall saying those exact words." Then she said, "I'm certain that they have a very high risk of inundation, yes." Ben Fordham said, "Yeah but you're not sure that it's the highest are you?" and Ms Plibersek replied, "Well I'm not sure if I said that Ben!" I also have a copy of a media release issued in July 2011 by the Hon. Tanya Plibersek. I quote from that media release, which states:

The science shows us that the Central Coast faces the highest risk of inundation from sea level rise in New South Wales.

What a load of garbage! On 28 July 2011, the Hon. Deborah O'Neill, the Federal member for Robertson, was interviewed on Radio 2GB by Ben Fordham. He asked her, "Do you honestly believe that out of all of New South Wales it is the Central Coast—your backyard—that faces the greatest risk in terms of sea level rise?" Ms O'Neill responded, "Let's be clear, we don't want to cause unnecessary alarm." I think the alarm had already been raised. Ben Fordham said, "But in terms of unnecessary ..."—and he quoted from Minister Plibersek's interview—"...they face an extremely significant risk of inundation and if I were them I would be worried."

Ben said further, "Have you noticed anything when you look out the window? How long have you lived on the coast?" Ms O'Neill responded, "Well I've lived there now for about 26 years." Ben Fordham said, "Have you noticed rising sea levels?" Ms O'Neill said, "Look, I haven't noticed how they change technology and computers either because I'm not a scientist!" Ben Fordham said, "No, no, I'm just asking a question. Have you noticed rising sea levels—you've lived there 20 years?" Ms O'Neill said, "Yeah, look I do, I notice when it rises and it falls and I certainly know when you look at the whole beach at Wamberal ..." Ben Fordham said, "It rises and it falls ...?" Ms O'Neill responded, "Yeah". Ben Fordham then said, "Isn't that called tide?" What an absolute joke. On 29 September 2010 the Central Coast *Express Advocate* reported:

Residents are furious about a proposed State law which could see fines of more than \$200,000 imposed for sandbagging their waterfront properties to protect them from storm damage. The Coastal Protection bill, which is yet to be debated by the State Government, added insult to injury for those home owners already outraged by the attachment of sea level rise information to Section 149 planning certificates for their properties.

Today I am pleased to speak in support of the New South Wales Government's Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012 which will, contrary to Frank Sartor's 2010 bill, ensure that landholders can more easily place sandbags to reduce the impacts of erosion from minor storms, dramatically reduce the penalties for inappropriate works, provide greater clarity to councils on the preparation of section 149 certificates and provide informative support and expert advice on sea level rises relevant to individual local areas. For years, communities, property owners and councils have been struggling with coastal erosion reforms imposed by the former Labor Government. On 20 November 2010 the Central Coast *Express Advocate* further reported:

Gosford Greens Councillor Terri Latella has criticised the State Government for giving no real direction to councils on how to handle coastal protection. Recent changes to legislation in view of climate change give no real directives or avenues for funding. The Government is churning out legislative framework but they deliver no real certainty on how to plan or cope, no prescriptive definitions of how and when—and no funding.

This bill returns a commonsense approach to this issue. It is the result of extensive consultation and research by the Coastal Ministerial Taskforce. This Government has listened. The former Labor Government's red tape approach to emergency coastal protection works was restrictive, unnecessary and unworkable. This Government is taking a far more practical approach. For example, something as simple as replacing the term "emergency coastal protection works" with "temporary coastal protection works", recognises that the works may not

necessarily be placed in an emergency where erosion is imminent. They will not have to be removed after 12 months and will no longer require a certificate from council or the Office of Environment and Heritage before undertaking works such as sandbagging on their own land. Penalties that apply for the inappropriate use of these works have been slashed; however, the current penalties for more serious offences, which will most likely be imposed by the courts, will stay as they are. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

On 15 March 2012 the Central Coast *Express Advocate* published an article titled, "Insurance costs jump from \$600 to \$4,000 after sea level rise maps." The article noted that a Central Coast resident had received her annual insurance contract, which had jumped dramatically, and was told, upon inquiry, that it was due to the notation on the section 149 certificate. While the insurance industry is a Commonwealth Government responsibility, we will work with the Commonwealth Government as part of stage two coastal reforms to ensure that the views of coastal residents are considered in its regulation of the industry. I acknowledge the presence of Minister Parker in the Chamber. In her second reading speech the Minister acknowledged the Central Coast as having struggled with section 149 certificates. And indeed this is true. My colleagues in Terrigal, Gosford and Wyong have heard the difficulties faced by our constituents with declining property values and skyrocketing insurance premiums simply because of the imposition of sea level rise notifications. The Minister said:

The bill will roll back another of the former Labor Government's inappropriate amendments to the Coastal Protection Act 1979, which required councils to include information about coast hazard categories on section 149 certificates once they had completed their coastal zone management plans. We have seen the distress that poorly worded section 149 certificates can cause to local communities, particularly on the Central Coast. Central Coast members know about ridiculous restrictions. Councils have been obliged to make these notations because they have been concerned about their position. We will ensure that councils are supported.

Councils will now benefit from support from the New South Wales Government. We will prepare guidelines for councils on appropriate section 149 certificate notations relating to coastal hazards and coastal flooding ensuring greater clarity in wording, accuracy and appropriateness. Councils need accurate mapping of coastal hazards in order to accurately notate section 149 certificates. Recently constituents contacted me regarding coastal hazard lines and their difficulties obtaining clear answers to their questions. Wyong Shire Council had placed the coastal erosion line directly through the middle of their house, causing a dramatic reduction in the value of the property. They questioned the disparity between their own property and the neighbouring property, yet the council was unable to give them an answer. The constituent wrote:

The house is at least 100 metres from the water and a good 60 metres above sea level and their plan shows that the house will be water frontage by 2050—

I thought the value would go up—

It means we cannot do any further additions to the house or sell the property for its true value. These restrictions placed on coastal properties are done on a council by council basis and I have been advised that council has no direction from the state Government.

I will be pleased to advise them that, thanks to this Government's amendments, we will be helping councils to map current coastal hazards consistently and appropriately. No longer requiring the use of statewide indicators, councils can adopt sea level rise projections pertinent to their local conditions. Following a recommendation from the chief scientist, we will also be investigating options for the provision of expert advice on coastal management to councils. The Central Coast is renowned for its coastline and beaches, but for too long our residents have struggled with the imposition of cumbersome red tape, inflated insurance and deflated property values. This Government is committed to ensuring fair and balanced coastal management guidelines. We are committed to providing greater certainty, information and expert advice to local councils. We are enabling greater freedom for landowners to manage erosion from minor storms without State Government interference. I thank the Minister for the Environment and the ministerial task force for their extensive consultation and research into this difficult issue. I commend the bill to the House.

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

PUBLIC HOLIDAY RETAIL TRADING

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [4.15 p.m.]: This petition deals specifically with retail trading hours. The petition has been signed by more than 24,000 people either on a

website or on hard copy. The petition was developed by a group of organisations that are concerned about a bill being considered by the Government that would allow trading on Boxing Day—a day that traditionally has been considered sacrosanct when it came to trading and time spent with families. In addition, the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012 provides that retail workers can be required to work on the morning of Anzac Day and on Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas Day. The bill clearly turns on its head the notion of family time. The O'Farrell Government was elected on the basis that it would look after families and ensure that family interests were taken care of. However, it would appear with the introduction of this bill that will not be the case if one happens to work in the retail sector.

People who work in the retail sector will be treated in a completely different fashion by the O'Farrell Government to those who are not. Indeed, the Government will put in place laws that will allow retailers to open on Boxing Day. That is bad for retail workers who will be required to work on Boxing Day, but the bill goes much further. The proposal would allow workers to be required to work on the evening of Christmas Day to set up their store for Boxing Day trading. Not only will those retail workers be affected; anyone who works in distribution and transport will be required to be at work on Christmas Day. They will have to load the trucks and deliver the loads to retail shops on those days. Interestingly, this week the Premier conducted a minor Cabinet reshuffle and appointed a Minister for Industrial Relations.

Mr Mike Baird: Last week.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: It was last week; I stand corrected.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Leader of the Opposition does not need any assistance from members.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: We now have a Minister for Industrial Relations, who hopefully will bring a new approach to the Government's attitude towards the Retail Trading Amendment Bill. We hope that the Minister will reconsider and take on board the legitimate arguments and concerns of workers, some of whom are in the public gallery today to hear this discussion. I hope that we will see a sensible outcome from the Minister for Industrial Relations when it comes to this bill because we need to ensure that we allow everybody in this State to spend quality time with their families. Retailers now trade for 360½ days a year out of 365. Only 4½ days are allocated for retail workers to spend time with their families. The Retail Trading Amendment Bill would overturn that, which would result in retail workers spending even less time with their families. The Minister for Industrial Relations is a family man. I know his upbringing. We all know what a great and decent person his father is and we know the values that he instilled in the Minister.

The Treasurer was brought up with good family values and he knows the value of spending quality time with his family. I anticipate that those values will result in the Minister reconsidering the proposition that is currently before the Parliament. It is not easy to achieve 24,500 signatures on a petition, but to do so conveys the genuine concern that these people have about spending time with their families. I have met some of the people involved in getting signatures on the petition. One woman told me she used to work in the Northern Territory where retailers trade every day of the year. We know what the Northern Territory is referred to from time to time. We do not want New South Wales placed in that category, where it is open slather and retailers open their doors and trade whenever they want. We are a State that should be proud to say we respect the right of people who work in retail to spend quality time with their families, particularly at religious festive times such as Easter and Christmas.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [4.20 p.m.]: I speak on the petition requesting that the existing retail trading laws be retained in their entirety. I thank those who put the petition together. Many who provided submissions did so out of a genuine interest to get the work and life balance right for their families. That is a good thing for the community, families and this State.

Ms Anna Watson: You don't care.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do care. Provisions within this bill will allow certain shops to open on Boxing Day. The bill deals with tourist trading precincts and exemption for a medium-size shop, and permits banks to open on the August Bank Holiday without prior approval. All these provisions are based on the proposition that people who work freely elect to work. I understand there are concerns about the concept of "freely elect to work". Three points summarise the pro side of the argument that came out of the 249 submissions: demands from the public who want shops to open for business on Boxing Day—consumers asked for that; demand from

local retailers for a level playing field in the current global trading environment that has increased online purchasing; and demands from some workers who wanted to supplement earnings by having the opportunity to work on that day.

I have previously expressed some of the arguments against extended retail trading. One argument is that employees who have to work on Boxing Day would have time with their family eroded—and I understand the concern about working on Christmas Day in preparation for Boxing Day. New section 8 (4) makes clear that shops can trade on a restricted trading day only if the shop is staffed by individuals who have freely elected to work on that day. That is the key.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Treasurer has the call and will be heard in silence. If members continue to interject they will be ejected from the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Ultimately a good boss, company or business is an employer that respects its workers. The bill will also align New South Wales with Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, which have the ability to trade on Boxing Day. In relation to the petition, the bill has passed through this place and it presently resides in the other place. It will continue to be the subject of negotiation in the other place. Yesterday I met with the members of the Take the Time Coalition, the Finance Sector Union, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, Good Beginnings, the Uniting Church and the broad-based Sydney Alliance. Those groups raised concerns that employees may work even if they do not freely elect to work. The "freely elect to work" provisions were first advocated by Labor and are not Government provisions. The bill contains serious penalties for any person or business found in breach of that provision—in other words, forces an employee to turn up or takes other action.

The Government is open to addressing some of the concerns of the petitioners. The Government will take on board what has been put to it. I have empathy for the community's concerns. How can anyone in the public gallery or any Government member say that they are not interested in or concerned about a work life balance for families, individuals and communities? At the same time there is the point of view that if people want to work and shop freely the Government will support that choice. I understand that there is a balance between the two. The Government is committed to continued consultation and to addressing community concerns in order to strike the right balance. I thank those who have taken the time to put the petition together. The Government will continue to consult with stakeholders.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.25 p.m.]: The rhetoric by the Treasurer is insurmountable and unbelievable. I speak in support of the 24,539 people who signed the petition requesting that the existing retail trading laws be retained in their entirety. I believe that the mums and dads who work in retail across New South Wales are entitled to time-out with their families on the 4½ days that traditionally have been held as non-trading days across New South Wales. As proud Australians we all enjoy the great outdoors and the wonderful environment that is the envy of other countries. It is the great Aussie tradition to pack up the car and to take off with loved ones to a special place for some quality time to relax and appreciate the simple things in life, whether that is the local park, beach or the bush. Time with the family and loved ones is precious. As the elected representative of Fairfield I know how hard mums, dads and teenagers work to get ahead in life.

As the cost of living increases in New South Wales the burdens and expectations of residents of this great State also grow. Some months ago I heard on the radio a news bulletin that lauded the operational effect of the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012 to allow retailers across New South Wales to trade on Boxing Day. The newscaster was meriting the possibility of Boxing Day sales held not just in David Jones, Myers and stores in Sydney's central business district, but right across New South Wales. However, the newscaster failed to mention what the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012 would mean to the thousands of mums, dads, sons and daughters who work in the New South Wales retail industry, which comprises 10 per cent of the workforce. What will this mean to them, particularly when the Christmas period and post-Christmas sales are some of the busiest trading days of the year?

It is simple: the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012 will result in the loss of one of the few days of the year on which retail workers are guaranteed a holiday. Mums and dads may no longer be able to organise their time to spend it with their families. Earlier this year the member for Camden mentioned that mums and dads have a choice as to whether to work on Boxing Day—a choice to earn money or to spend time with the kids. However, what Government members do not understand is that a choice not to work on Boxing Day could also be a choice to have their shifts reduced and a choice to be overlooked for future overtime. The reality of the

retail industry is that if and when an employer decides to trade on Boxing Day, staff will be required to work on Boxing Day. The Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012 is just another example of how the Government is out of touch with reality. I ask the question: Is nothing sacred to the O'Farrell Government?

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [4.28 p.m.]: I support the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012 and acknowledge the people in the public gallery who have signed the petition. I know that they are genuinely looking for a balanced outcome between family life and retail trading. It is unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition has been scaremongering and causing people in the retail sector to worry. It is a diversionary stunt to take attention away from his failing leadership and his woeful record as a Minister and as the member for Blacktown in western Sydney. Labor is now desperate for relevance and attention. The Leader of the Opposition has no respect in his local area. That can be seen by the fact that in the recent Blacktown council elections, Labor went backwards. This bill is a simple and commonsense measure.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The motion before this House is clear and has nothing to do with local government elections. The member should be brought back to the leave of the discussion.

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

Mr BART BASSETT: The bill is a simple, commonsense measure to allow for retailers to open on Boxing Day and to provide flexibility in retailing generally—nothing more, nothing less. The restrictive trading practices in New South Wales are unfair. They prohibit a large number of businesses across areas of New South Wales from trading unless they are in a designated tourism zone. The Leader of the Opposition argues that this arrangement is satisfactory. Let us have a closer look. Retail owners and operators in a classified tourism area such as Coffs Harbour can open. However, in the Labor leader's electorate of Blacktown there are retailers who cannot open because of these antiquated laws.

The Blacktown local government area—parts of which are in my electorate—is not considered a tourism zone and retailers cannot get approval to open. In 2004 the Labor leader's own Blacktown council adopted a tourism strategy to promote the local government area and the fact that it is open for business. Yet the member for Blacktown wants to restrict small business. We must understand that there is \$120 million worth of investment in Blacktown and small business operators are members of families.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Londonderry will be heard in silence.

Mr BART BASSETT: Those opposite fail to accept that small business operators have their family homes on the line. They pay staff who are part of the family business. Retailers need quality staff and flexibility in retailing. Retailing is going backwards in this nation. We need flexibility so that retailing survives and employment can grow.

Discussion concluded.

UNANDERRA RAILWAY STATION EASY ACCESS UPGRADE

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [4.33 p.m.]: The former Labor Government recognised the need of the community—particularly the elderly, aged and frail, parents with prams, and the disabled—to be able to access Unanderra railway station, which has 70 steps. The former Government allocated \$11.4 million to address the dire situation at that station. Prior to the last election, the Labor Government had allocated the money needed to install easy access lifts at Unanderra.

Mr Paul Toole: They are leaving.

Ms NOREEN HAY: The people from Unanderra are not leaving. They are sitting in the public gallery; they want the lifts. People with disabilities are here. That is the kind of attitude those opposite have towards ordinary folk who are trying to access the trains. People have travelled from Wollongong today to make sure the Government is aware of their needs. The fact is that the former Labor Government agreed to install easy access lifts at Unanderra station. During the election campaign the Liberal-Nationals candidate agreed that if the Coalition formed government the lifts would be installed. Now it is a different story because, once members opposite were elected, the upgrade stalled.

The Minister for Transport kept changing her mind about this matter. I made several representations to her, demanding that the upgrade be completed. The first representation was in September 2011, when the Minister informed me that work had been delayed in October 2010 because of issues associated with the location of underground services. She told me that, once the additional design work was completed and evaluated, the project team would be able to give an indication of the project's completion date. In March that year I received a letter from the then Minister for Transport, John Robertson, saying that RailCorp had advised that \$12.5 million in funding had been allocated. He said that the major phase of works, as part of stage two and "currently under construction", included three new lifts, a platform extension to the new platform lift, canopies over the lift entries, a new platform area, tactile tiles to aid visually impaired people and modifications to the existing station entries. Construction and the remaining works as part of stage two had commenced and were anticipated to be completed that year.

In September 2011 the Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, wrote to me indicating that following a review of the project a requirement for additional design work had been identified. The letter stated that once the revised design had been completed and evaluated the project team would be able to give an update on the timing of the project. She did not say it would not happen; she said we would be given a new timing for it. In November 2011—not two months later—I received another letter from the Minister saying that the project had gone back into the pool and would be decided based on patronage. She said that the Government needed to be sure that people could not access the platform in order to board the train and then it would establish what people like some of those here today already know. People with severe disabilities require assistance. They will never be able to access trains at Unanderra station without lifts. I am happy to table the letters from the Minister for Transport and to show that the Minister indicated to me, on the one hand, that the upgrade was going ahead; and, on the other hand, that the project had gone back into the pool.

It is clear that, once elected, the Government diverted the funds from the Unanderra easy access upgrade to recently acquired Liberal electorates such as Kiama, where a new station upgrade has been announced at Flinders. I do not begrudge Flinders a new station because the former Labor Government also announced that upgrade. The Coalition said that, in government, it would probably not go ahead with it. I do not begrudge Flinders its upgrade but not at the cost of the Unanderra easy access lifts. The people of Unanderra have been waiting too long; they need access. The aged, frail, disabled and those with young children need to be able to access the platform. It is a disgrace that those opposite are spending money in other electorates. Since the Coalition was elected to government about 12 easy access upgrades have been announced in areas that do not have stairs. Putting easy access lifts in areas that do not have steps is a slap in the face for the people of the Illawarra and it is a slap in the face for those who believed in the new Government.

Mrs Tanya Davies: What did you do for 16 years?

Ms NOREEN HAY: All I ask you to do is keep your promise. Be honest and keep your promises. That is all you are being asked to do: keep your promise.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.38 p.m.]: I thank the 10,000 people who signed the petition. I make a point of making sure I respond to all petitions that relate to my portfolio. I appreciate the level of community angst on this issue and, if I were in their shoes, I would have signed the petition as well. However, I must make a few points clear during this important debate. First, when I became Minister for Transport I inherited a network where two-thirds of stations did not have easy access. I know that is of little comfort to those in the gallery, but unfortunately two-thirds of stations in our State do not have easy access and that is disgraceful. The previous Government managed, on average, two upgrades a year. When I became Minister I said that I wanted to do more than two a year and I wanted to begin with those stations that were ready to go—where commitments had been made by the previous Government.

When I became Minister for Transport, I listened to what was said and looked at the files. I looked for the design work but it did not exist. I tried to find the money but it did not exist either. What was I to do? I allocated an extra \$40 million over four years to the easy access program and I put together six projects in different places. I called it the Transport Access Program. I announced 35 station upgrades, rather than the two every year that were completed under those opposite. I give the community this update on Unanderra station. The member for Wollongong gave an emotional address but she neglected to state that in 2009 she stood with the then Minister for Transport and promised the lifts within 18 months. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! I remind the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour that they are on three calls to order. The Minister has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I apologise to people in the gallery for the interruptions during my contribution.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The Minister will be heard in silence. I again remind the member for Shellharbour that she is on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know the member for Wollongong is very sensitive about this but it was in her local paper so everybody knows she said it and everybody knows what she promised. It is there in black and white. I make a point that is perhaps lost on the member for Wollongong—and I wrote to her recently to tell her. I have allocated more than \$1 million to install lighting and closed-circuit television at the station, to remediate the platform so people can use it again and to fix the stairs to ensure they are non-slip. I know this does not go as far as the community would like—I know the stairs are pretty bad—but I have a responsibility to those stations that are ready to go. Unfortunately, commitments made by Labor when in government did not come to fruition; the planning work did not happen. I am trying to get on with the job and do things as quickly as I can. I have to fix about 200 stations around the network.

As the community knows, I have made a number of commitments in the Illawarra regarding station upgrades—at Dapto, Gerringong and Albion Park. We know we have more work to do at Unanderra, as we do at many other stations. I appreciate the angst the community feels. A station in my community does not have easy access—indeed, all members opposite could name at least one or two stations in their electorates that are in the same position. I know it is little comfort but it is what we inherited and we are getting on with fixing the problem. To date, we have announced 35 station upgrades. Unfortunately, the previous Government managed only two a year. In fact, if we had stuck to Labor's timetable it would have taken 90 years to fix all the stations.

Mr Richard Amery: Which two have you done in the last year?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Get with the program, Mr Mount Druitt. I assure the community of the Illawarra that this Government commits to what it says it will do. We will not make commitments we cannot keep. I regret that the community feels disappointed because the previous Government—

Ms Noreen Hay: You did make commitments.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Noreen, can you please let me speak? The member for Wollongong cannot handle what she promised and what she failed to deliver. In 2009 she said that it would happen within 18 months. When I became Minister for Transport nothing had happened. This is the commitment I give to the community: We have allocated \$1 million already to address the issues at the station. We know we have more work to do, but the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Wollongong were too incompetent to deliver the upgrade and now they are complaining. I assure the community that this is a Government committed to dealing with these issues. [*Time expired.*]

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [4.43 p.m.]: I will speak specifically about Unanderra and not in generalities like the Minister, who has just scurried out of the Chamber. The Minister kept saying that Labor only did two easy access upgrades a year. I can rattle off more than two a year. Even more interesting is that she could not name one that her Government has done in the past 18 months. What I know about Unanderra is this. In September 2011 the Minister for Transport wrote to the member for Wollongong and said:

I am advised that work on the accessibility upgrade of Unanderra station was delayed in October 2010 because of issues associated with the location of underground services. After review of the project a requirement for additional design work was identified. Once the revised design has been completed and evaluated the project team will be able to provide an update of the timing of the project.

This Minister clearly said in September last year the project was going ahead but we see that the roll-out of the upgrades changed. If one looks at the program one discovers that the upgrades are not in Labor electorates—surprise, surprise. The majority of them have been shifted and reallocated to seats held by Coalition members. An equitable approach is not being applied to funding easy access upgrades. The Minister is not serious when it comes to funding the projects she writes to local members about; she changes her mind saying, "Oh no, I am reallocating this money and putting it somewhere else." This project was on track and it was confirmed by the

Minister. This is yet another community in New South Wales that has been let down by the O'Farrell Government—a community like so many that had expectations that this Government would honour its promises and deliver.

The Premier said that he was going to be open, honest and transparent. What changed between September 2011 when the Minister wrote to the member for Wollongong and when the money subsequently disappeared? The Minister can dance around this issue all she likes; she made that decision. She and she alone, as Minister for Transport, made the decision not to fund the easy access upgrade at Unanderra station. Government members like to talk about our 16 years in government. We were dealt with in March 2011. The Coalition won government because of the things it promised to do, and to date it has failed to deliver on any of them. Time and again, the Government walks away from its promises. It has failed the people of Unanderra with its broken promise to build the easy access upgrade at Unanderra station.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [4.46 p.m.]: This is an interesting discussion, and I respect the 10,000 people who supported the petition. The member for Wollongong has become very active on this issue. But she did not present a petition to the previous Government; it was not something she got involved in. In fact, the member for Wollongong spent most of her time telling us what a great job the Labor Government was doing. Today the member for Wollongong is supported by the former Minister for Transport, the guy who could have got it done. You had enough time to do it but you dragged your feet and created a dog's breakfast.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: First, the member for Murray-Darling is not directing his remarks through the Chair. Secondly, that anyone from Broken Hill or the Murray-Darling electorate would even know where Unanderra is—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: I remind the Duchess from Dapto that I have spent a bit of time down there and I know the place pretty well. This is about you suddenly becoming active.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: As an elected representative I am entitled to be addressed by my correct title in this House.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! I remind the member for Murray-Darling that he should address members by their correct titles.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: All of a sudden, the member for Wollongong is active. She should have been active when she was in government and realised that the work was not going to take place. Labor made the announcements but did not back them up with cash.

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

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: The Labor Government was dragging its heels but did the member for Wollongong try to make sure the work happened? She simply told us what a great job the then Government was doing. It was the greatest cover-up. The fact is that 10,000 people in her electorate have signed a petition to say they have been disadvantaged by representations made by the member for Wollongong to the former Minister for Transport, who was quite happy to make the announcement but who then dragged his heels and left the station in a state of disrepair. This is a dog's breakfast and we are playing catch-up to get up to speed. The member for Wollongong continues to present petitions and move motions in the House about issues that Labor should have dealt with in government. Instead, when in government she came into this place and made announcements that were incorrect and downright misleading.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AUSTRALIA-NORTH CYPRUS FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.49 p.m.]: I report to the House on an event that I attended on the night of Saturday 15 September. It was a function organised by the Australia-North Cyprus Friendship

Association to commemorate, as it does annually, events that occurred in 1974. I am pleased to say that I was welcomed to the event by president Muzaffer Turgut-Sarp, secretary Suzan Kumcuoglu, and vice-president Tarkan Fahri. The event being commemorated arose from the attempt in 1974 to annexe Cyprus to Greece and the Turkish response to that move. That essentially led to the partition of Cyprus and eventually the formation by Turkish Cypriots of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The commemoration also signified the end of the war as a day of remembrance for those who lost their lives during that conflict.

The association has commemorated this event annually. The association was established on 7 June 2006 and plays a number of useful community roles. It helps assist people to find relatives who were lost in the conflict. It regularly organises social gatherings and social events that bring the community together to talk about common concerns. The association has a weekly Turkish language school, which mainly caters for children younger than 13 years of age. It also holds multicultural days at McGirr Park in a facility that I will talk about in a moment. The association has an ambitious program of aims for the future. It wants to support the educational, sporting and social needs of young people in the community. It provides financial assistance for students in need or for high achievers to help educate younger members of the community. The association has plans to improve its sporting facilities and amenities as a way of increasing further community participation in events.

The association organises social events and will continue to do so in future. The larger objectives include aiming to help and provide childcare assistance to the community. The association wishes to increase the use of its sporting fields by providing sporting equipment. That of course will rely on assistance from community grants schemes and association fundraising. The association also has a longer term goal to cater for the growing elderly population of the community through retirement and nursing home facilities which meet more specific cultural needs. That objective of course is shared by many other non-English speaking communities. As people get older they often revert to their former language and there is a great need for more facilities for older people in those non-Anglo communities than currently exist. In that sense the objectives of this association resonate with other communities.

Another of the association's objectives is to generally increase the size of the organisation. The association currently has a community hub or clubhouse at McGirr Park, Miller, which is located within my electorate, which was gained from a significant amount of funding from the Community Building Partnership in the last round of announcements. Regrettably a fire, apparently caused by vandalism, damaged that facility on 4 July. However, that has not deterred the association from continuing to work towards its objectives and renovate and reinstate the facility. It is a good example of the vibrant multiculturalism in Liverpool. I had occasion to speak recently about another migrant community in Liverpool that had come here essentially as political refugees.

A whole range of communities within the Liverpool electorate and surrounding areas have come from all around the world. We have an extraordinarily vibrant, successful and effective multicultural society. That is because of the contribution of communities such as those from North Cyprus and associations such as this. I thank the association for its invitation to attend this event and I congratulate it on its contribution to Liverpool and to the vibrant multiculturalism of our local society. I also thank the association for all the community work it does.

RYDE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [4.54 p.m.]: I bring to the Parliament's attention an important pedestrian safety issue that affects the people of Ryde. With three major road arteries, the Ryde electorate is often used as a thoroughfare by motorists travelling from one part of Sydney to another. As a result, when community hubs such as shopping centres and schools stand side by side with these major arteries, pedestrian safety concerns often arise. Recently there has been an increase in near misses involving the elderly, schoolchildren and their parents at the Lane Cove Road crossing, near Coxs Road in North Ryde.

I provide the House with an account of David Starling, a North Ryde resident who regularly crosses the subject intersection. On Good Friday this year, Mr Starling and his 10-month old daughter, who was in a pram, were crossing Lane Cove Road. When Mr Starling was halfway across the eight-lane intersection, he noticed a motorist travelling northbound towards him at high speed. The motorist then proceeded to illegally enter the intersection. In a split second Mr Starling managed to swerve the pram out of the motorist's way, narrowly avoiding the car hitting his 10-month old child. As a result of this and other recent incidents, the Minister for Roads, the Hon. Duncan Gay, personally inspected the site and heard directly from those involved in near misses.

Minister Gay immediately acted by directing Roads and Maritime Services to increase the amount of time pedestrians have to walk along the crossing. He also arranged for additional high visibility signage at the intersection. I wish to acknowledge the responsiveness of Minister Gay in relation to this matter, and thank him for coming to inspect the intersection personally. Despite these changes, motorists continue to run red lights at this intersection. Year 6 student Pranav Hebbaly knows only to cross the road when the "green man" flashes. On 26 July Pranav was walking to school when a motorist narrowly missed him, before almost colliding with a car that was turning out of Coxs Road.

Luke Joseph, Dillon Geoghegan, Liam Whitfield and Carmen Cairney can further attest to the dangers at this intersection, as they have all witnessed or personally experienced a near miss at this intersection. With reports like these, parents are now driving through peak hour traffic to cross the intersection, rather than walking their children to school. For these reasons, I have joined the parents and residents in the area to petition Roads and Maritime Services to install a red light speed camera at this intersection. It is our hope that by installing a camera at this intersection motorists will be more cautious as they approach the intersection, thereby giving pedestrians a greater sense of security and minimising the chance of an accident occurring.

I wish to thank residents for their hard work on this issue, particularly Kat Israel, Penny Joseph, Nicole Starling, and Rebecca Ebel who continue to raise awareness in the community. Additionally, I wish to thank the North Ryde Public School Principal, Ms Erika Southam, who has raised this matter in the school newsletter and who has supported this cause from day one. Tomorrow morning I am meeting with Gladesville Local Area Command Superintendent John Duncan and parents and residents from the local area to inspect the site once more and to petition residents with a view to improving pedestrian safety. This is an important issue for the residents of Ryde but in particular the residents of North Ryde.

I have been to that intersection on numerous occasions and seen how important it is for children to cross that very busy road with safety. I remember a campaign that I took part in when we were in opposition to install flashing lights. We managed to get the flashing lights installed, with the assistance of Peter Olsen and the wonderful work he has done. That has improved safety; there is no doubt about that. Notwithstanding the flashing lights, motorists continue to drive down Lane Cove Road at a rate of knots. We need a speed camera there to make sure the children crossing at that intersection are protected. Beyond that, we also need to provide peace of mind for the parents. I imagine they want to know that when they send their children to school their children travel safely.

HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES, PROFESSOR MARIE BASHIR, AC, CVO

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [4.59 p.m.]: I want to place on the record the great love and respect that the people of the Coffs Harbour electorate and New South Wales have for Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO. Professor Bashir was born in Narrandera. She completed a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery in 1956 at the University of Sydney. She moved to Pendle Hill in Sydney and worked as a general practitioner. She then decided to undertake post-graduate studies in psychiatry and practised in psychiatry for the majority of the rest of her career.

In 1971 Professor Bashir was named Australian Mother of the Year. When her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, was appointed Lord Mayor of Sydney she became the Lady Mayoress of Sydney from 1971 to 1973. She became a member of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists in 1971, becoming a Fellow in 1980. She was appointed director of the Rivendell Child Adolescent and Family Service in 1972 and in 1987 she was appointed director of the Community Health Services in the central Sydney area. On 13 June 1988 she was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. In 1992 she served on the New South Wales Women's Advisory Council and in 1993 she was appointed Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Sydney. In 1995, in a partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Service, Professor Bashir established the Aboriginal Mental Health Unit. Professor Bashir has done so much for New South Wales she is beyond reproach.

In 2001 she was appointed the Governor of New South Wales—an appointment that was supported by all sides of politics. She has undertaken the duties of that office with the utmost dignity and I cannot express in words the way she has performed in that role. She travels all over New South Wales with Sir Nicholas Shehadie, looking after people in New South Wales who have no other form of representation. In recent years she took up the position of patron of the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service. In 2004 she was made an honorary member

of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. The Queen invested Professor Bashir as a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. Professor Bashir has been given—as my colleague the member for Lismore would acknowledge—the Lebanese National Order of the Cedar, Grand Cordon Grade, by the President of the Republic of Lebanon. She has been given awards in France, and across the world she has been noted for her service to the community. I am saying all this because today when the member for Sydney left this place she made the following comments:

I am being forced out of Parliament because of legislation enacted by the O'Farrell Government, with the support of the Shooters and Fishers Party and Fred Nile's Christian Democratic Party ...

There was no referendum, the Government's intention was not flagged prior to the 2011 State election, and the vice-regal office shockingly has no role in defending our basic democratic rights against predatory political parties. It would seem that it is merely a rubber stamp for majority governments.

In making such assertions in this place, the member for Sydney and Lord Mayor of Sydney not only contravenes standing orders but insults the Governor of New South Wales—a woman who has done so much. The Lord Mayor of Sydney did not advise this House that before she left this place today she had a choice: she could either be a member of Parliament or the Lord Mayor of Sydney. She chose the latter. Legislation may have enabled the outcome, but she was the one who made the choice to become Lord Mayor. One may ask why. Is it because she walks out of here with a parliamentary pension of more than \$100,000 a year tax free and picks up a salary of well over \$100,000 plus all the perks of office? The member for Sydney, in her role as a member of this place and in her continuing role as Lord Mayor of Sydney, owes the Governor an apology, and she owes this Parliament an apology for casting aspersions on such a fine woman and the office she holds.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.04 p.m.]: Today I pay homage to a very remarkable woman who has dedicated her professional life to the children of south-west Sydney. Joyce Blackmore is a teacher at St John's Park Public School. She dedicated herself to the many children who have come and gone from her classroom for a period that represents more than half her life. Jo Blackmore is 85 years old and she has been a teacher for more than 56 years. When she first stepped into a classroom Queen Elizabeth II was four years into her reign and the opening of the Opera House was more than 17 years away, and, to really put things into perspective, I had not yet entered this world. It is fair to say that Jo Blackmore—a dedicated educator in south-west Sydney for well over half a century—would have seen a great many changes in the way children are taught in New South Wales.

It was a poignant moment last week when she told me in no uncertain terms that the education funding cuts announced by this Government were the worst she had ever seen. Those are damning comments from a teacher who has worked under 19 education Ministers. The sentiments held by Jo Blackmore are not isolated. Many people in the community are quite concerned with the direction education is heading under the O'Farrell Government. Last week I attended a prefect investiture ceremony at one of my local schools, Patrician Brothers College, Fairfield. After the ceremony the principal, Mr John Killeen, handed me a letter from the Catholic Education Commission regarding the Government's cuts to education funding to the tune of \$66.7 million a year.

What was even more surprising was the response of the Liberal member for Smithfield when the subject came up: he had the look of shock and bewilderment on his face. He had absolutely no idea about the Government's decision to slash funding to education. The sentiments in relation to the cuts to education are best summed up by another member of the Liberal Party—the member for Drummoyne. The front page of the *Daily Telegraph* reported that he said:

The thing you just don't cut is education.

For Jo Blackmore, the O'Farrell Government cuts to education go particularly deep. It is the proverbial slap in the face because Jo Blackmore, in the twilight of her professional career, specialised in Special Education. She provided hands-on support to children with learning difficulties so they did not get left behind. According to the Government's reasoning, those are the types of roles earmarked to go. Recently, I have seen firsthand the impact that Special Education teachers have on the lives of children. On 31 August this year I was invited to the Les Powell School to attend Numeracy and Literacy Day. Les Powell School caters for children and families with a disability in the south-west Sydney region. The school has 80 students ranging from kindergarten to year 12, and a number of the students live their lives with more than one diagnosed disability. However, despite the challenges each child faces on a daily basis, what I saw during my visit to Les Powell School would certainly challenge anyone's perception of the capabilities of children who attend the school.

Personal achievements by each student in the face of their so called "dis"ability were thanks to the hard work and dedication of their Special Education teachers. Teachers at the school face very different teaching challenges compared with teachers in mainstream classrooms. Not only do they utilise the traditional classroom tools of whiteboards and printed books but they employ unconventional methods, such as music and song, to help children achieve the ultimate objective of the school—that is, to embolden each child with a sense of independence. The Special Education staff at Les Powell School, who are led by the remarkable principal Mr Sargon Makko, are a beacon for what modern education can achieve with the right government support and training. Jo Blackmore is an example of the dedication of teachers in New South Wales. For Jo Blackmore and the teachers, parents and students of Les Powell School, the cuts to education that the O'Farrell Government seeks to introduce is a step in the totally wrong direction.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.]: I want to respond to the comments made by the member for Fairfield. The member for Fairfield has misled the House by misquoting figures in relation to the savings that the O'Farrell Government has implemented in education across New South Wales. The figure of \$66 million a year stated by the member for Fairfield is wrong and it is a misrepresentation of the savings measures we have implemented.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: As I have said in this House many, many times, there are no greater champions of education than the members of the O'Farrell Government. I have explained our actions fully to this House. I have explained that we have to make savings across this sector in order to benefit all the residents of New South Wales. The savings measures that have been implemented come to \$116 million over four years, not the figure mentioned by the member for Fairfield, who has misled this House.

ST VINCENTS PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICE

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore—The Deputy-Speaker) [5.10 p.m.]: This afternoon I pay tribute to the palliative team at St Vincent's Hospital, Lismore. I refer to a lovely article in the *Northern Star*. I give credit to Hamish Broome for his article "Dying with Dignity", which stated:

The team at St Vincent's Hospital palliative care unit have been recognised as one of the best in the country with a recent report ranking their services as second in NSW and fifth in Australia.

As part of a national program to benchmark patient outcomes, St Vincent's unit was found to provide exceptional care in clinical outcomes and systems relief.

"Dying is one of the most critical things that happens to us," said clinical nurse specialist Alan Hickey, who's spent more than a decade in palliative care.

"The reason why the nurses are so dedicated to making sure we do a good job is because you don't get a second chance at it. You've got to make sure that when the person dies, they do die comfortably, at peace, accepting of their death, and their family sees it as a good death as well."

I pay tribute to the nurse unit manager, Wendy McKey, and everyone associated with St Vincent's Hospital Palliative Care Unit for making it one of the best in the country and for the job that they do in providing comfort not only to people who are dying but also to their families. That is typical of what is happening in all palliative care services throughout the State. Recently the town of Murwillumbah lost the "Treasure of the Tweed", Arthur Ernest Holmes. The funeral service was the final curtain and a fitting tribute to a man who devoted his life to sharing his love of performing arts. He was supported by a wonderful team that nursed him to the end. Arthur wrote his own eulogy, the contents of which were kept a secret to everyone except his brother Jim, who read it at the funeral service. It read:

He [Arthur] touched the hearts and lives of so many preschoolers. Later, Arthur (and Margaret) were invited to a seemingly endless number of 21st birthday celebrations and weddings ... and he was also a godfather to at least 20 children.

Last year—in the festival's 80th year—Arthur organised a special gala concert for some of those successful performers. Some even made their way from across the world to attend the concert in recognition of Arthur's contribution to arts in the Tweed. Arthur sadly passed away on 9 August, after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his [lovely] wife Margaret and sons John and Andrew. Margaret and John are still involved with the Festival of Performing Arts and remain committed to it.

Arthur died in the week prior to the performing arts annual finale night.

"There was never any doubt the evening would go ahead as usual," said John. "Dad would have said the show must go on!"

In recent years Arthur had been recognised for his outstanding services to the community.

He is a life member of the Festival of Performing Arts, awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by Murwillumbah Rotary Club ... and was the Murwillumbah Citizen of the Year. In 1999 he was awarded a special Children's Week Education award.

The day before Arthur died he was presented with an Order of Australia Medal [OAM] by the former Deputy Prime Minister, Doug Anthony, who is also the patron of the Performing Arts Festival where Arthur had dedicated his life, together with his wife and family. Palliative care is provided to people throughout this State and the palliative team at St Vincent's, Murwillumbah and other hospitals throughout this State do a wonderful job in caring for people. This year the Woman of the Year for Lismore was Ann Spillane. Her work began at the St Vincent's Hospital Auxiliary, a group that disbanded in 1985. Ann became the foundation president of a new group, The Friends of St Vincent's Hospital. Over the past 25 years Ann has worked five days a week. During her term she has raised \$1.25 million. The Friends of St Vincent's provide a vital service by assisting patients and staff, raising funds and supporting capital work. As president, Ann was responsible for recruitment and training of over 100 volunteers. To Ann Spillane and everyone associated with St Vincent's Palliative Care Unit, on behalf of the community, I say thank you for a wonderful job.

AUSTRALIAN AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [5.15 p.m.]: On Saturday 15 September I joined more than 200 people in the main hall at Charles Sturt University to attend the inaugural inductions of the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame. Max Hazelton, with his wife, Laurel, proudly accepted an honour. Max started a commercial aviation service near Orange in 1953, which grew into a large regional airline and aerial agricultural operation. Recalling how he pioneered night aerial spraying on cotton crops and the frustrations of economic regulation of air services, Mr Hazelton outlined how air services made a difference to the lives of people in regional Australia. Eilish Kendell, of Wagga Wagga, wife of the late Donald Moreton Kendell, flanked by her daughters Mary and Sara, was delighted at the recognition bestowed on her husband. He grew Kendell Airlines from a small charter and flying school business in 1965 to Australia's largest airline, which won many awards.

A Special Recognition award was made to the Indigenous Peoples of Australia for the design and practical use of the aerofoil, the Boomerang. Accepting the award was Mr Graeme Mundine, Director of the Australian Catholic Aboriginal Ministry. The Royal Flying Doctor Service received the Southern Cross award, honouring an organisation that has made an outstanding contribution to aviation. With its roots back in 1928, it has provided emergency medical aid to remote areas of Australia. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is now a major organisation serving an area of 7.15 million square kilometres with a staff of 1,000 and a fleet of 16 aircraft. Guests travelled from all over Australia and the United States to attend the inaugural induction. Charles Kingsford Smith was also inducted into the Hall of Fame. His son, Charles Kingsford Smith junior, appeared via video link from Washington State.

Lores Bonney, Australia's little known record-breaking aviatrix of the 1930s, was inducted, as was Lawrence Hargrave, the Australian who, in 1894, coupled four of his cellular box kites together, added a sling and propelled himself 16 feet into the air. This was the first major step towards winged flight by a man and earned Hargrave the title "Father of Flight". Bonney was the first woman to fly solo from Australia to England and the first person to fly from Australia to Cape Town, South Africa. In addition to those already named, inductees included: Bert Hinkler, who flew the first solo flight from England to Australia; Sir Norman Brearley, who started West Australian Airways, which later became Australian National Airways and subsequently Ansett; Reginald and John Duigan, who designed and built the first Australian aircraft to fly; and the Smith brothers, Sir Keith and Sir Ross Macpherson Smith, who won the England to Australia Air Race in 1919.

The Australian Aviation Hall of Fame is an initiative of the Civil Aviation Industry. Its founding partners included Jeppesen, General Electric, Shell Aviation, Aviation Development Australia Limited, Wagga Wagga City Council and Charles Sturt University. The Australian Aviation Hall of Fame's Chairman, Mr Geoff Breust, said the inaugural induction was a huge success and set the foundation for continuing annual inductions. In a press release Mr Breust said:

We finally have to put right an important missing element in Australia's aviation history of honouring our pioneers. While the hall of fame currently exists as a substantial web site, we aim to offer a bricks and mortar exhibition in Wagga Wagga in the future.

I highlight the fact that this momentous occasion occurred where there is now a virtual hall of fame constructed, which honours the great achievements of those aviators. More people will be inducted into the hall of fame.

Proudly, Wagga Wagga will call this hall of fame home. It is important that we recognise that this country has benefitted from the amazing feats of these individuals. I congratulate all those who worked for two years to bring this event together. It was fantastic on the night to see distant relatives accepting the awards. Aviation has brought people together from across Australia and across the world. That is what happened on Saturday night and it will continue to happen as we nominate and recognise individuals. As I said, there is a need for bricks and mortar. I have no doubt that the committee will achieve that aim. I will do everything I can to assist them to keep the memories of those great aviators alive for future generations.

BOMBALA HIGH SCHOOL RURAL FIRE SERVICE CADET PROGRAM

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [5.20 p.m.]: Yesterday it was my pleasure to attend the Bombala High School Rural Fire Service Cadet Program graduation ceremony in my capacity as the member for Monaro and representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher. It was great to be in Bombala to celebrate the day with the graduates, their families, other students and the school faculty. It was my role to officially present certificates to 19 graduates of the Rural Fire Service Secondary Schools Cadet Program. This was my second year playing that role and the fourth year that Bombala High School students have participated in the program.

The 19 young cadets are a credit to their school and the wider community. Not only have they learnt valuable lessons about fire behaviour and safety, they have also demonstrated great dedication while completing the program. The cadets program is a great way for students to learn basic firefighting skills and develop an appreciation of the important role emergency services play in helping keep our community safe. Throughout the 10-week course cadets also grow in confidence as they learn about teamwork, camaraderie, leadership and showing initiative. They will lead the charge during times of crisis and it is comforting to know that they have had such good training from so early on.

I have seen members of the Rural Fire Service dedicate their whole lives to the cause. It is a unique profession and one that is highly admired. The skills that the students have learned throughout this cadetship program will carry them through life. Skills such as confidence, teamwork, leadership, initiative and trust are all important skills that these young men and women will need in the future. The program is a valuable opportunity for students to experience firsthand the Rural Fire Service ethos of teamwork and community service, as well as the rewards of volunteering. The cadet program has been an outstanding success. It is now in its sixth year across New South Wales with more than 4,000 secondary school students completing the course.

The program could not run without the dedication of many people at Bombala High School and throughout the community. These people include the principal of Bombala High School, Mr Philip Steel, his staff and the students' parents—many of whom were in attendance yesterday and very proud of the great achievements of their children. The program also would not be possible without the dedication of the students and the local Rural Fire Service staff and volunteers, led by volunteer firefighter Vern Dunning, who all give up their time to teach the cadets. It is right to name the 19 students who completed the program this year. They were Aimee Badewitz, Jackie Chapman, Jack Clark, Aaron Cusbert, Thomas Eccles, Aaron Girvan, Ryan Goodchild, Nikki Hepburn, Luke Ingram, Renee Ingram, Jasmine McLaughlin, Toby Morgan, Kurt Overend, Jack Parr, Sam Pocock, Jake Power, Darcie Roberson, Sophie Rumph and Lachlan Sellers.

This is a fantastic program which teaches the next generation of volunteers and leaders. These kids are not just leaders in their school community; they are the next generation of leaders in our society, businesses and government. As members of Parliament we are the guardians of the next generation of leaders in our communities. We need to ensure that we upskill the kids of today and the students of the future so they will lead with integrity and principles. I congratulate the students on enrolling in this cadet course which has upskilled them for the future. I congratulate them on completing the program and I commend all those who were involved.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR LARRY BOLITHO

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [5.25 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the current Mayor of The Hills Shire Council, Councillor Larry Bolitho, who this month will retire after 29 years of service on The Hills Shire Council. Councillor Bolitho has been a fantastic servant to the people of The Hills and his hard work and dedication is an example to all public servants. Coming from an insurance background, Larry has brought a number of unique skills and insights to the council. He has been able to bring a business-minded ethos to council proceedings and has managed to streamline projects very effectively.

I have known Larry for a number of years and have learnt a lot from him. In 1983 Larry was first elected to The Hills Shire Council—then known as the Baulkham Hills Shire Council. He has been re-elected six times in 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2004 and 2008. Recently I asked Larry what inspired him to run for council. He informed me that on 3 May 1982 he acted as spokesman for a protest group that was opposed to a certain development in the area. That day was his thirteenth wedding anniversary. In the evening a brick was thrown through his lounge room window with a threatening note attached, which read along the lines of, "Back off council or you'll get your face rearranged." Not to be intimidated, Larry thought this was his calling to run for council. He did so and obviously enjoyed a sterling career.

During his time on the council Larry has served on a number of committees. One of Larry's greatest achievements has been his involvement and input into civic and urban planning projects, ranging from rivers to roads. Larry has also represented council on a number of organisations external to the council. These include the Floodplain Management Association in the position of deputy chairman, the Hawkesbury River County Council, the Joint Rivers Committee-Hawkesbury Nepean River Catchment Council, a local government liability insurance pool called Metro-Pool as the chairman, the North West Transport and Town Planning Committee, the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust as trustee, the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, and the Western Sydney Information Technology Centre. Through his involvement in these various committees Larry was able to successfully liaise and lobby with the North West Transport and Traffic Committee as well as with the State Government.

In 2003 Larry's achievements and commitments were recognised when he was awarded the Centenary Medal by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The citation upon the medal reads, "For long service to the community including through local government and the church." This award was a fitting tribute to Larry and his tireless efforts working for both the council and the community. Larry made some of his most significant contributions to The Hills Shire Council following the 2008 local government elections during his time as mayor. In his role as mayor Larry set out with the goal of changing the focus of the council to become more strategic in the way it planned its developments and sought to solve the shire's problems. Larry called for a greater emphasis on professionalism for his fellow councillors in an attempt to build a more harmonious and inclusive council which would translate to the wider community.

Larry's actions on this front saw the following strategic planning workshop being one of the most successful workshops ever conducted by the council. Throughout Larry's adult life he has always had a strong and passionate commitment to community volunteer work within local groups, sporting bodies and his church. He has worked tirelessly to build up strong community relations with both his own and other community groups. One example of this on an international level is Larry's work as the president of the Faith Hope and Love Children's Foundation of Australia Inc. This foundation helps to raise money in Australia for the provision of building and transport needs in developing countries. Currently these projects are all taking place in the Philippines.

As the phrase goes, if you need something done give it to a busy person. Larry Bolitho fits that mould. His passion for the local area is an inspiration to those of us who choose to dedicate ourselves to serving others. For that I thank him. In reality I should be congratulating Larry's wife, Glenda, for putting up with his constant community work, commitments and other responsibilities but I know Glenda would not have it any other way. Larry Bolitho is a man of utmost integrity and character. He is a conviction politician of the highest order who served our community in The Hills with absolute distinction. I wish him and Glenda all the best in retirement and I look forward to seeing them out and about in The Hills community in the future.

NEW SOUTH WALES RAIL TRANSPORT MUSEUM FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.30 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum, which I had the pleasure of attending on 16 September at Trainworks in Thirlmere. I am honoured to speak about that event today because the celebrations highlighted the important part that rail transportation has played in this State's history and because of the pivotal role that rail transport has played in the history of the Wollondilly region. Wollondilly thrived with the coming of the Great Southern Railway in 1863, which brought jobs and services to the area. The resultant population and economic growth led to Picton being named a municipality in 1895.

The railways brought further development to the Wollondilly area early in the twentieth century with the building of the two-track rail deviation through Bargo and Tahmoor, which increased access and therefore encouraged population growth in the region. The railway also allowed for the rapid movement of coal from the

area in the post-war years when the State and the nation were getting back on their feet. In light of this rich history, it was pleasing to see hundreds of people coming from across Australia to share in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations. Although many people came from the south, central and north coasts of New South Wales, visitors also came from as far away as Queensland and Victoria to share in the celebrations. Many of them constitute the diverse membership of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum. However, many of those who attended the celebration also were tourists who were interested in learning more about the State's rail heritage and experiencing the beauty of the trains from yesteryear.

Those who attended saw two heritage steam trains roll into Thirlmere station from Sydney. Engine 3642, which has recently had a full mechanical restoration thanks to generous donations, and Engine 2705, which was thought to have been used on one of the very first tours, brought 350 passengers from Sydney to the celebrations at Trainworks. The trains carried past and current board members of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum as well as the general public. Other guests included 13 of 21 founding members who were still alive today and life members, past presidents and chairmen, and the local mayor and general manager of Wollondilly Shire Council.

Guests had the pleasure of hearing a talk given by founding member No. 1, who joined the museum's youngest volunteer—an 11-year-old—in cutting the celebratory cake. Along with these formalities, the guests indulged in a gourmet barbeque lunch and visitors had the opportunity to get up close and climb up on the trains and have their photograph taken. It was a wonderful day. I was accompanied by the newly elected Wollondilly councillor Lou Amato. The success of the weekend's celebrations can be largely attributed to the partnership of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum and Trainworks, which provided the opportunity for people from near and far to celebrate the rail heritage of New South Wales and Wollondilly. Through their collaboration these organisations have continually delivered for the Wollondilly region by encouraging tourism in the area by offering fun and educational events and programs, including the annual Thirlmere Festival of Steam and A Day Out With Thomas events, which I enjoy attending with my two young boys.

Trainworks is a significant tourism feature in the electorate of Wollondilly. It was named as a finalist in the 2011 New South Wales Tourism Awards for the New Tourism Development Award and received the Judges Commendation Award for Tourism Business Excellence. This year Trainworks is also a finalist in the 2012 Great Sydney Tourism Awards in the tourist attractions category, and I wish it all the best. I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum and Trainworks for their continued positive impact on the Wollondilly region. I also thank all those involved in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations for their efforts in ensuring the day was a great success.

I also acknowledge Des Egan, the general manager of New South Wales Rail Transport Museum—who did a great job looking after us—and Rob Austin, the chief executive officer of Trainworks. It is people like Mr Egan, Mr Austin and their dedicated teams who ensure that Trainworks and the museum continue to provide fantastic experiences and events for locals and tourists alike. It is important to recognise the numerous volunteers who not only contributed to this celebration but also volunteer their time on an ongoing basis to ensure the future of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum and Trainworks. I also offer my best wishes and support to Peter Berriman, the chairman of the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum, and his family. Our thoughts and prayers are with Peter, who is currently unwell. Before becoming ill, Peter put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that the public had an opportunity to celebrate our rail history at this wonderful event. He will bounce back and we are looking forward to working with him again in the near future.

GRANDPARENT CARERS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [5.35 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the plight of grandparents who must step in to raise their grandchildren. It is most fitting to raise this issue on the day that we apologised to parents who were willing to love and care for their children but who had them stolen. The children about whom I speak tonight have parents who do not have the skills to look after them. On Monday I spent some time with about a dozen grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. I found the meeting difficult because I heard stories about children who have been badly damaged and traumatised. Their parents' drug use and mental illness means that they are unable to care for, love, nourish and raise their children, and the grandparents have stepped in to parent the children despite the fact that it is not their responsibility.

The grandparents told me stories about how difficult it is to work with government departments—the agencies that this Parliament oversees. They said that Federal and State government departments do not seem to be able to talk to each other. One woman said that she has been waiting for many months for the Department of

Family and Community Services to obtain some files from Coonabarabran. She said that the information must be on a computer and that it would be easy for it to be emailed. Even if it is in hard copy, it could simply be sent to Maitland so that her case could be heard. After 11 months of caring for her five grandchildren, this woman is still not receiving any assistance.

Every time another grandchild arrives she must go through the Working with Children checking process yet again. That is ridiculous and a gross example of government bureaucracy gone mad. We must get this right. When grandparents take on the care of their grandchildren they know that when those children are ready to go out into the world they will probably be 70 or 80 years old. They might be living on the pension or their superannuation and they must spend it to raise their grandchildren. Dancing lessons, school fees, food and clothes are not cheap. That is money that they believed they would be able to spend on themselves so that they could enjoy their retirement. They do not begrudge spending that money on their grandchildren, but they would like some help.

They would appreciate the support of a caseworker to help them to navigate the bureaucracy. They believe that they are entitled to that assistance, but they have seen neither hide nor hair of any such person. They simply want someone to talk to who can advise them about the processes and any financial assistance to which they may be entitled. Some of the people to whom I spoke have had to extend their homes to accommodate their grandchildren or move from their retirement unit back into a family home and buy a bigger car, prams and cots. We must offer these people some support. They are exhausting their savings while they provide love, care and compassion to their grandchildren. The children have been delivered by bureaucrats who have dumped them on the doorstep and walked away. If they were foster parents the system would offer them a great deal more by way of assistance. However, because they are grandparents the Government does almost nothing for them. It is just not good enough.

One of the grandparents to whom I spoke told me that when they approached the Department of Family and Community Services for assistance they were threatened with the removal of their grandchildren because the house in which they live does not meet departmental standards. The not-so-subtle threat was that if the grandparent caused trouble or made waves by requesting compensation the department would remove the children. It pains me to think that the bureaucracy of this State would do that to grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren and offering them the support and love that every child deserves. I implore the Government to do better.

WILBERFORCE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.40 p.m.]: This evening I pay tribute in this House to the efforts of the hardworking men and women of the State Emergency Service [SES] who belong to Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit. I am privileged to have the State Emergency Service head office for the Hawkesbury region located in Wilberforce in my electorate, which recently was visited by the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, during recent floods that have spread across the Hawkesbury district. Kevin Jones is the local control officer at Wilberforce and he has provided me with a brief history of the work undertaken over the past three decades by the dedicated members of the Wilberforce unit of the State Emergency Service.

Kevin made particular reference to what is known as General Land Rescue. This is a good opportunity for me to advise the House of just how lucky we are to have such efficient and well-trained volunteers of the State Emergency Service protecting our communities. General Land Rescue takes up a lot of time and is a large part of what a State Emergency Service unit is required to do. It has been suggested that State Emergency Service volunteers are virtually glorified labourers, who are there to move heavy metal and objects in emergency situations, or to help people when they are faced with the danger of the elements during storms and floods. However, as Kevin says, it is hardly glorious.

Over the past 27 years since the Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit first came on line for rescue within the Hawkesbury area, the unit has not stopped being online—not once. General Land Rescue is now fully accredited. The era of hand-only operated hydraulic cutters and spreaders and worn out second-hand council trucks being rebirthed as the latest rescue truck is well and truly over. The State Emergency Service now possesses some of the most up-to-date equipment and resources for all emergency situations. The era of little or no communications, using member-owned CB radios to communicate back and forth, is well behind the Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit. It weathered the era of hundreds of trucks a day thundering up and down the Putty Road, with tight deadlines, poor maintenance and drugged-up or fatigued drivers, which all too often resulted in catastrophic consequences.

For the past 27 years the Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit has provided a rescue service to the Hawkesbury community—a service that I believe is second to none. It has researched better, smarter techniques and equipment, and pioneered the New South Wales State Emergency Service participating in Road Crash Rescue competitions, competing at international level in the world championships in Melbourne. As a result, the Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit has revolutionised the techniques used in road crash rescues, developed training material, and spent a lot of time taking it to its peers in other State Emergency Service units throughout New South Wales. The Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit wrote the training package that currently is used by all State Emergency Service units right across Australia and by other services across our country. In conjunction with Cliff Ross from PT Hydraulics, it developed what is now known as a glass management kit, which is now standard across all the Road Crash Rescue [RCR] units in New South Wales State Emergency Service regions.

As Kevin says, the Wilberforce unit continues to be challenged by the changing technology in modern cars, such as high-voltage electrical hazards in hybrid vehicles, like my own Prius. In 27 years the Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit has responded to approximately 3,000 rescues. It is no accident that it has great facilities, modern, efficient state-of-the-art trucks and equipment, as well as the training, experience, ability and enthusiasm that are second to none. The people of the Wilberforce unit make it happen. They are the ones with the heart and the passion to make a difference, who try to produce the best possible outcomes for victims, or for those left behind in more tragic circumstances. And they cannot do their work without the support of families, employers, friends, fellow volunteers, State Emergency Service regional staff, and the Hawkesbury City Council. The State Emergency Service personnel forge a fantastic product from the partnership of all those people.

Kevin Jones said that it is heartening to see a record level of funding by the New South Wales Government that now has been committed to the State Emergency Service. He hopes that, with an increasing number of what he calls non-State Emergency Service people acquiring decision-making positions within the organisation, they do not lose sight of the things that have been created by the Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit, and why it currently exists. The Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit also has a horse rescue unit, which uses state-of-the-art technology that has been developed by the Wilberforce group. The unit assists in rescuing horses that are in dangerous situations, such as being caught in low-lying areas during floods or in very muddy areas. The Wilberforce State Emergency Service unit has proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the horse rescue unit's services will be implemented throughout New South Wales. I take this opportunity to congratulate every member, both past and present, of this wonderful organisation and thank them for their tireless commitment to protecting the lives and property of the residents of the Hawkesbury electorate and, more broadly, residents across New South Wales.

WHITE CLIFFS UNDERGROUND ART FESTIVAL

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [5.45 p.m.]: I compliment the community of White Cliffs on its recent inaugural Underground Art Festival that was held from 7 to 9 September 2012. On 7 September I had the pleasure of visiting White Cliffs and participating in the festival. I commend the Central Darling Arts Association for its commitment to making the arts exhibition an annual event. The association applied for a Community Building Partnership grant of \$37,840 to renovate the White Cliffs hall. I was absolutely amazed to see the quality of that renovation. It was obvious to me that the \$37,840 was pretty well spread around on the project. I know that a high level of community input was involved in achieving such quality.

The opening event of the festival was its art exhibition, and that was held on Friday 7 September. Having visited the exhibition, I can only say most people would be very impressed and perhaps pleasantly surprised by the quality of artworks produced in the White Cliffs area and throughout the Central Darling region. The opening event featured a performance of Sound Circus, a group of musicians that has been formed by Jon Rose and Hollis Taylor. Sound Circus also performed throughout the weekend. It was quite entertaining to witness such an impressive performance and great sound coming from such unusual instruments. However, probably for most people the highlight of the festival was the Body Art Show, which featured an internationally recognised body artist, Tim Gratton. Tim provided body art on Saturday 8 September for all the local people who were brave enough to be painted. They tell me it was quite entertaining.

Mr Richard Amery: And you were one of them.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Actually, I was not at the festival that Saturday night. In any event, I already had decided that probably the last thing I should do is be painted—hardly a vote-winning strategy. But certainly

many people have said that it was a very popular event. The White Cliffs Underground Art Festival was supported by accommodation providers, such as the White Cliffs Underground Motel, the White Cliffs Hotel and Motel, and the White Cliffs Opal Pioneer Tourist Park. For the information of people who have not visited White Cliffs, the White Cliffs Underground Motel is a unique facility. The hotel and motel and the tourist park are also doing really well as a result of increased tourism. I encourage everyone to visit White Cliffs. I am proud to represent Far West New South Wales where all our communities offer incredibly interesting tourist attractions. Certainly the underground lifestyle that is a feature of White Cliffs is unique.

The Red Earth Opal Café, the Underground Motel and the Outback Store catered for local people, visitors and tourists at the festival by providing delicious meals at very competitive prices. The people who attended the opening event were very pleased with the entertainment and catering and were looking forward to the rest of the festival's events throughout that weekend. I was fortunate in catching up with an old mate of mine, Lindsay White, who has been a long-term resident of Broken Hill and White Cliffs. He is building his fourth underground home, so I took the opportunity of inspecting his latest creation. Lindsay and his partner, Cree Marshall, were the festival's event coordinators. When their latest underground home is completed, it will be a work of art in itself.

The unique feature of White Cliffs is underground homes. Very few people in White Cliffs live on the surface. The commitment by the White Cliffs and Central Darling communities to developing tourism opportunities for the White Cliffs area is commendable. I compliment them on their initiative. I look forward to next year's White Cliffs Underground Art Festival. Judging by the quality art exhibits, entertainment and catering at this year's festival, I am sure next year's festival will be fully supported by the people who attended the 2012 White Cliffs Underground Art Festival.

KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [5.50 p.m.]: On 8 September countless residents were elected and re-elected to their respective local government councils right across New South Wales. But it is important to pay tribute to those councillors who retired at the recent election after having served their communities for many years. Our local government officials give countless hours away from families and loved ones to make our communities better. It is important to acknowledge their contributions and thank them for their considerable efforts. Tony Hall of Ku-ring-gai Council is one such councillor. After representing the St Ives ward for 25 years on council—which included service as mayor in 1999 to 2000, and as deputy mayor on two occasions—Mr Hall is the longest serving councillor in the history of the municipality. He has served with distinction, passion and great energy.

A Ku-ring-gai boy all his life, Mr Hall grew up in Wahroonga and has lived in St Ives since 1978. Ku-ring-gai has changed considerably over the past 25 years, and Mr Hall ensured that the voice of St Ives was heard on every significant council proposal during that time. But, importantly, Tony Hall fought to ensure that the interests of residents and ratepayers were always protected. Mr Hall leaves office as the longest ever serving elected representative in the history of Ku-ring-gai Council. Some of Mr Hall's notable achievements whilst on council included: improving traffic conditions in St Ives; implementing Ku-ring-gai's first conservation heritage plan in 1988—which protected more than 800 areas from destruction, including local historic buildings and the St Ives village green, a great part of our community—and prioritising a host of conservation initiatives.

Mr Hall's efforts and leadership did not go unnoticed: he received the local government outstanding service award and gold medal in 2010. In my experience, Tony was always available to assist residents in dealing with council. Indeed, it was my own experience in needing assistance from council which brought me into contact with Councillor Hall and indeed my first contact with the Liberal Party. In 1999 my neighbourhood faced the prospect of being destroyed by inappropriate overdevelopment. A proposal for medium-density dwellings in the middle of suburbia had been put forward under Labor's draconian State environmental planning policy No. 5, which was being used as a back door for inappropriate development under the guise of providing housing stock for seniors.

It was Tony Hall who volunteered and assisted my family and our neighbours in our time of need. He was a great source of support and encouragement to our community and embodied what it meant to be a public servant. His integrity and fortitude enabled Ku-ring-gai to advance and prosper for the betterment of ratepayers. In his role as a councillor he acted in various capacities—advocate, visionary and community leader. Although his opinions on particular matters drew criticism and opposition, Mr Hall always sought to consult and engage

with members of the community to alleviate concerns and issues. Ku-ring-gai residents will remember Mr Hall's contributions and impact. The area is a better place as a result of his service. I wish Mr Hall and his wife, Lee, all the best in the future. May the next chapter in their lives bring them happiness and joy.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge another retiring councillor, my great friend Ian Cross. Ian was first elected to Ku-ring-gai Council in 1999, and has served the community with distinction ever since. Ian's time on council was remarkable, not only for his support in providing essential infrastructure to local sporting and community groups, but also for his passion for the protection of the character and amenity of our suburbs. Probably his most notable achievement was in 2003, when he was the first mayor of Ku-ring-gai ever re-elected to council in its 100-year history. I might note that he had a very good campaign manager in me when, as a young Liberal, I agreed to run the campaign at the request of the member for Ku-ring-gai, and current Premier, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell. Ian's keen sense of humour, dry wit and calmness under pressure will be greatly missed in the community. I wish him, his wife, Marion, and their children every success in the future.

Community service does take a lot of sacrifice. Sacrifices are made on the home front—long hours are spent in council meetings away from loved ones, family and friends—but it is done to make a difference to the community and to make our suburbs, neighbourhoods and communities a better place. Both the councillors to whom I have referred have done so with distinction. I also note a number of councillors in this place who retired at the recent local government elections, including the member for Coogee and the member for Riverstone, who are present in the Chamber. They have served their communities at a local government level with distinction. I am pleased that they will continue to serve their communities at a State level with that same dedication to community service.

WANDA TO NORTH CRONULLA WALKWAY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [5.55 p.m.]: I am delighted to inform the House of the benefits which the Government's Metropolitan GreenSpace Program is bringing to the Cronulla electorate. The Metropolitan GreenSpace Program aims to improve regionally significant open space for recreational purposes. Each year about \$2.5 million is available under the program on a dollar-for-dollar matched funding basis from the New South Wales Government to local councils in metropolitan Sydney. The core objectives of the Metropolitan GreenSpace Program are said to be: to improve regionally significant open space, including links between bushland, parks, centres and waterways; to enable more effective public use of regionally significant open space; to promote planning and improve access to a diverse mix of open space opportunities for Sydney community; to promote partnerships between State and local government, including council to council; and to support projects which demonstrate a commitment to the design and future management of open space, including improved outcomes for health, sustainability, climate change and the community.

The Government awarded a total of \$2.5 million in the 2011-12 round of funding to 23 successful projects enhancing open space and regional trails across Sydney. Applications for the 2012-13 funding round are now open, with a closing date of 5 October 2012. One of those successful projects for the 2011-12 funding is the upgrade of the Wanda to North Cronulla walkway by Sutherland Shire Council. Work began in June. The existing footpath that was in poor condition will be upgraded and widened and a new section of walkway installed between Wanda Surf Life Saving Club and Don Lucas Reserve. The upgrade includes four features. First, it will replace the old four-metre wide asphalt footpath along Mitchell Road with a five-metre wide shared concrete pathway.

Secondly, the upgrade will provide a new four-metre wide pathway along Murdoch Street from Wanda Surf Life Saving Club north to the Don Lucas Reserve. Thirdly, at each intersection of the path and a beach access track there will be a node with furniture such as cycle racks, beach showers and benches—the combination of the furniture will depend on the suitability for each location. The upgrade will also install conduits for the future upgrade of street lighting. The installation of new lighting is not included in the scope of works for this project. The eight kilometre walk along Cronulla's coastline from Boat Harbour in the north to the fisheries in the south is one of Sydney's most spectacular. Fourthly, the upgrade of the Wanda to North Cronulla section will enhance Cronulla's tourism potential and will be a pleasing improvement for the many locals who enjoy Cronulla's healthy outdoor lifestyle.

GRAFFITI

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [5.58 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House success in the ongoing fight against graffiti in the north-west of Sydney. Collaboration between local police at Quakers Hill and Hawkesbury local area commands, the EyeWatch Program, the VandalTrak graffiti reporting website and

local Rotary groups has resulted in dramatic improvements. There has been a significant decrease in graffiti incidents across the north-west in suburbs such as Glenwood, Quakers Hill, Kellyville Ridge and Windsor. There has been an increase in the apprehension rate of perpetrators. I note that 19 per cent of graffiti incidents relate to council property. As many people are aware, councils remove graffiti that is on their own property. But, of course, graffiti on private property and on the property of State agencies and utilities is also a major problem.

Graffiti on businesses and private residences makes up 42 per cent of reported graffiti incidents—a staggering figure which requires us to look at ways to tackle graffiti beyond reliance on local councils. VandalTrak data shows that in the Blacktown local government area there were 813 graffiti incidents from April 2011 to March 2012—about 74 a month, more than two per day. This is obviously a significant problem but one I am pleased to say that is being tackled head on. I would like to highlight the work of VandalTrak, which is making significant inroads into tackling graffiti. The way VandalTrak works is that members of the public can register as users and then log incidents of graffiti online. This rapidly builds an intelligence database for police to use in tracking perpetrators. There have been 5,500 incidents of graffiti uploaded to VandalTrak in the last 12 months alone.

The Quakers Hill local area command has been a pioneer in working closely with VandalTrak and EyeWatch to deal with the issue of graffiti and has begun to have significant success in identifying those responsible. VandalTrak's rewards program has resulted in 70 leads. The rewards program provides people who make tip-offs about graffiti offenders with a cash reward if the tip-off results in charges being pressed. In what I believe is an unprecedented advance against graffiti, 32 offenders have been caught over the last nine months and many more are being investigated as a result of the collaborative effort taking place in the north-west. VandalTrak and EyeWatch have together played a critical role as questions regarding graffiti tags are posted online for EyeWatch members to respond. Members are also kept updated on the progress made tackling graffiti through the EyeWatch page.

A recent example of the advantage provided by the EyeWatch program was when a post was put up about an offender and, within an hour, 44 comments were made, which led to investigations that are currently underway. I would like to acknowledge some key people who are leading the fight against graffiti in Sydney's north-west. Inspector Brett Guyatt from Quakers Hill Local Area Command has pioneered work on EyeWatch with VandalTrak and is training other local area commands on the programs that Quakers Hill has successfully used. Chief Inspector Josh Maxwell coordinates the EyeWatch program, which has been a resounding success, with 170,000 fans on Facebook across New South Wales. Anthony Krkac, a resident of my electorate and the founder of VandalTrak, has obviously contributed enormously to the progress now being made against graffiti.

Members of the Windsor Rotary graffiti removal team, headed by Garry Baldry, have played a crucial role in the Hawkesbury and I commend Garry and the 20 or so members of the team. Windsor Rotary's graffiti removal team was launched in May 2011 and since then they have assisted with the clean-up of over 520 sites, not just on council property but on all sorts of property, involving some 1,400 hours of voluntary labour, which equates to a commercial value of approximately \$62,000. Their generous and voluntary contribution to our community is overwhelming.

Various community groups frequently hold graffiti clean-up days, where the public are invited to help clean graffiti in local areas. Windsor Rotary's graffiti team is coordinating one such day along with Hawkesbury City Council on Sunday—which is Graffiti Action Day—with a focus on the suburb of Bligh Park. I commend the many individuals I have mentioned today and express my appreciation for the work that they and the community are doing in tackling graffiti. The tide is turning. We are making progress in this battle. I encourage all property owners in the north-west to clean any existing graffiti off their buildings and fences and help maintain the momentum which is developing to rid our suburbs of this blight.

SURF LIFE SAVING CENTRAL COAST

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyang) [6.03 p.m.]: It is time to take the Speedos out of the drawer and to put on the red and yellow uniform and the iconic quartered cap. This Saturday, 22 September, marks the start of the 2012-13 surf life saving season. It is a time when an army of volunteers take to the beaches to protect beachgoers, and perhaps the most well-known part of our unique Australian lifestyle and culture. My electorate of Wyong on the Central Coast attracts thousands of tourists over the summer months as people travel from all over the State to enjoy our beaches. As picturesque as our beaches and coastlines are, they present a very real and often ignored danger. I am extremely proud of the strong tradition surf lifesaving holds on the Central Coast. For over 70 years surf lifesavers have been saving lives and ensuring safe swimming environments. As a result of this hard work we enjoy some of the safest beaches not only in Australia but in the entire world.

The Central Coast season launch will be held this Saturday at Shelly Beach in a raising of the flags ceremony. I recently spoke in this House of Project Blueprint and highlighted within that speech the dangers associated with enjoying our coastline. According to Surf Life Saving New South Wales statistics, since 2004 some 37 people have lost their lives in the Central Coast area and 15 of those deaths have occurred in the Wyong Shire Council area. This reinforces the important role volunteers play in saving lives during the summer months, particularly taking into account that those lives were lost outside of the flagged, patrolled areas and outside of patrol hours. The 2011-12 season has seen over eight million people go to the beach. Importantly, across New South Wales surf lifesaving volunteers have made 8,013 rescues, conducted 7,785 first aid responses and taken an incredible 191,066 preventative actions.

In the past 12 months, on the Central Coast alone, 895 lives were saved by volunteer lifesavers. A further 39,589 bathers were prevented from getting into difficulty at our beaches. The president of Surf Life Saving Central Coast, Mr Stuart Harvey, has informed me that across the Central Coast some 2,400 patrolling members will provide over 87,000 person hours of volunteer time to patrol local beaches this season. These numbers speak volumes and illustrate the crucial role these volunteers play day in and day out. I thank the volunteers who give their time to protect our Central Coast beaches, in particular Lakes Beach and Soldiers Beach in my electorate of Wyong. Just fewer than 150,000 people visited these two beaches alone in my electorate in the past season.

During this time some 8,000 preventative actions were taken and 158 first aids services were provided. In total, volunteers provided 113 rescues at these two beaches. Across the Central Coast there are 8,515 volunteers. In my electorate of Wyong 780 volunteers have given their time at Lakes and Soldiers beach surf clubs. It is important to remember that these are unpaid positions and volunteers give their time for the better good of the community. I welcome Chris Parker as the new chief executive officer of Surf Life Saving Central Coast, and pay tribute to Chad Griffith, who vacated that position to work with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service earlier this year. Chad has been an amazing advocate for surf life saving and a valued colleague. I commend him and wish him well. From this weekend volunteer surf lifesavers will be on patrol until April 2013.

As a volunteer surf lifesaver myself I will continue to actively support education programs so that our beachgoers are better informed and aware of potential dangers. I am chairperson of the parliamentary surf life saving friendship group—and I acknowledge the vice-chair, who is at the table, the member for Pittwater. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament both of us wish all volunteer surf lifesavers a safe, happy and successful season ahead. We thank them in advance for their contributions, as well as all the volunteers behind the scenes who keep our clubs vibrant and operational. Finally, I offer a timely reminder to all beachgoers to always swim between the flags and always follow directions from our volunteer surf lifesavers.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.08 p.m.]: I commend the member for Wyong for his great words in support of the Central Coast surf lifesavers. As a Parliament we thank them for their service over so many years and for their service in the coming season. The member for Wyong is a surf lifesaver on the Central Coast, as is the member for The Entrance. I understand that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is also a surf lifesaver on the Central Coast. Indeed, if the member for Balmain or the member for Mount Druitt goes for a swim on the Central Coast they will be in safe hands. I also commend the member for Wyong for his work as the inaugural president of the parliamentary friends of surf life saving.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [6.09 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the recent local government elections. I take this opportunity to congratulate all those civic-minded people who raised their hands to serve the community. From all walks of life and all political persuasions, they deserve our respect. I congratulate those who were successful, those who completed their time on council and those who may need to try again in order to serve in what is I believe the most important level of government. From my experience, local government is a rewarding yet rigorous and challenging place to serve. The impact one can have on the direction of one's community is immense and immediate. I spent two terms on Sutherland Shire Council and it was a challenging and fulfilling role. My fellow councillors are now close friends and, as much as I am content to hand over the reins to someone else and focus on my State role, it is with fond memories that I relinquish the job of councillor. I hope that those elected increase their duties in a careful and considered fashion.

Two substantial and valuable local government areas are found in the electorate of Menai. The Liverpool and Sutherland shire local government areas will be of great import to this Government and to its

Federal counterparts. These areas can lead our economy. We need to increase productivity and deliver growth for local communities and the State. In the south and south-western regions of this State our innovative and productive community will grow and deliver substantial business activity and, now that the results of the local government elections of 8 September are known, I am confident that will be achieved. Dynamic teams were elected in these areas and I am confident that we can work together for the betterment of this State.

Both Liberal campaigns in my electorate focused on delivering core responsibilities to the community. Both challenged residents to look beyond political rhetoric and vote for candidates with vision and plans for their communities, environment and local economies. There was no scaremongering or half-truths such as those portrayed in other campaigns during those elections. In response, overwhelming support has been given to the Liberal teams led by Ned Mannoun in Liverpool and Kent Johns in the Sutherland shire. Their positive agenda was not only fresh but constructive and persuasive—one only has to look at their results. In Liverpool we welcome a Liberal mayor for the first time. Well done, Mayor Mannoun. I also congratulate Ned, his wife, Faten, and son, Solomon, on their newest arrival, Jacob, who was born the day before the election. Ned said his wife's labour pains were over a day before Liverpool's were.

In the Sutherland shire a record number of Liberal councillors, including experienced and capable Kevin Schrieber in A ward, Kent Johns in B ward and Steve Simpson—my former running mate—in E ward, have all been returned to council. A team of fresh-faced and capable new councillors will join them—namely, Scott Williams, Tracy Cook, Hassan Awada, Tom Croucher, Carmelo Pesce and John Riad. I congratulate each councillor on his or her appointment. Carol Provan and Bruce Walton will return to the Sutherland council team. Liverpool City Council will also have strong leadership, with Tony Hadchiti in south ward and Mazhar Hadid in north ward returning to the council with Mayor Mannoun. Peter Ristevski, Gus Balloot and Sabrina Mamone will also join the Liverpool team. These new councillors will provide real representation and fresh ideas. I again congratulate this great new Liberal council team.

Both local government areas for the Liberal party delivered substantial mandate-delivering swings. The policies of our party and the business focus that we will bring will drive the economies in those areas, while maintaining the enviable lifestyles our residents enjoy. I look forward to working with these two councils in a cooperative manner to achieve results that my constituents deserve. This should be recorded in the Liberal Party's history books as a time when true representation was delivered to south and south-west Sydney. I also acknowledge two councillors who left their councils at a time not of their choosing. I acknowledge the time and commitment of Craig McCallum to the Sutherland Shire Council. I also acknowledge the time and commitment of Gary Lucas to the Liverpool City Council. Many of my constituents have dealt with Gary, and I am disappointed to see him go. It was a very close election result for Gary and Peter Harle. I welcome Councillor Harle back to Liverpool council.

Voting does matter and this was shown in E ward in the Sutherland shire, which came down to 13 votes. It is important to take an interest in local government because councillors make decisions on behalf of local communities. Thirteen votes was a tough call. I congratulate and welcome our new councillors but I also put them on notice. Councillors have a mandate to deliver for the community. They make a promise to do so and they must keep that promise. I will hold our new councillors to their promises but, more importantly, the community will also hold them to it. They have the opportunity to achieve great things, but that mandate should be treated with care and responsibility. Good luck and best wishes for the four years ahead.

BLACKTOWN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

RETIREMENT OF GREG KELLY, DEPUTY SERJEANT-AT-ARMS

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [6.14 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House about the Blacktown Community Transport, which does a fantastic job in assisting people with transport issues both in my electorate and the surrounding areas. I met recently with Ms Susan Heyne, the executive office for this organisation. I also have met Chairman Ken Bailey on many occasions. He is a resident in my electorate. Blacktown Community Transport is one of the highest-regarded organisations in the electorate of Mount Druitt. At last count it had some 2,000 clients on its books. Blacktown Community Transport is primarily funded from the Commonwealth's Home and Community program.

Blacktown Community Transport also receives assistance from the New South Wales Government through the Ageing and Disability portfolio. At the outset, I place on record the efforts of so many who assist this organisation as volunteers. The bus drivers deserve special mention. Ms Heyne sent me a letter about client

needs, in particular the crucial need for specialist treatment to be in close proximity. Approximately half of all the transport provided is for medical treatment. Indeed, demand has been so high that Blacktown Community Transport has had to set up two new services to take people to their medical treatment. In that letter Ms Heyne said:

One of the treatments we get a large number of requests for is transport to cancer treatment.

Of the 2,246 requests for transport to cancer treatment in 2011-2012, 77 per cent of requests were to either Westmead Hospital or Nepean Cancer Centre. Only 23 per cent of requests were to Blacktown Hospital. The reason people have to travel out Blacktown Community Transport is funded by the Home and Community Care Program and the New South Wales Community Transport Program of the area is because Blacktown Hospital only provides chemotherapy, not radiotherapy. Mount Druitt hospital does not provide any of these services.

She said further:

Data from the New South Wales Cancer Institute reveals that, although Blacktown LGA residents are below the state average for cancer diagnosis, they have a higher likelihood of dying from cancer than the state average. The Cancer Institute does not analyse why but having a complete treatment clinic close to where the people live must have a bearing on when people are diagnosed and how quickly they get their treatment.

She also raised the need for community bus stops at shopping centres. Apparently these are in places such as Roselands and Ryde. I was advised that many community buses take groups and people to shopping centres for medical treatment or a day out because they do not have any form of transport. Most of these people are elderly or have some form of disability. These passengers need to be dropped as close as possible to these facilities. Because of the size of the buses and car parking places, community buses such as those of Blacktown Community Transport cannot park and wait for their clients at the entrance to many of these large shopping centres such as Westfield—where my office is located.

Ms Heyne said that whilst individual approaches to shopping centre operators is the immediate need, consideration should be given to ensuring that community bus stops should be a requirement when approval is given to build any new shopping centre or to extend existing ones. Many of us take this important issue for granted because we can easily drive our cars to a shopping centre and park our cars in a normal parking spot. We then do our business and return to our cars. Those reliant on these community buses cannot do that. I intend to make representation to the Minister for Transport, and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure about these important issues that have been raised by Ms Heyne.

I have 40 seconds left in my time allocation for this private members' statement. As the longest serving member in this House, I take this opportunity to wish Greg Kelly, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, all the very best in his retirement. He is one of the few people around this place who has been in the New South Wales Parliament for longer than I have been. The farewell he was given in the Speaker's garden yesterday was a fitting tribute to a person who has dedicated his life to this Parliament. I hope that in his retirement he continues to visit this Parliament as part of his activities. Perhaps a Friends of New South Wales Parliament organisation should be set up to ensure that the talents and the dedication of people such as Mr Kelly are never lost to this Chamber and to the Parliament of New South Wales.

PLANNING GREEN PAPER

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [6.19 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about planning, an issue of great and lasting importance to my electorate and to many communities across New South Wales. The Government has released its green paper proposing a range of changes to the State's planning system. The review is a welcome opportunity to address the hopelessly compromised planning system under New South Wales Labor. However, I am concerned that many of the proposals contained in the green paper dramatically shift the power of the planning process in favour of developers. These changes pose significant threats to communities and the environment. A strategic approach and a commitment to ecologically sustainable development [ESD] should be at the heart of planning. We should be planning for our generation and the many generations to come, not just for developers who stand to make a quick profit.

The claimed focus of the paper on strategic planning is welcomed, but the paper also sets out the mechanisms to undermine and circumvent strategic planning outcomes, including the ability for developers to submit non-complying development applications, enable minimum control of so-called enterprise zones and contravene local environment plans with a strategic compliance certificate. The paper also has expanded appeal rights for developers but not communities and has allowed developer-initiated rezoning. Any pretence at

genuine strategic planning is undermined fatally by these exceptions. The major concerns about the proposals in the paper include, first, the removal of community consultation and local decision-making and the lack of democratic oversight in planning decisions in clear contravention of this Government's promises to return planning back to communities; secondly, the significant weakening of planning controls; thirdly, the imposition of costs for developments on existing residents, rather than the developers who profit; and, finally, the empowerment of developers at the expense of local residents.

Planning for our growing communities does not mean that we need to sacrifice the basic principle of ecologically sustainable development. I am a strong supporter of providing housing and affordable housing. During my time at Leichhardt council I was proud to oversee a number of successful developments, and I note that that council is exceeding the new housing targets set by the State Government. Leichhardt council has achieved this while consulting with the community and working collaboratively with developers. A sustainable and effective planning system can create local jobs, protect the environment and respect the fundamental right of people to participate in decisions that affect them. The Government's green paper fails to include the community in the assessment process. The proposed changes remove the right of residents to have a say on most developments in their neighbourhoods.

The changes propose to include the community in the abstract planning stage, that is, the strategic planning phase. That simply is not good enough. It is difficult to engage the community without a clear vision of the proposed development. Under the green paper, the most significant developments in local areas would be decided by State-dominated joint regional planning panels [JRPP] rather than by local, accountable, elected representatives. This removes an important oversight in the planning process and an important accountability mechanism. The Government also proposes to introduce enterprise zones with very few planning controls where local councils and residents will have almost no say on the size, nature or type of development to be built.

One of the most significant changes is the proposal to move away from the most measurable development controls—height restrictions, limits on the number of storeys and building bulk controls—and instead use generalised merit-based controls, which experience tells us undermine strategic planning approaches and will be open to widespread abuse by powerful developers. If successful, the changes will fail to return planning powers to the community, will retain State-dominated joint regional planning panels and will expand the role of a State-appointed State Planning Assessment Commission. Developers will be able to appeal unfavourable zoning decisions by a local council to a State-dominated joint regional planning panel, but local residents will have no right appeal. Finally, the proposed changes will reduce the amount developers have to pay for new infrastructure and require the rest of the community to meet these costs through compulsory levies on existing home owners.

Councils will be prohibited from requiring developer payments for the cost of green open space, which will have a real impact on the kinds of neighbourhoods and communities we create in respect to providing parks and green space. New South Wales needs a genuinely independent State Planning Assessment Commission that is resourced to undertake its own assessment of developments and is made up of members with secure tenure. The proposed changes outlined in the green paper seem to be the result of effective developer lobbying. I will stand with my community to participate in this process to ensure that at the heart of any planning for this State is an ecologically sustainable development approach that puts at the centre of the debate a genuine strategic planning approach that searches for community solutions in respect of the environment, local business, transport and much-needed housing.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.24 p.m.]: I commend the member for Balmain for his advocacy for good planning in his community. However, some of his conclusions regarding the green paper cannot be truly drawn. Of course, we agree that the concept of ecologically sustainable development must be at the cornerstone of any modern planning system. Development in favour of the community is absolutely paramount, but we must ensure that the manner of that development preserves the ecological processes on which we all depend. That is the point of the green paper and of providing a new planning system for New South Wales that puts people at the centre of planning decisions that will affect their communities and their neighbourhoods.

PITTWATER SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.25 p.m.], by leave: Across Pittwater and the New South Wales coast the cicadas will soon sing, the bindies will soon bite, the nor'-easters will soon blow, the bluebottles will soon begin their landward drift, and the red and yellow flags are about to be raised. What

better time to commend the amazing work of our volunteer surf lifesavers. The member for Wyong spoke about surf lifesavers on the Central Coast, and I want to put in my two cents' worth about the Pittwater and northern beaches surf lifesavers. At a local level surf life saving clubs run on the smell of an oily rag. It is amazing that the surf lifesavers of the 11 Pittwater clubs under the watchful leadership of the northern beaches branch of Surf Life Saving NSW can provide so much service with such limited resources.

I commend the northern beaches branch under the leadership of branch president, David Murray; deputy branch president, Christine Hopton; directors Steve Faddy, Shannon Job, John Fahey, Rob Berry and Glenn Langley; and the excellent staff of Steve McInnes, Jen Huston, Belinda Dobson, Marcial Nunura, Kristen Raper and John Taylor for their incredible work supporting our volunteer surf lifesavers. Running a surf club is an enormous task and the club presidents and executives of the 11 Pittwater surf life saving clubs do an incredible job. We expect them to fulfil a job that is not dissimilar to the responsibilities faced by directors of medium-sized public companies.

From north Palm Beach to south Narrabeen, Pittwater has wonderful clubs and leaders in every aspect of club operations. They are family clubs underpinned by a strong family ethic. A few names constantly recur in clubs along the northern beaches, such as the Raper family of Bilgola, the Hopton family at Avalon, the Lang family at Palm Beach and the Howard family at north Palm Beach, the Cross family at south Narrabeen—we are particularly proud that Andy Cross was named Surf Lifesaver of the Year 2012—the Jollows family of Warriewood, the Hendrikson and the Cullis families of Whale Beach, the Menzies family of Newport and the Stonell family at Mona Vale, but these are just a few of the many families involved with this organisation.

Surf life saving crosses age and generation, and the same spirit is learned and passed on. John Dibbs, president of Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club visited Parliament House recently. He is the grandson or great-grandson of Sir George Dibbs, the tenth Premier of New South Wales. I understand that John Dibbs attended the bucks party of the member for Maroubra, although he refuses to divulge any details. I commend the athletes, trainers and particularly the patrolling members who protect us on the beaches, and the proliferating nippers and their parents along the northern beaches. In many ways surf lifesavers are living icons of Australia. So many personifications of world nations do not reflect reality: not every German wears a dirndl, not every Englishman wears a bear-skinned hat, and not every Texan wears a 10-gallon hat—at least some of them do not. These icons are largely historical.

Every weekend on beaches in Pittwater, New South Wales and, indeed, Australia the red and yellow caps are worn by embodiments of Australia—the living icon that is the Australian surf lifesaver. I do not believe it is a coincidence that the first lifesavers became the Anzacs. The good-natured, self-deprecating, almost larrikin temperament, the laconic humour, the courage and selflessness—exactly the same spirit that motivated the Anzacs motivated the life saving movement. I shall tell two quick stories about that.

Newport surf club was founded in 1901. Twenty-five men from Newport signed up for service; six of them did not return. Five brothers from the Porter family signed up; three did not return. Kym Charles, a relative of the Porter family, is still a member of Newport surf club. The Mona Vale surf club stopped operating because many of its members died in the First World War; there were insufficient lifesavers to form the surf club after the war. So the flags will be raised symbolically on Saturday on the beaches in Pittwater. I thank the surf lifesavers for the wonderful service they provide and I wish them all the best for the 2012-13 season.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.30 p.m. until
Tuesday 16 October 2012 at 12 noon.**
