

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 16 October 2012

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

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

## ACTING DEPUTY SERJEANT-AT-ARMS

**The SPEAKER:** I wish to advise that Jonathan Elliott will be the Acting Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms over the next few sitting weeks. He will undertake the ceremonial and Chamber duties of the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms role in addition to his substantive position as Committee Inquiry Manager. Welcome, Jonathan.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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### LIGHTNING RIDGE CENTRAL SCHOOL CENTENARY

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES** (Barwon—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales) [12.12 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a fantastic event that occurred in the Barwon electorate during the recent parliamentary recess. Ever since opal mining took off in Lightning Ridge in 1901 the town has been one of the most popular, unconventional and unique places in New South Wales. While the town has changed immensely in that time, there has been one mainstay of the local community: Lightning Ridge Central School. Last month I was extremely pleased to join the Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, in Lightning Ridge to celebrate the centenary of the official opening of the school's weatherboard building, a building that is still in use today. This was part of a three-day celebration that featured a street parade, an official dinner and a special church service. While we celebrate the centenary this year, the school itself was opened in 1907 in a building that was described in a newspaper article at the time as a "miserable humpy". A school inspector reported that:

It is constructed of a framework of saplings with hessian walls and bark roof. There are no windows.

The students and teacher went through two more rented properties before finally moving into the purpose-built, weatherboard school building that was the focus of the centenary celebrations. Countless obstacles had to be overcome in establishing the new premises in 1912, from the transient population to the challenges of staying cool in the searing summer heat. However, not only did the school overcome these challenges but it thrived in the difficult conditions, and the school's enrolments grew substantially over the following decades. Through the 1960s and 1970s Lightning Ridge experienced a reasonable population increase and as services grew Lightning Ridge Central School increased its staff of teachers, some of whom were present at the centenary celebrations.

Among those also in attendance were former principals Neville Norris, 1958-1960, and Barry Graves, 1964-1967, and the families of former principals such as Jack Attwood, 1949-1953, whose children, Beth and John, were in attendance. Two pupils from the 1930s also returned for the day, one of whom, Nola Denis Rennie, was returning to Lightning Ridge for the first time in 70 years. There was a huge turnout of former students, all of whom very much enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with one another and recall their memories from the countless ones the school has produced over the years. Today Lightning Ridge Central School continues to go from strength to strength. It has an enrolment of nearly 400 students, 37 per cent of whom are

Aboriginal. The school's principal, Dr Christopher Tome, has been a wonderful advocate for the school and for the town and I congratulate him on the work he has done there. I congratulate also his staff members who all do a fantastic job.

Schools are a fundamental part of the fabric of any regional community and Lightning Ridge Central School is certainly no exception. A school is a mirror of the community itself, and in a town with a history as colourful as Lightning Ridge the school has seen more than its fair share of characters over the years, both on the staff and among its students. The community has a very special affinity with the school and never has this been more evident than during the centenary celebrations. I congratulate the entire school community on putting on a wonderful celebration to mark the 100th anniversary of the official opening of the old weatherboard school building at Lightning Ridge Central School. It has been a wonderful 100 years for the school and I wish them all the best for the next 100 years.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.16 p.m.]: I thank the member for Barwon for enlightening the House about the 100th anniversary celebrations of Lightning Ridge Central School. Whilst we come to this place to debate matters relating to Sydney, it is refreshing to hear about what is happening in other parts of New South Wales, including the colourful township of Lightning Ridge. I was most interested to hear there are 400 students, 30 per cent of whom are Aboriginal. I congratulate the principal and everyone involved in organising the centenary celebrations.

### NEW LAMBTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FETE

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [12.17 p.m.]: The beautiful weather provided a happy atmosphere and a sunny backdrop in which to enjoy the New Lambton Public School fete on Saturday 15 September this year. It was a fantastic and very successful fair, for the reasons I will outline. One of the reasons it was so successful relates to the way in which the New Lambton village community gets behind such events. No school fete succeeds without the support of not only the local community but also the parents and friends and the parents and citizens association of the school. It is important to say thank you to all the volunteers who helped run the fete on the day. Preparations for the fete were long and very complex but also very enthusiastic.

The school and the parents and citizens association starting preparing for the fete in term one. The work has been ongoing and a great deal of effort was involved. I want to thank the many volunteers who were involved in the preparations, setting up and manning the stalls and packing up at the end of the day, which is always important. Those people are essential in making any school fete a success. Special thanks go to Lyn Fogerty for overseeing all the work on the day. I also thank the committee members and coordinators including Jacinta Campbell for handling advertising, Penny Price for external donations, Fergus Costello for procurement and Amanda Hall Griffin for school donations. The creativity of the stalls was remarkable and I thank the volunteers on behalf of the parents and citizens association.

One aspect of the fete that I particularly enjoyed but did not partake of because I was very busy was the food. There were sorbets, ice cream, fudge, cupcakes, great coffee and food from around the world, which reflected the backgrounds of the parents and the students who attend New Lambton Public School. There also was, of course, a great Aussie barbecue and gorgeous girlie treats. There were lots of things to tempt everybody. After people had eaten all that wonderful food they needed to move around, and there were plenty of attractions to help them do that such as hoopla, minigolf, photo booths, bargain bookstalls, masses of white elephant stalls, an addictive chocolate wheel, a great raffle and cool drinks to refresh everyone on that warm and sunny day. Thanks go to everyone who made the fete such a success.

I also thank the bean counters and a few other people in particular. Wonderful music provided a lovely backdrop on that beautiful day. I thank David Shakespeare and his band The Stack of Cats—thank heavens that they did not sound like cats—for the wonderful atmosphere they created. We also heard great singing from Shirley McNally and we saw amazing performances by Jadore Dance and Northcott Dance and martial arts demonstrations from Rhee Tae Kwon Do New Lambton. Lake Macquarie Pipes and Drums provided other music during the day. I thank the New Lambton fire station and the Ambulance Service of NSW for allowing children to explore what it is like to be part of their services.

I especially thank the fete coordinator, Julianne Turner, who did such an incredible job after working on the fete since term one. She put up her hand to be fete coordinator and the event would not have been staged without her. I also thank Ms Megan Hattingh, secretary of the parents and citizens association, who was the

entertainment and amusement coordinator. Mr Rick Furness went beyond the call of duty to help. In particular I thank all the parents and members of the community who turned up on the day. The school raised almost \$20,000, which hopefully will go towards a new visual arts room. I congratulate all those involved in the New Lambton Public School fete.

### WAIROA SCHOOL

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.21 p.m.]: On 14 September I visited Wairoa School in Bondi and had the pleasure of meeting with the principal, Ian Gallan, staff and students at the school. Wairoa, a special school in my electorate of Vaucluse in many ways, has the crucial mission of providing educational programs for students with moderate to high support needs. Wairoa School programs support students with moderate to severe intellectual disability who may also have additional support needs related to autism, physical disabilities and/or sensory disabilities. Currently, 67 students from four to 18 years of age attend Wairoa and they learn in 11 classes, each of which has a special education teacher and a teachers' aide special. At Wairoa students also have an opportunity to receive physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. Remarkably, 11 of the students obtained their School Certificate during 2011 after completing the Board of Studies requirements, which is a tribute to the work of the school and the principal.

My visit to Wairoa followed a recent and welcome announcement of funding for the school through an agreement between the New South Wales and Federal governments. Wairoa was one of 16 schools in New South Wales that received reallocated Building the Education Revolution funding. Wairoa will receive about \$4 million in funding to improve its facilities for students. During my visit it was clear that the whole school community was excited at the prospect of a better home for the school. The new facilities will provide specialist permanent classrooms specifically designed for the needs of students with disabilities, rather than the 30-year-old demountable classrooms that I sighted that some classes have had to use. The construction of a double-storey building with access for students in wheelchairs will increase the size of the playground. The funding will also enable the upgrade and improvement of other areas of the school, including the library, the art room, the hydrotherapy pool and the hall.

During my visit I had an opportunity to see the hydrotherapy pool, the hall, the playground and the demountables, which will now be removed. While I was there the students got ready to go home for the day and I had the chance to observe the great respect and affection that students and staff have for Principal Ian Gallan. Many of the students strongly insisted on personally farewelling their principal as they left for the day. The passion with which Ian spoke about the school and the big and small developmental steps that various students had made over time confirms that Wairoa School is indeed fortunate to have his strong and gentle leadership as principal. Wairoa continues to play an important role in assisting university students from Sydney and from overseas who undertake placement for periods of days up to six months. These young people bring a new sense of energy and commitment to the school and the students benefit from their input.

As I mentioned earlier, I saw the demountables that will be replaced and I saw how the site will be reconfigured to give students an easier area to navigate—because some students need wheelchairs to get about—and enable staff to keep a closer eye on the comings and goings in what are now two separate playgrounds. I could clearly see how the students and teachers will benefit from a larger playground with better lines of visibility between the two sections of the playground. I am absolutely thrilled that this funding will make such a big difference to the whole school community at Wairoa. It is a close school community with a partnership between teachers, students and parents. I thank Ian Gallan, his team and the students for making me feel so at home in their special school. I congratulate them on receiving the funding, which I know has been long awaited. The funding will enable the whole school community to make some wonderful improvements to a magnificent learning environment for students that need special assistance. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

### QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARDS

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [12.26 p.m.]: As a young member of Parliament I take a particular interest in recognising the achievements of young people. Today, with so many impressive young women in the gallery for the Women in Leadership Forum, it is fitting that I recognise two female leaders from my community in Hornsby—Ms Erin Stanfield of Normanhurst Scout Group and Ms Rebecca Mabbott of the 1st Hornsby Heights Scout Group, both of whom have achieved and have recently been awarded Queen's Scout awards. The Queen's Scout Award is the highest award that can be bestowed on a scout in any country. The Scouting

movement is one of the greatest youth initiatives in the world. Scouts Australia alone has more than 73,000 members. Since Robert Baden-Powell first founded the Scouts in 1907, young people from Hornsby Heights to the United States of America—

**Mr Bryan Doyle:** To Campbelltown.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** And to Campbelltown; the scouting movement is strong in Campbelltown. I note the interest of the member for Campbelltown in this important matter. In those communities young people have been provided with opportunities to learn and develop important life skills that lead to personal and community development. The movement enables young people to realise their potential and the importance of community service. The skills developed in the Scouts can be applied in all walks of life. Queen's Scout awards are presented to a select few. Erin and Rebecca from my community have thrived in the movement for the betterment of our local Scouts as well as society as a whole. Earning a Queen's Scout Award is an extraordinary feat, particularly for two individuals so young. I know that Rebecca has achieved the rare feat of being awarded a Queen's Scout Award before she finished high school and she is to be congratulated on that. In order to receive this award a Scout must complete a host of leadership, personal, outdoor and community service challenges within a three-year period.

Over the course of many years Erin and Rebecca have embodied and practised the scouting movement's core values: service, determination and leadership. Erin and Rebecca are not ordinary people; they are leaders. Through their commitment to leadership development, personal growth, outdoor activities and community involvement, they have advanced the values and philosophy of the scouting movement in their community and beyond. Other Scouts have benefited as a result of Erin and Rebecca's leadership and energy, and the local community is grateful for their significant service. It is imperative that the scouting movement remains strong, and I am confident that as long as individuals such as Erin and Rebecca join the movement, the Scouts will have a promising future. I urge Erin and Rebecca to continue practising the values that have earned them this award. They have promising futures and are leaders amongst their peers. Their success and determination are an inspiration to the scouting movement and to the local community. I thank them for their significant efforts in achieving this award.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [11.29 p.m.]: I commend the young and talented member for Hornsby for his recognition of young people in his electorate, particularly Erin and Rebecca. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I join the member in congratulating those two young ladies on achieving the Queens Scout Award. Well done.

### ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [12.30 p.m.]: As we head into the festive holiday season, I take this opportunity to place in *Hansard* the need for the Government to plan and construct the Princes Highway bypass around Albion Park Rail. My parliamentary colleague the member for Kiama knows that once again this festive holiday season the Princes Highway between Yallah and the Oak Flats Interchange will become a congested car park. As has been reported by Infrastructure NSW, it is one of the Illawarra's infamous pinch points. Following the June budget, the Minister and the member for Kiama announced that \$100,000 would be made available for a study into the Albion Park Rail bypass. Interestingly, this funding was made available only after I raised the fact that while funds had been announced for Princes Highway improvements in Kiama, the strip along Albion Park Rail had missed out. I have called this strip the Princes Highway's missing link. Since the announcement of the \$100,000 funding, precious little has been said by the Minister about the detail of the study.

The *Illawarra Mercury* published a story on 29 September under the headline "Watson demands details of the Princes Highway study". I repeat my demand today in the House. It is important for the long-suffering residents and businesses of Albion Park Rail to have more detail about the \$100,000 study. We need to know when the report by Roads and Maritime Services will be completed, what route options are under examination, when community consultation will commence, and the estimated construction costs of the options under consideration. These are important questions to be answered. It is simply not good enough that this study was announced after the budget as a form of issue management amid the fanfare of upgrades to the Princes Highway in the electorate of Kiama. I acknowledge the work of my parliamentary colleague the member for Kiama in obtaining funds for the upgrade of the highway in his electorate. He continues the work that was undertaken by previous Labor governments to upgrade the Princes Highway.

In the 1980s and early 1990s the former Labor Government built the F6 freeway bypassing Dapto. In the late 1990s the Labor Government built the Oak Flats Interchange and North Kiama Bypass, which alleviated the snail crawl through Dunmore, Minnamurra and Kiama. It is now time to deal with the missing link of key infrastructure in Albion Park Rail. The bypass corridor has been preserved and remains on the Shellharbour city local environment plan. It is time to deal with this significant regional pinch point; it is time to settle on the route options; it is time to get on with community consultation; and it is time to build the Albion Park Rail bypass. This will remain one of my key infrastructure priorities throughout this term of Parliament, as well as improvements to traffic congestion into and out of Dapto and West Dapto. The coming weeks will again highlight the importance of building the Albion Park Rail bypass.

### MYALL LAKES DREDGING

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [12.33 p.m.]: I bring good news from Myall Lakes: the Government is delivering on another pre-election commitment. We promised before the election that we would take action in relation to the silting up and dredging of estuaries in New South Wales. This dredging is currently taking place in two areas in Myall Lakes. The first area is Wallis Lake, where 30 per cent of Australia's Sydney rock oysters are produced. This area is a major contributor to the oyster industry. The second area is in Manning River at the Old Bar entrance. After 16 years of Labor neglect, the estuaries urgently needed dredging. We went to the election with the promise that we would put the money on the table and we would deliver. We are now delivering. Thank God the Liberal-Nationals came to Government, otherwise the dredging would not have taken place. The previous speaker, the member for Shellharbour, referred to the missing link in the south about which the previous Government did absolutely nothing in 16 years.

I thank the two Ministers involved in this initiative: the Minister for Primary Industries and the Deputy Premier. Minister Hodgkinson, having visited the area, was instrumental in getting the projects underway, with the assistance of the Deputy Premier. I acknowledge the General Manager of Great Lakes Council, Glen Hannaford, and Mayor Jan McWilliams for the great work their council did in preparing the necessary reports and studies in order to put forward a sensible proposition. They have done a great job of improving the council over the past four to five years. The director in charge of the dredging is Gerard Tuckerman. The council proposition was a partnership between Great Lakes council, the State Government and the local oyster industry. I thank all those involved in the oyster industry, including Graham Barclay, Steve Verditch and Anthony Sciaca.

This \$1.6 million project protects the oyster industry and the environment and assists in water safety and navigation for pleasure boats, commercial ferries and other tourist craft. The State Government has put in \$400,000, and that figure has been multiplied by four to obtain the \$1.6 million that is being spent in this area. I congratulate all those involved in the project. Moving to the Manning River and the Old Bar entrance project, I thank the Farquhar Inlet Management Group, in particular, Bill Nelson, Greg Crisp and Ian Crisp. Their achievement in Farquhar Inlet has been phenomenal. They have created a number of islands. The little tern now nests on the islands because foxes, dogs, cats and other animals are unable to attack the birds and their eggs.

This community group has raised over \$100,000 to buy their own dredge. They did not say to the Government, "Give us the money" or "We want you to do it." The Manning Valley community, this group in particular, raised the money to purchase and restore the dredge and now they are using it and creating wonderful waterways. They also have undertaken work worth hundreds of thousands of dollars following a \$40,000 contribution by the State Government. Another \$20,000 was granted to Greater Taree City Council as project manager and proponent for the works. It is a great partnership. A few days ago I accompanied the group's representatives, together with staff of Greater Taree City Council and the Mayor of Greater Taree City Council, Paul Hogan, to inspect the work. I commend them for the fantastic job they have done on this project.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.38 p.m.]: I thank the hardworking member for Myall Lakes for highlighting yet another achievement of this Government. The member has achieved a great deal in his electorate in only 18 months of this Government. The issue he raises about silting up along the east coast of New South Wales is being addressed by the Government within the current constraints of the State's finances. The \$1.6 million projects at Wallis Lake and the Manning River at the Old Bar entrance are a great achievement for this Government.

### MORISSET AMBULANCE SERVICES

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [12.38 p.m.]: The people of Morisset continue to suffer an increasingly inadequate level of ambulance service, despite the town having its own ambulance station. The

transfer of administrative control of Morisset to the Central Coast was regarded with great suspicion by the public from the outset, and this position appears to have been vindicated by ongoing significant lapses in service. I have raised this matter in the House three times. It is simply unsatisfactory that people in the Morisset area feel that they are not being heard by the Government. As a reasonable and valid indicator of community concern, 37 households and community organisations wrote to me in February and March this year about the poor level of ambulance service and asked that I raise their concerns with the Minister for Health. I am advised that their letters remain unanswered, despite repeated assurances by ministerial staff that the letters would be answered. The Government's disregard of their written concerns has added insult to injury.

On 13 October last year in the House I asked the Minister for Health to investigate and rectify any reduced availability of ambulance service in the Morisset area arising from the transfer of the Morisset ambulance station from the Hunter area to the Central Coast. I thank the Minister for her reply and for any action she may have taken, but the fact is that the problem of poor service appears to be getting worse. I will inform the House of two recent horror stories, although there are numerous others yet to be reported publicly. On Monday 30 July Mr Alan Hillhouse of Bonnells Bay presented to the Bonnells Bay Medical Centre with leg pain so severe that the doctor gave him two morphine injections to ease the pain. An ambulance was called at 9.45 a.m. to convey Mr Hillhouse to Wyong Hospital. I am advised that the ambulance first given the job was redirected to a motor vehicle accident. That situation is understandable. However, the replacement ambulance arrived three hours after the original call, and its delay caused a lot of distress to the patient and the staff at the medical centre.

Last week the local media reported an incident in which a five-year-old Buttaba girl in a life-threatening situation became blue and limp while waiting 18 minutes for a local ambulance to return from Cardiff. The report rightly praised the efforts of the ambulance control officer who gave life-saving advice over the phone, but other aspects of this event are very concerning. A typical journey from Morisset to Buttaba takes 13 minutes. An ambulance responding to an emergency call certainly could do it faster. The 18-minute trip from Cardiff may have notionally involved only an additional five minutes but I suggest the additional time was more than five minutes—and even an extra five minutes could have been the difference between life and death. These incidents are examples of unacceptable delays that people associate with the NSW Ambulance Service's transfer of the Morisset station to the Central Coast-North Sydney sector. They illustrate the nature of the problem but they do not show its extent. There have been numerous other incidents and the broader community of the Morisset area is becoming increasingly involved in compiling a record of what they see as a shabby service.

As I have already mentioned, the poor standard of response to the written concerns of residents is aggravating the situation. On 22 February I met with NSW Ambulance Service staff and a representative of the Minister for Health. One of the matters discussed was the fact that complaints to the Minister about the ambulance service were answered not by the Minister but by the ambulance service—and only after a protracted delay. The current failure to respond to the previously mentioned 37 letters has added to this problem and compounded the angst of the Morisset community. At that meeting the ambulance service acknowledged some difficulties but attributed them to different rostering systems for Morisset and the Central Coast ambulance stations and anticipated a resolution when Morisset moved fully to 12-hour shifts. This has now occurred, so the current problems with the level of service must be caused by other issues.

Whatever the effect of roster differences, the fact remains that ambulance services at Morisset are unsatisfactory—seemingly because the vehicles are out of the area much of the time. Regardless of the reasons, recent experiences of the Morisset community show that the service does not meet expectations. As the problems did not occur to the same extent prior to administrative changes, it is increasingly difficult to dissociate the change from the reduced quality of service. I draw the attention of the House to this unsatisfactory situation and ask the Minister to ensure that an accurate and complete response is made to Lake Macquarie residents who are waiting for both a written and a practical response to their expressed need for an adequate and equitable provision of ambulance services.

### **PARRAMATTA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [12.43 p.m.]: As the capital of western Sydney, Parramatta is an important economic, residential and festival and events city. The Infrastructure NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2032 report identifies Parramatta as Australia's second-fastest growing city behind Perth in employment growth. Parramatta City Council administers close to a \$180 million budget and provides many services that touch every resident and businessperson alike. These include important services such as development planning controls and consent, the maintenance of parks and gardens and the hosting of festivals

and events. Therefore, the governance of Parramatta city and its suburbs is important. The recent local council elections in Parramatta were important because local councillors provide the strategic direction of the city and oversight of the city's operations. I note that the Minister for Local Government is at the table. He obviously takes a keen interest in the elections and in the improvement of local council governance.

I wish the retiring councillors all the best for the future and thank them for their service to the community. I congratulate all the recently elected councillors. I especially congratulate my colleagues John Chedid of the Elizabeth Macarthur ward, who has been elected as the new Lord Mayor of Parramatta, and Scott Lloyd and Bob Dwyer of the Caroline Chisholm ward. I also congratulate John Hugh, who is new to office in the Elizabeth Macarthur ward, Steven Issa, who is new to office in the Woodville ward, Jean Pierre Abood, who is new to office in the Lachlan Macquarie ward, and Bakous Makari, who is new to office in the Arthur Phillip ward. It is also important to recognise those who nearly got over the line, including candidates such as Lyn Bruce and Devi Shetti.

Of course, elections are a team effort. The 2012 team was led by Matthew Camenzuli, who embraced the challenge in the last five weeks of the campaign, demonstrated leadership and was able to achieve the highest number of Liberal councillors ever to be elected to Parramatta council. Matthew had an able team of volunteers who gave up their time to help out. These people include David Elliot, MP, who helped Scott and Bob in the Winston Hills and Toongabbie areas and shared his knowledge and experience with them; and Tony Issa, MP, who helped his son and his team in the Woodville ward. Tony's extensive networks again proved highly successful. Chris O'Keefe, who was the campaign manager for John Chedid's ward, worked 48 hours straight in the last days of the campaign and was able to get John and his number two, John Hugh, elected. Charles Camenzuli gave advice and helped Bakous and Jean Pierre in their campaigns in any way possible.

Alan Sexton was on the ground every weekend, creating and proofing content and acted as a booth captain. Samia Baisari helped coordinate the campaign and worked in the office. Theresa Mary Ayoub managed the campaign office. Jason Felton was always willing and helped where required on the streets. Pierre Issa used his graphic design skills behind the scenes for all candidates. Peter Semaan did endless letterbox drops in North Parramatta. Dianne Abboud helped with street stalls and performed other vital duties. They are just a few of the people who assisted during the campaigns. I congratulate all the other volunteers, Liberal members and friends and families who worked on polling day, some for an hour and others for the whole day. Matthew said the success of the campaign was due to the cohesiveness of the team and the passion of the volunteers who worked together from early in the morning until late at night.

As the State member for Parramatta I look forward to working with the newly elected councillors, who are now in place to meet the challenges in Parramatta. Those challenges include securing pre-leases so construction can get going on Parramatta Square, which will be a vital asset in the heart of Parramatta. Other challenges include how to grow jobs in Parramatta city and how to preserve the tree-lined suburban streets that draw many residents to the area. Parramatta has the largest collection of early European and colonial buildings in Australia. The councillors will work to meet the challenge of preserving Australia's history and making Parramatta known as a top tourist destination. I have spoken many times in the House about the importance of Parramatta to the birth of our nation. I wish the councillors a productive four years and I look forward to working with them.

### **RYDE RIVERS FESTIVAL**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [12.48 p.m.]: The Ryde Rivers Festival is a wonderful event in my electorate. The festival is held at Kissing Point in Putney, most recently on 9 September this year. It is one of the best attended and largest events of its kind in my electorate. The Ryde Rivers Festival has been an annual event for 15 years and combines many of the best features of life in Sydney: family fun, community fundraising, sporting endeavour and enjoyment of our wonderful harbour. The festival was started by Ryde area stalwart and local newspaper proprietor John Booth, AM. With the support of Catherine King of the Ryde Business Forum and later the Rotary Club of Gladesville, the festival has gone from strength to strength over the years.

Perhaps the most exciting sporting competition of the day, which brings participants from across Sydney, is the dragon boat races. These races are the much-loved sporting highlight of the festival. The races are held every 15 minutes and are run over a 250 metre course throughout the day. There are two levels of races: the sports team races for dragon boat club members and the corporate and community races, the latter being the fun

racers for any business or community teams that wish to participate. The dragon boat races are reminiscent of the wonderful regattas held at the beginning of the last century on the Parramatta River when thousands of people from what was a very small population watched rowing crews compete on that stretch of the river.

Since my election as a member of Parliament in 2003, it has been my very great honour to fire the starter's pistol for the fun run—the event which starts a day of great sporting fun for young and old. It was a privilege and a pleasure to have my son, John Anthony, accompany me in starting the race this year. From the children's go-kart races to the dragon boat races, the Ryde Rivers Festival shows how communities can come together to enjoy themselves in good old-fashioned, wholesome fun. Importantly, the day also serves a more noble purpose: fundraising. Money raised throughout the day funds a variety of worthy local causes. Funds have been previously donated to Royal Ryde Rehabilitation Centre, which is just up the road from Kissing Point in Putney, and Ryde Hospital. In addition, local State high schools have benefited through three scholarships of \$2,000 provided to local students to help with the cost of their university studies.

I could not make mention of the excellent work done by the festival without referring to some of those who contribute greatly to the success of the day. Ulrike Eichmeyer of the *Weekly Times*, Victor Berger, Bob Erskine, Paul Wynn and former councillor Victor Tagg have all been active and committed in promoting the festival throughout its early years and have continued to work hard to achieve real results for the community through this wonderful event. Of course, last but not least, mention should be made of Steve Sim, the excellent master of ceremonies who presides over the event every year. They are but a few of the many people who make the day such a remarkable event. While I always encourage people to visit my electorate at any time during the year to enjoy what I believe is one of the most special areas of Sydney, I recommend that next year members join us in Putney for what is a truly spectacular community event. Once again, on behalf of the House I extend my congratulations to the organising committee and place on record the wonderful contribution made by the Minister for Sport and Recreation, who once again provided State Government funding to ensure the event was such a remarkable success.

### ENDEAVOUR CLUBHOUSE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS** (Port Macquarie) [12.53 p.m.]: As everyone in this place would attest, as members of Parliament we are invited to many functions and events throughout the year. However, we have the opportunity to participate in some real stand-out community events. One such event that I attended recently was a vintage fashion parade organised to raise funds for the new Endeavour Clubhouse in Port Macquarie. The clubhouse will be a vocational rehabilitation service for people living with mental illness. I congratulate fashion designer and long-time Port Macquarie resident Maureen Cooke for her contribution to the event. I am sure Maureen would not mind my mentioning her age—she is 82 years young. She has been a top-quality fashion designer since completing her apprenticeship with a local tailor in Port Macquarie. On completing her apprenticeship, she moved to Sydney and worked at a number of fashion houses before starting her own business in the 1960s, when the Maureen's Models range was born.

Maureen's business went from strength to strength and she made many trips overseas to source the highest quality fabrics in the world. In 1970 Maureen won the prestigious Gown of the Year award in Canberra. At the peak of her success in the early 1970s she left the high life of fashion and returned to the Hastings to look after her ill father. What a commendable thing to do. After a career spanning 60 years, Maureen decided to throw open her wardrobes and to showcase 100 of her 300 vintage garments to raise funds for this important charity. On that Saturday afternoon, along with hundreds of others, I witnessed a parade of magnificent vintage fashion from an era of elegance, beautiful materials and stunning creations. Maureen certainly had a wonderful eye for design and a classic sense of style, and it showed in the fashions she produced. That is not only my opinion; it was the opinion of many other people who attended the fashion parade and helped to raise more than \$10,000 for the Endeavour Clubhouse.

The Endeavour Clubhouse is currently under construction and it is hoped that it will be completed by Christmas. Many people are working hard on the job and behind the scenes to ensure that the clubhouse is the success it deserves to be. There are more than 330 clubhouses in 30 countries around the world. Clubhouses are not drop-in centres; rather, they are safe places where people can start to recover from their mental health issues. They are places for people with mental health problems to go where they are supported by their peers and where they can be valued through their contribution to the running of the clubhouse. I have done a number of site inspections as the building has progressed and when it is finished it will be a wonderful asset for the local community.

Work is continuing on the building with building supervisor Phil Pittis doing a great job leading a small team of dedicated men involved in the Wesley Uniting Employment's work for the dole program. He has been aided by local tradies and suppliers, who have all pitched in to help. The Endeavour Clubhouse Committee is keen to secure ongoing funding for the clubhouse and I have met with it on several occasions to discuss the issue. I have also met the Minister for Mental Health on a number of occasions to discuss this issue. I look forward to continuing a strong partnership with the clubhouse team, local agencies and stakeholders to secure the future of the Endeavour Clubhouse in Port Macquarie. On behalf of my local community, I thank all those involved in the Endeavour Clubhouse development, and particularly Maureen Cooke for her fundraising efforts. They have done a wonderful job to help people dealing with a mental health issue in the Port Macquarie electorate.

### **YARRAMUNDI RURAL FIRE BRIGADE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

### **MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITAL THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [12.58 p.m.]: Recently I had the privilege of visiting a number of community-based organisations that provide valuable services across my electorate. These groups are run by local volunteers who are champions in their communities and who spend countless hours of their time helping others. I represented the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Mike Gallacher, at the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Yarramundi Rural Fire Brigade on 6 October at the Yarramundi YMCA hall. I attended along with more than 100 local people. Guests included Chief Superintendent John Parnaby, the Commander of Region East representing the Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, and Hawkesbury Mayor, Councillor Kim Ford, who has been a long-term resident of Yarramundi and a member of the local brigade.

The Yarramundi Rural Fire Brigade had humble beginnings in 1962 with about eight local people getting together to form the brigade. The inaugural meeting elected Mr S. Higgs as the first captain and Mr W. Murray as the first president. From those beginnings, the Yarramundi Brigade now has 50 members led by Captain Ed Cameron—who is the brigade's second-longest serving captain—and President Chris Garlick, who were both at the dinner. The brigade embodies the Aussie spirit of mateship and service and has several life members who have given more than 20 years of service, including Ken Pullen, the longest serving captain, and his wife Kerry Pullen; Jim Hatcher; Sally Hatcher; Rod Newton; and Kim Ford.

Members volunteer their time to attend about 30 call-outs each year to local fires and emergency situations, including motor vehicle accidents, in rural areas of my electorate that are not covered by the metropolitan Fire and Rescue Service. They also have fought major bushfires over the last 50 years in New South Wales and interstate, including the Black Saturday fires in Victoria. The dinner was a truly local occasion to celebrate the contribution over 50 years of local men and women who give of their time freely to help others. To mark the occasion, a special cake in the form of a Rural Fire Service fire tanker was designed and baked by local resident Rachael Jones. Another great celebration of decades of service was the Mount Druitt Hospital thirtieth anniversary dinner, at which I represented the Hon. Jillian Skinner, the Minister for Health. The dinner was held at the Rooty Hill RSL Club on 11 October. Former editor of the *Women's Weekly*, Ita Buttrose, was the master of ceremonies, and she did a fantastic job.

More than 200 people attended the dinner, including my colleague the member for Mount Druitt, Mr Richard Amery, the Federal member for Chifley, Ed Husic, and my predecessor, Allan Shearan. A number of former and present staff members also attended, including Rhonda Loftus, Director of Operations at Mount Druitt Hospital, who organised the dinner; Danny O'Connor, Chief Executive of the Western Sydney Local Health District; Andrew Newton, General Manager of the Blacktown-Mount Druitt Hospital Group; Professor Peter Zelas, Executive Medical Director for Blacktown-Mount Druitt Hospital; Father John Boyle, representing the Bishop of Parramatta, Anthony Fisher; Uncle Greg Simms from the Darug Aboriginal Tribe, who performed a welcome to country; and Mildred Villason, who has worked at Mount Druitt Hospital for 29 years, including 15 as a paediatric ward nursing unit manager.

I acknowledge Uncle Greg Simms. He is always out there representing the elders from Aboriginal communities throughout western Sydney. He is a great guy, and he is doing a fantastic job for the Aboriginal communities as well as all other Australians. He is always quick to point out we are all one nation, working together. There was someone in attendance on the night who also is very special—a lady named Fairy Sparkle. This lady has dedicated a great deal of her time to creating gardens in hospitals.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Hear, hear.

**Mr BART BASSETT:** Fairy Sparkle was all dressed up for the occasion. I am sure the member for Toongabbie has witnessed how good she is at creating tranquil gardens in hospitals, and we all know how really important the gardens are. She has dedicated her time and efforts to ensuring that tranquil gardens are created in hospitals so that parents and their families can go to a fresh environment and for a while feel a little removed from the hospital environment. I certainly support her in her endeavours to establish tranquil gardens throughout the whole hospital network and system: I did much the same thing in relation to hospital heliports. Fairy Sparkle is endeavouring to ensure that space for gardens is taken into account at the planning stages of developing and redeveloping hospitals, and that the spaces include electrical installations for oxygen, et cetera, to ensure that moving a patient to the garden is without difficulty for the patient and their loved ones. I commend all the great people in our community who do volunteering work.

### **ST GREGORY'S COLLEGE CELEBRITY SPORTS DINNER**

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [1.02 p.m.]: "What you sow, so shall you reap", is the motto of St Gregory's College at Campbelltown—that great opal of the south-west. Last Friday, 12 October, it was my great privilege to attend the Nineteenth Annual Celebrity Sports Dinner held at St Gregory's College along with the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Graham Annesley, who is a famous sportsman. I was very proud that the event's organising committee managed to find some colour footage of the Minister in fine action. The evening was hosted by a college old boy, Jimmy Smith, and Sarah Ryan, whose broad knowledge and experiences in the world of sport added so much to the enjoyment of those who supported the dinner and its worthy cause.

The celebrity sports persons dinner raises much-needed funds for scholarships that enable students to attend St Gregory's College. Funds are raised through ticket sales to the dinner, sponsorships, raffles—one of the prizes for which was a lunch for two at Parliament House with the member for Campbelltown as an entrée to question time—a silent auction, and an auction. A major sponsor is the Wests Leagues Club Campbelltown, of which Roy Warby is chairman. The organising committee did a marvellous job in turning the school's hall, which is currently being used for Higher School Certificate [HSC] examinations and often is used as a sports venue, into a world-class entertainment venue. The committee is led by Bruce Hanrahan, OAM, who is supported by Paul Wakeling, Steve Carter, Jack Hughes, Ms Kate Bryan, Greg Field, Mrs Annette O'Neill, Mrs Catherine Jeffcoate and Ms Mary Stepien. Thanks to their tireless efforts and commitment to excellence they ensured the success of another wonderful event.

The lesson learned from sport is that active participation provides enduring experiences and guidance for life. Those who attended the dinner were honoured by the presence of so many role models from the sporting world who have represented their individual sports on the world stage with distinction, both on and off the field. I have already mentioned our wonderful Minister for Sport and Recreation, Graham Annesley, and he was joined by the principal of the school, Damien Millar, who also is a very good sportsman in his own right. Ken Wark is a former hockey full-back for the Australian Hockeyroos and competed for Australia in three consecutive summer Olympics: Seoul in 1998, Barcelona in 1992, where he won a silver medal, and Atlanta, where he capped his career by winning a bronze medal for Australia. Ken very generously brought his medals with him and shared some of his sporting experiences with those who shared his table.

The special guest for the event was none other than Stirling Austin Mortlock, AM, who is a famous Australian Rugby Union centre. He scored more than 1,000 points in Super Rugby and nearly 500 test points for the Wallabies. Stirling was also captain of the national team and captain of the Brumbies and the Melbourne Rebels. He spoke about how his coach found that a player was underperforming and steered him in the right direction by getting the player to write down his goals on a piece of scrap paper. One of the player's goals was to play for the Wallabies. Much later, after it had all come to fruition, his coach presented to Stirling that framed scrap of paper on which the goals had been scrawled by a young Colts player.

Stirling spoke of the importance of wanting to be the player who, when the chips are down and the team needs someone to stand up, steps up for the team. He wanted to be the person who wanted the play to come to him and to make the difference. He spoke about the instrumental role he played in the famous Bledisloe and Tri-Nation Series victories of 2000 when he lined up a penalty goal and scored against South Africa in 2000 in Durban to win Australia's first Tri-Nations crown. He also won Man of the Match, having scored an 80-metre intercept try at the then Telstra Stadium to help knock the All Blacks out of the 2003 Rugby World Cup. Footage of that was played on the screen during the dinner and we all still cheered him home as he raced in to score that try. Stirling Mortlock, AM, is an insightful, humorous, humble and proud Australian. St Gregory's

College is a Marist school and is based on the themes of presence, simplicity, family spirit, love of work and conduct in the way of Mary. The school and its students are a credit to Campbelltown—that great opal of the south-west. I commend it to the House.

### KOREAN WAR VETERANS RECEPTION

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI** (Strathfield) [1.07 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I inform the House that last weekend I attended a reception for Korean War veterans at Government House hosted by the Premier of New South Wales. What a great afternoon it was, and not for the least reason that the weather had turned from winter the previous day back into summer. I was honoured to be the master of ceremonies for this occasion and to be standing among many highly decorated Korean War veterans. Distinguished guests included the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Korean Consul-General, Mr Jin Soo Kim, Admiral Ian Crawford, AO, AM, who is the President of the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council, Mr Byung Il Kim, who is the President of the Sydney Korean Society, and of, course, Mrs Olwyn Green, who is the wife of Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Green, the commanding officer of 3RAR and who was killed on active service during the Korean War.

Overall more than 200 veterans attended the reception and they had travelled from places right throughout New South Wales, including places slightly south of Strathfield, such as Wagga Wagga, and slightly south-west of Strathfield, Lithgow, and in between those, a place by the name of Young. I noticed that some of the veterans had firm handshakes considering that they were quite elderly, and when I asked how it was that they were able to crush my hand in greeting some of them said that they were still "on the land", and one said that he was a rower. At the end of the day I was grimacing in pain as those elderly folk had caused some distress to the joints in my right hand. The event was all about acknowledging the sacrifice and service of Australia's Korean War veterans. It was a small but nonetheless highly significant reception.

We spoke about the contribution of a number of soldiers, and one in particular resonated with me. Mr Acting-Speaker, as you know, I am an Italian, and during the Korean War the Australian Army's enlisted personnel reflected some of the attributes of the multicultural character of Australian society. Among the soldiers of the Royal Australian Regiment men such as Lieutenant Charlie Yacopetti, who was an Italian serving with 3RAR, demonstrated that Anzac courage is not confined only to soldiers with British ancestry. Charlie was born in Reggio in Italy, where my mother was born, and he migrated to Western Australia with his parents. Lieutenant Yacopetti was awarded the Military Cross for patrol action in 1953. He was twice wounded and, with his patrol outnumbered, Lieutenant Yacopetti stayed behind to delay the enemy while the survivors of the patrol carried their wounded mates to safety. Of course, Lieutenant Yacopetti was captured. While he was a prisoner of the North Koreans he rescued a fellow prisoner during a United States bombing raid on the camp. For that he was mentioned in despatches.

I turn now to mention a couple of the lesser-known aspects of the Korean War. The first is that the Korean War offered Australia a rare opportunity to obtain a formal alliance with the United States and that became the Australia, New Zealand and the United States Security Treaty [ANZUS]. The war also gave the army much combat experience during which high professional standards were achieved, and that contributed to the army's professional reputation in the Vietnam conflict. In the last two years of the Korean War in particular it could have been described as a platoon commander's war rather than a general's war. The soldiers who survived a year in operations in Korea knew infantry tactics, especially patrolling, and that knowledge was passed on to those who served for the following 30 years in the Australian Army. There is no better example in the world of the contrast between communism and democracy than the North Korean and South Korean societies—an example evidenced by their international reputations, their standards of living, their approach to their neighbouring countries, and the values that their nations stand for.

The name of North Korea became blackened by the war and very little has happened since to improve that reputation. The South Koreans, by contrast, have picked themselves up from the ruins of war, developed a highly successful national economy and then gone on to reach the political status of a highly respected democracy. It was the efforts, sacrifice and the service of Australian war veterans, in amongst veterans from the many other nations that contributed to the United Nations forces, that helped achieve this. I am touched by the respect and affection afforded me by the Korean community in my electorate and more broadly within the Korean veterans community as a consequence of my military service. So much of this has its roots in the sacrifice and service of Australian service personnel who served in the Korean war. I acknowledge their sacrifice and the gratitude of the Korean people. I am humbled by the support of the Korean people. Last weekend's event that was hosted by the Premier was a great success. Many people who attended contacted me afterwards and remarked on this wonderful event, which they hope will be repeated in the future.

### WHITEBRIDGE COMMUNITY OF SCHOOLS

**Mr ANDREW CORNWELL** (Charlestown) [1.12 p.m.]: I want to acknowledge a fabulous program in my electorate called the Whitebridge Community of Schools. This is a learning community whereby a group of public schools unite to reap the benefits of a strong and strategic partnership. The Whitebridge Community of Schools has seven schools from the Charlestown area in its learning community: Whitebridge High School, Charlestown Public School, Charlestown East Public School, Charlestown South Public School, Dudley Public School, Kahibah Public School and Redhead Public School.

The learning community allows these schools to: build strong partnerships with their neighbouring schools; promote existing partnerships; provide students with both competitive and diverse sporting opportunities—the schools have a combined sporting carnival; provide extracurricular cultural, social and academic opportunities for our students; share and maximise key resources; participate in combined events; have a unified approach to transitions, such as pre-school to kindergarten and year 6 to year 7; and have a common approach to student welfare policies and practices. This learning community has been collaborating for many years, and it is enjoying official recognition in 2012.

To celebrate this thriving partnership that spans more than 10 years the launch of the Whitebridge Community of Schools will be held on 24 October. The purpose of the launch is to forge new links and celebrate existing links between the school, its business community and supporters. I acknowledge the hard work of the principals to make this learning community a success: Mr Ian Wilson, Whitebridge High School; Mr John Theissen, Charlestown Public School; Mr Neil Sneddon, Charlestown East Public School; Mr Colin Johnson, Charlestown South Public School; Mr Peter Adams, Dudley Public School; Mrs Pam Richardson, Kahibah Public School; and Mrs Jo Clews, Redhead Public School. The Whitebridge Community of Schools is in some way a metaphor for what has happened in that part of my electorate, because each one of those school communities was based around either a coalmine two centuries ago or an orchard.

Over time those villages that were once isolated by bushland have now coalesced to become effectively one community. But each one of the communities, and its interaction with their school, maintains its individual identity. It is fitting that they have formed this community of schools. I also acknowledge that these are feeder schools for Whitebridge High School. The work to develop the students in the primary schools makes them not only academically, socially and sportingly sound but also well rounded individuals who enter high school very resilient and ready to enter the new challenge of being a small fish in a big pond from being a big fish in a little pond. Those students are then provided with fabulous opportunities from then on by the principal and staff at Whitebridge High School. When I have attended end-of-year celebrations at the high school I am struck by the quality of students leaving high school. They are far more polished and rounded than any of us ever were when we finished school.

**Mr Bryan Doyle:** Thank heavens.

**Mr ANDREW CORNWELL:** That is a fair point. Our schools are not just there to produce students based on academic performance; they are also there to produce students who will become good citizens. Whitebridge High School, as the end point of this community of schools, produces good citizens. All governments can be proud that our education system has focused on producing well-rounded individuals. I congratulate the Whitebridge Community of Schools and wish it well for its launch.

### DOYALSON-WYEE RSL YOUTH CENTRE

**Mr GARRY EDWARDS** (Swansea) [1.17 p.m.]: I refer to a wonderful new facility in my electorate, a facility that was officially opened two weeks ago. Premier Barry O'Farrell and I had the pleasure of officially opening the Doyalson-Wyee RSL Youth Centre on Wednesday 3 October last. For the members of the RSL Club, the RSL sub-branch and the youth centre committee the day was a culmination of 22 years of vision, commitment and hard work—a vision for a better lifestyle for the young people of the area, ideally leading to a more harmonious and prosperous community. The youth centre will provide a venue for indoor sporting activities for local children and youth, such as netball, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics, dance, boxing and cricket.

Physical culture classes will also be conducted at the facility. These activities are in addition to the already existing outside floodlit cricket and football facilities provided by the Doyalson Wyee RSL, at no cost whatsoever to the community and local schools. The youth centre is a much-needed venue for the North Wyong

local government area. The lack of adequate sporting facilities in communities such as Doyalson, Wyee, Mannering Park, Lake Munmorah, Budgewoi and Halekulani could well discourage some who otherwise may have been interested in participating in sport or some other form of physical activity. This youth centre will assist in encouraging children and youth from around the district to pursue a sport or other physical activity, thereby promoting healthy lifestyles and, hopefully, assisting to develop future leaders.

The Doyalson Wyee RSL Youth Centre project was first envisioned by RSL member and World War II Royal Australian Navy Veteran, John Tink, OAM, more than 22 years ago. John saw the need for a community facility on the grounds of the RSL at the Pacific Highway, Doyalson which could cater for local sporting and youth groups located in some of the more isolated communities of the now Swansea electorate. I have visited and spoken with Mr Tink and it is clear to me that he is a man who remains today just as passionate as he was 22 years ago about the welfare of our youth and supportive of giving our young people the resources and facilities to assist them to achieve their individual potential.

For more than two decades the Doyalson-Wyee RSL Club has been tirelessly fundraising for the project by selling Friday night raffle tickets and holding sausage sizzles. Many of those very early supporters of the youth club have since passed on and did not have the gratification of seeing the youth club eventuate. Despite the contributions and efforts of John and many other RSL members and subsequent boards, the youth centre project was seriously put at risk some four years ago after the RSL, in good faith, entrusted \$140,000 with a local business to undertake initial works for the construction of the youth centre. The company went into receivership and, in the process, many years of fundraising money was lost.

Last year I received an application from the club through the Community Building Partnership Program for the final amount to complete the youth centre. After seeing the many benefits that this facility would bring to my electorate I was proud to support the RSL sub branch in its application. Today, after 22 years of fundraising and planning, the Doyalson-Wyee RSL now has an operational youth centre with a full schedule of sporting and youth-based activities available. Clearly, this facility will cater for many younger people who would previously have needed to travel long distances to take part in sporting activities. On behalf of this Parliament I congratulate the Doyalson-Wyee RSL sub branch, boards past and present, the youth club committee and finally, but certainly by no means least, Mr John Tink, OAM, for bringing this wonderful community facility to fruition.

### **ALBURY MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL**

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [1.22 p.m.]: If you come down to the Lauren Jackson Sports Centre in Albury on Friday nights this is what you could see: a large group of teenagers listening to a speaker talk about dental hygiene or money management, and participating in a short workshop; the same kids enthusiastically playing games of basketball; volunteers serving hot meals to those young people after their exercise is done; and a volunteer bus driver taking the children back home, delivering them right to their front doors by midnight. Then those teenagers go to sleep exhausted, happy, better informed about life skills, and with warm, nutritious food in their bellies. This is what you could see late on a Friday night instead of the real alternative for many of these kids: a night wandering the streets, bored and possibly getting into trouble.

Albury is one of the locations across the nation where the Midnight Basketball program is in full swing. According to the organisers, this program is about providing young people with a safe, healthy and positive environment at times when they may be vulnerable to harmful and antisocial behaviour; combating drug, alcohol and other physical abuse by young people; and supporting the learning needs of young people and providing them with encouragement to participate in mainstream society and their local community. The program is aimed at kids who are at risk of getting into trouble, but any child aged 12 to 18 is welcome. Each program runs for eight weeks, and I am speaking today about Midnight Basketball because a new season has just commenced in Albury, with the first games on 12 October.

Midnight Basketball has been a hit in Albury. Last year an average night would see 40 young people taking part. However, the last tournament, held earlier this year, saw average numbers jump to 50 per game, with 70 on the final night and 90 registered to play. Albury produced its first program in February 2010, and the programs are now in their third year. The Albury program runs with the assistance of a group of 40 volunteers, with 20 to 25 present on any given night. The evening starts with a bus doing a pickup run at 7.00 p.m., stopping at three central locations. First up at the stadium is the workshop, which is compulsory. This session is facilitated by qualified people. Past workshops have covered issues such as health and wellbeing, teamwork, dental health and finance. According to Rod Bramich of Albury's Midnight Basketball, "The workshops cover things that are relevant to the health and wellbeing of the children and how they see themselves."

One of the mottoes of the program is: No Workshop, No Jumpshot. Participants must attend the compulsory life skills workshop before they play basketball, reinforcing the idea of life being about getting your work done first then playing afterwards. What follow are four games of high-energy basketball and then a hot, nutritious meal, prepared and served by volunteers. There are many jobs for the volunteers, including driving the bus, assisting with catering, working as a scorer, team manager, or scoreboard operator, or helping the facilitator with the evening's workshop. Some volunteer their time and skills to sit on the organising committee. Volunteers are told that they need bring no money with them; similarly, they should not bring lollies, soft drink, fast food or cigarettes into Midnight Basketball tournaments. Everyone is focused on the kids. While these young people have to get themselves to the stadium or one of the collection points for the bus run, each one is taken home to their door by midnight.

One of the emerging features of Albury's Midnight Basketball program is the arrival of increasing numbers of children from the Bhutanese community. Around 12 Bhutanese children are now active participants, as part of settling into their new lives on the border. The program continues to expand. A Wodonga committee has been formed and is planning to launch its first tournament in the first school term next year. In June a surprise visitor to Midnight Basketball was XFactor winner, Reece Mastin, who was in Albury for a concert raising funds to support Albury's Carevan. Jodie Tiernan, one of the organisers, said that seeing the reaction of the children when Mastin entered the stadium was one of the highlights of her involvement with Midnight Basketball. "To walk into the stadium and see all the kids screaming, it just made my heart sing," she said. "It nearly brought me to tears. They were just amazed. They had a cuddle from him and a photo ... They were just over the moon. That's the reward you get out of doing something like this."

On behalf of the Albury community I thank everyone at Midnight Basketball for their initiative and hard work in providing such a wonderful opportunity and resource for our young people. My appreciation goes to the committee and other volunteers, to Carevan for supplying meals and to all the other sponsors and donors, including Albury City, Rotary clubs, the Police Citizens Youth Club, Kalianna Enterprises and Border Trust. I also express my support for all the young people who turn up and get onto the basketball court. My hope is that you will continue to learn more about yourselves in the process and that these positive experiences will enrich your young lives.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

*[Acting-Speaker (Mr Gareth Ward) left the chair at 1.27 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

**BALI TERRORIST ATTACKS TENTH ANNIVERSARY**

**The SPEAKER:** Last Friday Australia paused to remember the most tragic peace-time event in living memory for Australians abroad—the tenth anniversary of the Bali bombings. Just after 11.00 p.m. on 12 October 2002 a bomb concealed in a backpack was detonated inside the crowded Paddy's Pub in Kuta, killing many and driving traumatised survivors onto the streets. As the injured and dazed gathered together, comforted each other, searched for loved ones and wept for the dead, a significantly larger car bomb exploded in the immediate vicinity—directly outside the Sari Club. The carnage and chaos that followed was beyond comprehension. We acknowledge today those who lost their lives or who were injured in Bali 10 years ago. We acknowledge also the pain of their families and friends—pain that for many is as excruciating today as it was then. We acknowledge also and commend the police, official personnel, and brave Australians and Indonesians who tended to the injured, cared for those in distress and brought those responsible to justice. On behalf of all members I recognise and celebrate the strength of the New South Wales community—a community that responded to an act of horrific violence with a commitment to each other.

With the indulgence of the House, I particularly acknowledge the loss of former South Coast residents from Ulladulla in my electorate 18-year-old Craig Dunn and 19-year-old Danny Lewis who had just arrived in Bali for a 17-day surfing holiday. Since then, family, friends and the local Ulladulla community together created the Dunn and Lewis Youth Development Foundation as a wonderful memorial. In September 2010 the multimillion-dollar Dunn Lewis Centre, funded in part by the local community, was opened. The centre focuses on initiatives that contribute positively to young people's personal, social and vocational wellbeing. We acknowledge also the six Coogee Dolphins players—Clint "CT" Thompson, Adam "Big Ads" Howard, Dave "May" Mayroudis, Shane "Shaggy" Foley, Gerard "Cup Cake" Yeo and Joshua "King" Iliffe—who are remembered each time the Dolphins take the field. The Coogee Dolphins Club and the community continue to honour these men and remember their legacy. We remember all of the 202 who lost their lives in Bali, including

the 43 New South Wales men and women who were taken from us too soon. We will never forget that awful night and we will never forget those who died, those who were injured, those who helped and those who were left behind.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

### **ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following bills reported:

Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Amendment (R 18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012  
Crime Commission Bill 2012  
Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2012  
Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Representation) Bill 2012  
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2012  
Transport Administration Amendment (Community Road Safety Fund) Bill 2012

### **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF SYDNEY**

#### **Resignation of Clover Moore: Issue of Writ**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that on 21 September 2012 I received a letter from Clover Moore resigning her seat as member for the electoral district of Sydney. I advise the House also that, pursuant to section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912, I issued a writ on 8 October 2012 for the election of a member to serve in place of Clover Moore, resigned, with the following particulars:

Nomination day—11 October 2012  
Polling day—27 October 2012  
Return of Writ—7 November 2012

### **DEATH OF KEVIN JOSEPH HARROLD, FORMER MEMBER FOR GORDON**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 28 September 2012 of Kevin Joseph Harrold, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who served as the member for Gordon from 17 November 1973 to 2 April 1976. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

### **DEATH OF THE HON. GEORGE PACIULLO, OAM, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND FORMER MEMBER FOR LIVERPOOL**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 9 October 2012 of George Paciullo, a former Minister of the Crown, who served as the member for Liverpool from 13 February 1971 to 19 February 1989. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained. The death of George Paciullo will be the subject of a motion of condolence on a future day.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I inform the House that in the absence of the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services will answer questions regarding her portfolio this week.

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Notices of Motions**

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

**QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.28 p.m.]*

**ROGER MASSY-GREENE POLITICAL DONATIONS**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. When did he first become aware that the Treasurer had accepted \$15,000 in personal campaign donations from Roger Massy-Greene?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** This Government has implemented a system in this State that ensures political donations provided to political parties are disclosed—unlike the system used by those opposite when donations to individuals such as Noreen Hay occurred. Those donations are posted on a website and can be viewed by anyone. The fact is that donations are made because donations have been legitimised by legislation through this Parliament. The fact is that since the Coalition came to office it has restricted donations to individuals. Enterprises, businesses or foreign nationals are not eligible to make political donations. To make a political donation you have to be on the Australian electoral roll and you have to be an individual, and any donations made are provided within a cap.

This question is aimed at an issue that was beaten up by those opposite last week. It is an alien concept to those opposite that anybody could be appointed on the basis of merit. I notice that nothing that was said last week, or today in fact, suggests that Roger Massy-Greene is not appropriately qualified to do the job to which he was appointed. It is an important job. The Government explained at the time that three distribution companies will be merged in order to achieve \$400 million worth of savings. Those savings will then be returned to low-income people—

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was specifically about when the Premier became aware, not what he is restructuring.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being generally relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Those savings are to be directed to low-income families and to individuals who require assistance because of escalating electricity prices across this State. We will continue to make appointments on the basis of merit. That is what we have done since we were elected.

**Ms Cherie Burton:** Rubbish.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** "Rubbish", says the police-ignoring member for Kogarah. Therefore, the appointment of Morris Iemma to chair her local health district is rubbish, is it? Therefore, the reappointment of Nicholas Whitlam to chair the Port Kembla Port Corporation is rubbish, is it? Therefore, the appointment of Phil Koperberg to run the Emergency Management Committee is rubbish, according to her.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: These are wholly extraneous matters. This is a very simple question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I place the member for Maroubra on two calls to order. I warn members that I will not tolerate spurious points of order in this term of Parliament.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** One knows when their strategy has gone sour; it is when they get noisy.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Whether it is Ron Dyer, Paul Gibson, Tanya Gadiel, Michael Egan, Kevin Greene, Paul Whelan, Barry Collier, Patricia Staunton, Pam Allan or Gary Kennedy, we appoint on the basis of merit. We appoint people who can help us fix New South Wales. Each of those appointments, like the appointment of Roger Massy-Greene, goes to Cabinet. Each of those appointments is subject to a Cabinet process; it is ultimately signed off by the Cabinet and, as I said at the estimates committee hearing last week—

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** —I have no intention of telling members opposite the workings of Cabinet, but I am able to tell them that when it comes to the appointments I have referred to—the appointment of Roger Massy-Greene and other appointments made by the Government—they are all made on the basis of merit; they are made collectively by the Cabinet.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Question time is not an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to argue with the Premier. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The other point members opposite have given me some opportunity to elaborate on is that, by and large, most of the people we have appointed do not need the money. That is in stark contrast to Labor's appointments, which were about enriching people like Michael Williamson—scoundrels like Michael Williamson who is facing criminal charges—simply because they were card-carrying members of the Labor Party. We will appoint on the basis of merit because the State deserves it and we want to fix the State.

### TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI:** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government investing in vital transport infrastructure to make New South Wales number one again?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I appreciate the question from the member for Strathfield, and his interest and understanding of the importance of getting this city and this State's transport infrastructure in particular up to a standard that people can be proud of and, more importantly, that business can rely upon. We are targeting our infrastructure spending. We should remember that our infrastructure spending is \$61.8 billion. On average \$15 billion a year will be spent on infrastructure, \$1 billion more than that spent by those opposite, but if one takes out the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution spending, it is up \$2 billion. We are determined to target that infrastructure spending so that we get better value for money for taxpayers and so that we do not waste \$500 million on those Rozelle metro style projects that those opposite were so known for. We have done the work to identify the most critical projects.

We established Infrastructure NSW to thoroughly assess the State's needs, to examine what was missing, what could be done to fix it and to make proper assessments based on which projects are going to contribute most to the State's economy. We understand that it is only through a strong economy that we provide people with jobs, opportunities and the future they deserve. More importantly, it is also one of the ways in which we gain revenue in order to fund those services that people look to us to provide. We are determined to make proper assessments, unlike those opposite. I am reminded of the comments that Lindsay Tanner, the former Federal finance Minister, made in March, which belied what those opposite did here for 16 years and what has been happening federally for the past five years, that is, that projects were assessed on politics and not on the economics or in the public interest. He said in March, "You are increasingly within a construct—

**Mr John Robertson:** What about the North West Rail Link?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Did I hear the name of that rail project that the *Sydney Morning Herald* never mentions—the North West Rail Link project—the project that those opposite promised but now are pretending that they knew nothing about? I return to Lindsay Tanner. He said in March, "You are increasingly within a construct that says you have to spread the gravy around irrespective of merit, otherwise you [will] suffer politically." That is not how we are prepared to spend taxpayer dollars. That is not what we intend to do. We are ensuring that the projects meet the needs of this city and its economy. Whether it is the North West Rail Link servicing that growth area nominated by those in government or whether it is WestConnex, we will get on with the project. We announced on the day that Infrastructure NSW handed down its State Infrastructure Strategy our commitment to WestConnex and our commitment to Bridges for the Bush, a program close to the heart of the Deputy Premier and every country member in this Chamber.

The 33-kilometre WestConnex project will see a widening of the M4 from Parramatta to north Strathfield; it will see an extension to Taverners Hill, a tunnel from Taverners Hill to St Peters via the Camperdown area—the inner-west bypass—a Sydney area access link between St Peters and the M5 East with links to airport terminals, Port Botany and surrounding industrial areas, and duplication of the M5 East motorway to King Georges Road. As we said in the lead-up to the election campaign, we were determined to make a start on one of the missing links of Sydney's road system, and it is clear from the State Infrastructure Strategy handed down by Infrastructure NSW that that is the project to commit to. I am delighted that the Minister for Roads and Ports has established a Sydney Motorways Project Office to get on with turning that concept into a reality.

We have committed \$1.8 billion to WestConnex, and we will be working with the private sector and the Federal Government on the delivery of the project. I welcome a Federal leader's interest in this project. Two weeks ago Tony Abbot stood beside me and said, "Here is \$1.5 billion. Should we win, that can go to this motorway." Today I have written to the Prime Minister to accept her offer of \$25 million towards funding the project office—\$1.5 billion committed by the Federal Coalition; \$25 million on offer from the Federal Labor Government for planning alone. But I have gone further in my letter to the Prime Minister. I have formally asked her to match our \$1.8 billion commitment for this project. Members opposite can try to run down this project. [*Extension of time granted.*]

It is not surprising that the member for Strathfield would be interested in this, because it will provide enormous benefits. Infrastructure NSW estimates that WestConnex will result in reduced travel times of between 15 and 35 minutes between Sydney's west and south, and the airport and Port Botany, time that is money in the bank for businesses moving imports and exports to and from either the airport or the ports—time that motorists would appreciate having with their families or in their businesses. I have written to the Prime Minister today to formally request the Commonwealth to match our \$1.8 billion commitment to this project. I urge her to get on board with the project and to reassess her Government's anti-New South Wales stance that is so evident in Federal funding of infrastructure projects.

**Ms Cherie Burton:** It's a State Government project.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** To the bright spark over there who said that it is a State project, I just point out that with Infrastructure Australia's first round of funding, this city got 1.5 per cent of that funding. Melbourne, for a similar road network, got 55 per cent—less than \$20 million to Sydney for a road and \$800 million to Melbourne. That is why we will continue to argue that we deserve a fair share of funding. Congestion costs to New South Wales, our economy and the national economy are more than \$4 billion. An investment of \$1.8 billion by the Federal Government to match ours not only would keep tolls lower on the WestConnex but also would assist in growing the State and the national economy, providing jobs to people but, more importantly, providing that secure revenue that governments need.

#### NETWORKS NSW CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Why did the Treasurer breach his own Board Appointment Policy and appoint Roger Massy-Greene without going through the independent panel process, which the Treasurer himself announced in September last year?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. The Treasurer has not even started his answer.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** What is amazing is that the Opposition has opened this appointment box. I advise everyone in the House to grab some popcorn and get comfortable, because this is going to be good. I love the fact that Labor is talking about appointments and the quality of appointments—it is a road to Damascus-style experience. We said that we would improve recruitment processes and we have.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Question time is not an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to argue with the Treasurer.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There are two principles that drive the recruitment process. Appointments must be made on the basis of merit. That means appointees must have the skills and the experience suitable for the job.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kogarah and the member for Toongabbie will cease shouting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Just as importantly, appointees must have the full approval of Cabinet. That is what has driven every appointment we have made.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will find themselves out of the Chamber if they continue with their disruptive behaviour. The member for Bankstown and the member for Toongabbie will cease shouting and interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** To understand the culture and the process of appointments adopted by those on the other side of the House, it is worth looking at a particular case study. In the last days of the former Labor

Government someone was appointed as a director of State Water, to take effect on the day before the election. Who would that be? It would not be Michael Williamson, would it? The interesting facts about that appointment are that it was to take effect before the election and also, when we look at some of the paperwork, we find that he was appointed despite being knocked back as a director of the Newcastle Port Corporation. The former Treasurer proposed his appointment as a director of the Newcastle Port Corporation, but the paperwork suggests that the proposal was knocked back by the member for Liverpool and the former Attorney General. I do not know what happened in the former Government.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I am not sure that the Treasurer heard the question.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** The point of order is relevance. What happened to the independent panel? The Government promised to establish it. Where is it?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have heard the question; the member for Maroubra does not need to repeat it. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** What was the basis of the appointment? It must have been on merit. I inform the House what Michael Williamson has listed as his experience on his curriculum vitae. He is the former Australian Labor Party National President, he is the current Australian Labor Party Senior Vice-President, he was the National President of the Health Services Union, he was a member of the Australian Council of Trade Unions Executive—

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was about Roger Massy-Greene. I ask you to direct the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the point of order; the member for Macquarie Fields articulated it better than did the member for Maroubra. The point of order is upheld. I ask the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I ask those opposite whether the appointment was on the basis of merit.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer is straying from the question. I ask him to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There are two interesting things about this. This appointment, which was made the day before the election—

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer has 10 seconds to conclude his answer. There is no need for the Leader of the Opposition to jump up and down. I will determine whether the Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked, which was quite specific. The Treasurer has strayed from the question, but I trust that he will return to the leave of the question. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** All I am doing is contrasting the process of the former Government to our process. We have said that the appointment must be on the basis of merit, skills and experience, and it must be approved by the full Cabinet. That is the process that we have established. The opposite process was engaged in by the former Government for the appointment of Michael Williamson. Where does he live? I have a sense it might have been about preselection because he lives in Maroubra.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the Treasurer of my earlier ruling.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: The Treasurer is clearly flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer is not flouting my ruling. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Who signed off on his appointment? It was the member for Maroubra. [*Time expired.*]

## REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government rebuilding regional roads infrastructure?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the member for Monaro for that very good question. As members are no doubt aware, the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals came to government with a commitment to revitalise regional communities and to renovate the regional infrastructure that had been so badly neglected under 16 years of Labor. I am happy to report that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is delivering on that commitment. Not only are we delivering a \$61.8 billion infrastructure investment program for the entire State over four years—which represents a 17 per cent increase compared with the previous four years under that lot on the other side, excluding Commonwealth stimulus spending—but also we are ensuring that regional New South Wales finally gets its fair share.

With the recent release of the State Infrastructure Strategy from Infrastructure NSW, I can confirm that regional New South Wales has secured 30 per cent of the funding available through Restart NSW. Through that funding, more than half a billion dollars will be allocated for the upgrade of the Pacific and Princes highways, as well as \$135 million for the Bridges for the Bush program. I know the Opposition is not interested in regional infrastructure, but it is important to the many regional members who sit in this place and to the communities they represent. The Bridges for the Bush program was identified in the State Infrastructure Strategy as a critical priority for the State to improve road safety and freight productivity, and this Government has responded immediately by fast-tracking funding for the program.

Under Bridges for the Bush the Government will replace or upgrade bridges at 17 key locations in regional New South Wales over the next five years, including five key priority higher mass limit deficient bridges on State-managed roads in Wagga Wagga, Gunnedah, Wee Waa, Cooma and Echuca. We will also replace 12 timber truss bridges on State, regional and local roads, including on the Bruxner Highway over the Clarence River; on Namima Road at Gooloogong over the Lachlan River; on Bridge Street at Lawrence over Sportsman Creek, and I know that the member for Clarence is happy about that; on the Malley Highway at Tooleybuc over the Murray River, and the member for Murray-Darling is happy about that; on Barham Road at Swan Hill over the Wakool River, and the member for Murray-Darling is happy about that, too; and on Binda Road at James Park over the Crookwell River.

Other timber truss bridges to be replaced or upgraded include at Woodville, Clarence Town, Carrathool, Middle Falbrook, Warroo and near Lithgow. By investing in critical regional infrastructure the Bridges for the Bush program will enhance freight productivity by removing freight pinch points and bottlenecks on our State's regional road network. Bridges for the Bush also will make our regional roads safer by improving the safety and reliability of old bridge structures and through the replacement or upgrade of the five higher mass limit deficient bridges, which alone will remove 8,000 truck movements from the freight task on our roads each and every year. Estimates indicate that replacement or upgrade of those five bridges alone will save the State more than \$200 million in economic, social and environmental costs over the next 30 years, as well as reduce annual maintenance costs for the Government.

Of course this big, new building program will create thousands of construction jobs and give a real boost to the regional communities of Wagga Wagga, Gunnedah, Wee Waa, Cooma and Echuca where those five key priority bridges are located. The reaction of people apart from those opposite has been fantastic. Regional communities, local councils and other stakeholders such as the NSW Farmers Association and the NRMA have welcomed the increased investment in regional infrastructure and the improvement to productivity in transporting goods and commodities from regional New South Wales to our ports and the big market in Sydney. In its press release the NRMA said:

After years of neglect it's great to see that the State Government is fast-tracking this vital infrastructure that will improve road safety for local communities.

Indeed, under the Labor Government this was neglected for 16 long years. Thankfully the Liberal-Nationals Government is fixing the mess left by Labor. Despite the difficult economic climate it will continue to invest in infrastructure that makes a difference to our economy and to people's lives.

## GOVERNMENT BOARD APPOINTMENTS

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier table a list of all government board appointments and the process by which those appointments were made?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** This is the laziest Opposition in the State's history. I have been a member of Parliament for 17 years and I have never seen such a group of lazy bums as those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition, as a former electrician, and anyone else with a basic understanding of technology knows that they can google the agencies. That is what I did to check who appointed Michael Williamson to a board on the day before the election campaign. It did not have the paperwork signed by the member for Maroubra but something called the worldwide web contains all the agency reports that are tabled in this Parliament each year. That information is publicly available and will continue to be publicly available.

I am not surprised that members opposite are unhappy. They are an unhappy family. I absent the member for Lakemba from that because he got married and the House should congratulate him. It is a great union. I am sure, like me, that the member for Lakemba married above his station. We both married better women than we deserve. But we saw an extraordinary attack on the member for Lakemba whilst he was on his honeymoon. The attack came from his colleagues, and I know that from his Facebook page. As the member for Lakemba says—

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier has clearly moved away from the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has indeed answered the question that he was asked. He is going into other matters, but I will determine whether he is straying from the leave of the question.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The member for Lakemba said:

I make no apology and have no regrets about taking two weeks to celebrate my marriage.

He went on to say:

The biggest shame however is that colleagues who have access to my Facebook updates would deem to leak them to journalists for their own self interests.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. Part of the question related to whether the Premier would release the process by which those appointments had been made. The Premier has not answered that part of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has been relevant to the question asked, and I am satisfied with his answer.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The last sentence of the Facebook message of the member for Lakemba demonstrates the unhappy families opposite. The member for Lakemba said:

If they want to be shadow ministers, they should work in the interest of the party perhaps...

I have been where the member for Lakemba sits. An Opposition disunited only benefits this side of the House. Give the member for Lakemba a go. He sat with that mob for 16 months. Allow him to get married and allow him to enjoy the moment and to take two weeks off. We will not allow the lazy Leader of the Opposition to get away with asking a question in which he requests us to provide him with information that is available on a public website. The Leader of the Opposition should do his homework. We will continue to do our homework as we seek to battle the questions that are lobbed to us by Opposition members.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: The Treasurer announced the process at the Australian Institute of Company Directors in September last year. The Premier has been asked about the independent panel. He has not answered the question.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Let me get this right. On the one hand Opposition members want us to reveal to the House appointments to each of the agencies, which are already on the website. On the other hand they want us to detail the process from which the member for Maroubra just quoted. Thank you.

## INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How will the Government release funds for infrastructure through the Port Kembla and Port Botany transaction?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his significant private sector experience and interest in driving this State forward. It is great to talk about a Government that is getting on with the job of getting this State moving. Members opposite can carry on with their smears, innuendo and conspiracies and do whatever they like because no-one cares what they do. The Government is getting on with the job of getting this State moving.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** This week we are proud to introduce legislation for the long-term lease of Port Botany and Port Kembla. Regardless of what those opposite say, this State has its financial challenges. Members opposite ignore them but they are real. Since we have come into government up to today we are facing \$10 billion less in revenue. At the same time the credit rating is under pressure which we have acknowledged time and again. If it were left to those opposite it would have been lost. We also are faced with a significant infrastructure backlog. Those opposite want to keep the triple-A rating but they also want more infrastructure. The O'Farrell Government has the solution. The way to do it is to free up capital from the balance sheet. That is why the O'Farrell Government has got on with the job of freeing up capital. It has undertaken a long-term lease of the desalination plant, which delivered net proceeds of \$300 million and \$2 billion of additional balance sheet capacity.

**Mr John Robertson:** What were the net proceeds?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It will not surprise anyone that the Leader of the Opposition does not understand a balance sheet. We also have got on with the job of getting legislation through this House for the sale of the generator assets to ensure that additional billions of dollars are freed up for this State. Now we have moved on to the long-term lease of the port. The long-term lease of the port is generating a lot of interest around the world and within Australia as an asset that is perfect for superannuation funds and infrastructure funds to invest in. That will create the competition that we hope will deliver an excellent result for this State. As the Premier announced a couple of weeks ago, the net proceeds will go into Restart NSW and that will deliver \$2.6 billion. I am sure the member for Wollongong will be as excited as the member for Kiama that from that \$2.6 billion an amount of \$170 million will go to the Princes Highway. Other members up and down the coast—the member for Coffs Harbour in particular—will know that \$403 million will go towards the Pacific Highway duplication.

Another new initiative was announced by the Deputy Premier and Premier as part of the Infrastructure NSW announcement; that is, Bridges for the Bush. For too long we have waited for those bridges to be delivered. We are getting on with providing funds for that program because we know how it will impact on communities and on the transportation of freight. For those members across western Sydney we also are proud that \$1.8 billion from the sale will be reserved for the WestConnex project. Finally, \$100 million will go to the Illawarra for its infrastructure, even though the member for Wollongong does not seem to want it. But the question is: What are members opposite doing?

When the legislation is introduced and members of the Opposition oppose it, as I assume they will, we will tell communities across this State that Labor members do not want to put funds into the Princes Highway, the Pacific Highway duplication and Bridges for the Bush, and they certainly do not want to do WestConnex. That is what Labor member are saying, and the community is beginning to see a very clear difference between the Opposition and the Government. This Government is providing the funds for infrastructure that this State desperately needs. We are proud to provide funds to deliver what is required. Government members understand that difficult decisions are required to be made to get this State moving. At the same time we have to be creative and look for every opportunity to find the capital to build the infrastructure that Labor promised but never delivered. The O'Farrell Government is doing its job. Through the long-term lease of the port, we will continue to get this State moving.

## NETWORKS NSW CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT

**Mr PAUL LYNCH:** My question is directed to the Premier. Did Michael Photios, Mark Needham or any other Liberal Party officer put forward Mr Massy-Greene for appointment as the chairman of Networks NSW?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Again I say to the House and to the public that Opposition members should not judge us by their standards. The answer is, to the best of my knowledge, no. This will come as huge shock to Opposition members, who only ever appointed people on the basis of a membership card. Mr Massy-Greene is not a member of the Liberal Party. The point we make time and again is that Cabinet will appoint on the basis of merit. We will continue to appoint people to boards and positions across this State who can help clean up the mess left to us by Labor—a mess in the electricity sector, a mess in the infrastructure space, a mess in the delivery of services across this State and a mess that has been left to people who do not have the luxury enjoyed by Opposition members of sitting on leather couches and being paid by the public purse. People across this city and this State earn a living only through their own efforts. They deserve better roads, better hospitals, better schools and better policing services, but Labor members failed them.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** That is why the Government is getting on with the job of delivering infrastructure such as WestConnex or Bridges for the Bush, or the myriad projects we detailed a fortnight ago that are benefitting people across this State. The M5 West widening was promised by Labor but not delivered. The Erskine Park link road was promised by Labor but not delivered. The upgrade of the Princes Highway was promised but not delivered. I was pleased to join the member for Kiama to announce funding for that project worth \$310 million for 7.5 kilometres of road, and there will be upgrades of the Hume, Newell and Pacific highways. Finally through this Government's efforts we will be able to give people who live in rural New South Wales the health infrastructure that they deserve, and I can cite the list of projects beginning with the Wagga Wagga hospital redevelopment through to the Dubbo electorate and health infrastructure at Parkes and Forbes.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about Michael Photios and Mr Needham and about their knowledge of Roger Massy-Greene.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has answered the question.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I am highlighting that this Government is getting on with the job, assisted by people who are appointed to positions on the basis of merit. I was pleased to join the member for Dubbo to turn the first sod for the Dubbo Base Hospital—a project that is nine years overdue. The project was promised by Labor to benefit Independent candidates at election after election, but never delivered until this Government started it last week. Other examples of this Government getting on with the job are the Lismore Base Hospital and the Kempsey District Hospital, the upgrade of the St George Hospital's emergency department, the Bega hospital's integrated healthcare facility, the Central Coast regional cancer centre and the improvements underway at the Nepean Hospital. I also highlight improvement in education, such as the Hurstville Public School upgrade. During the election campaign I stood outside that school and made a commitment for upgrading—a school that the former Labor member, during all the years he was in Parliament, did nothing for.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the second time. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time. The member for Kogarah will cease shouting at the Premier.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School is nearing completion. The Lake Cathie Public School, whose upgrade was a commitment by Labor at successive elections, is finally underway. The Cabramatta High School's stage two upgrade, the Karonga school's upgrade, the Kyogle school upgrade and the Ulladulla school upgrade are underway. There is more to come because the Government is putting some order into the process. We are not appointing mates, such as the member for Keira to be a former deputy Director-General of Transport. We advertise and Cabinet appoints on the basis of merit, and we will continue to do so. But how lazy are Opposition members? Madam Speaker, I am loath to use that term as it will offend you, but how lazy are they?

It has come to my attention that Opposition members are so lazy that one of them received a letter on 2 January in relation to an issue and that representations to the relevant Minister were made not in January, February, March, April or June, but on 10 July. In the meantime, the problem had been resolved. Who was that member? Which member of the Opposition was that? Was it one of the backbenchers who is trying to get the job of the member for Lakemba? No. It was the lazy Leader of the Opposition. That is the type of example he sets. I feel very sorry for his constituents.

## HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. What is the Government doing to revitalise health infrastructure across New South Wales?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. He is an excellent member, who has campaigned long and hard for many years to achieve the redevelopment of the Wagga Wagga hospital. The redevelopment was promised by Labor for years and years, but not delivered.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** On a number of occasions I have visited the Wagga Wagga electorate and met with the member, and each time the visit has been delightful. Recently it was really interesting to note the reaction of local residents when we showed them the plans and drawings relating to the hospital's redevelopment. People were sceptical. They thought, "Oh, no. Governments say this, but they never deliver." Now they are over the moon about the projects as they are developing. Firstly, we built the car park that was so desperately needed. Later I was accompanied by the member for Wagga Wagga to inspect the commencement of works for the mental health facility, and that project is well and truly underway.

**Mr Daryl Maguire:** Show them the photographs.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The member for Wagga Wagga has circulated throughout the electorate *State Matters* that contains an artist's impression of the fabulous new Wagga Wagga hospital. In 1995 the then Premier, Bob Carr, stopped a \$32 million government-funded redevelopment proposal. It was not until the current term of this Government, many years later, that work on the project recommenced. This is a \$282 million three-phase development at the Wagga Wagga hospital, and I was very proud to stand beside the member for Wagga Wagga when the plans were exhibited.

As a result of the previous Government's failures, health infrastructure generally is 50 years old. It is little wonder that the Government is being forced to invest so heavily in bringing the State's health infrastructure up to date. Recently I was very pleased to visit the electorates of a number of my parliamentary colleagues. Most recently I visited the Tamworth electorate and joined the member for Tamworth to inspect the Tamworth hospital's cancer centre, which is nearing completion and will soon be occupied, as well as proposals and early works for major redevelopment. The project has been jointly funded by \$120 million from the Commonwealth and \$100 million from the State. When the project was announced, the then Federal Minister generously acknowledged that if the State Government had not provided its proportion of the funding, the project would not have proceeded.

A day earlier the member for Tamworth and I attended the opening of the Werris Creek multipurpose centre, which represents an \$11 million investment by the New South Wales Government. It is a fantastic new facility for people who live in the Tamworth district. As the Premier mentioned earlier, the previous day I had been pleased to visit the Dubbo electorate and meet with the local member—my second visit to Dubbo in a month—to show the community the proposal and plans for the hospital upgrade and witness commencement of the works. I was very pleased to stand next to the Premier and the member for Dubbo as the first sod was turned. This hospital has been long awaited by members of that community.

The week before I was at Blacktown and Mount Druitt with local Coalition members of Parliament as the first sod was turned for the early works for that hospital. I was joined by the member for Londonderry, the member for Mulgoa and the member for Riverstone and I pointed out to the member for Riverstone the beaming smiles on the faces of doctors and medical staff at the announcement that work would start on the \$324 million Blacktown-Mount Druitt redevelopment. When they came to see me just after the election they were despondent and miserable because they had been lied to by those opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, who represents that electorate and who did nothing to deliver the redevelopment.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** We built that hospital.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** For the 16 years that members opposite were in government they did nothing for that hospital. On the same day that I went to Mount Druitt I visited Nepean Hospital to see the commencement of work on the car park—work that was desperately overdue. I also visited the Central Coast

with members representing that area to see the development of the cancer unit at Woy Woy Hospital. Many other projects are underway, including multipurpose services and money has been allocated to commence work on Kempsey and Lismore. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I am grateful for the extension of time as there is so much to talk about, for example, this Government's investment to bring our health stock up to scratch. The member for Camden, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Campbelltown, who represent the Macarthur area, turned the first sod for the early redevelopment work at Campbelltown Hospital. I am surprised that Opposition members, including the shadow Minister for Health, were not there saying to the press, "Isn't it wonderful that the Government is getting on with the job of redeveloping hospitals that we abandoned, did not deliver, or let fade into insignificance over so many years?" Members opposite can carry on as much as they like but doctors in that region are saying, "Well done. You are getting on with the job of rebuilding the health stock that has been so badly neglected. When I visited that area Mr Danny O'Connor, Chief Executive of the Western Sydney Local Health District, said, "We have been ignored for so long. We would like to provide more services but we could—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting and arguing with the Minister.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Danny O'Connor said, "The former Government did not provide us with funds to increase the size of the hospital to meet increasing demand", which is exactly what this Government is doing. At long last we are putting the money where it is needed—in our hospital stock—so that we can treat additional patients who will be provided for through this year's recurrent budget.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** We are providing more infrastructure than ever before.

#### **NETWORKS NSW CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENT**

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** My question is directed to the Premier. Did Treasurer Mike Baird put forward Roger Massy-Greene for the position of chairman of Networks NSW?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The short answer is no; I will not waste another four minutes and 55 seconds to give an answer. But I say again that there should be nothing remarkable in a State after 16 years of corrupt Labor Government that a Government—a Cabinet—should appoint an individual like Roger Massy-Greene on the basis of merit. No-one would think that would be unacceptable, except in New South Wales after 16 years of the corrupt mob opposite. I note that not one Opposition member has taken objection to that description. Given what is happening at the Independent Commission Against Corruption, nor would I if I were in their situation. According to Kate McClymont's story online yesterday, the Independent Commission Against Corruption is about to see the greatest number of lawyers assembled in its history because of the way in which those opposite behaved in government.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** That's not true. It is about one person.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The member for Marrickville—one of the laziest members on the frontbench—said that is not true, that it is about one person. Which person? Is it Ian Macdonald, Eddie Obeid or Eric Roozendaal? I feel sorry for Morris Iemma, the bloke who led them and who is being dragged into an Independent Commission Against Corruption hearing. He is one of the few decent people who sat with those opposite in government. The facts speak for themselves and they are about to speak publicly at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I say again that I do not care how many questions the members opposite toss up this week—it was not bowled but it was certainly wide of the mark—we will continue to appoint on the basis of merit. We decided to make a change and to give people who know how to run the State a fair go. Infrastructure NSW is about ending political interference in the delivery of infrastructure. This city and this State were promised everything for 16 years but too little was delivered. That is why we are getting on with the job of building the infrastructure to which I referred earlier.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Minister for Health, in accordance with our election commitments, has appointed local health districts and, through reforms, is redirecting \$2.2 billion to the front line, which will assist in delivering another 50,000 emergency department treatments this year. That \$2.2 billion will see an

additional 30,000 people given overnight stays in our hospital system and will redirect resources to the front line which will provide an additional 2,000 elective surgery procedures to the State's health system. That is what we are on about, assisted by good people, including former Premier Morris Iemma who chairs the South Eastern Local Health District. That is what we are on about, appointing good people to help fix and repair the State. We know—and we came to office saying so—that no government is the repository of all wisdom in any system. That is why we are determined to partner with the not-for-profit sector in the delivery of reforms in the Disability Services and Family and Community Services sectors.

That is why we are determined to partner with the private sector and to use private sector skills, not just to demonstrate to taxpayers that they can get better value for money from the dollars that the Government spends on their behalf—let us not forget the Building the Education Revolution project. We know that thanks to the financial situation in which those opposite left this State, public-private partnerships are the only way to deliver infrastructure that supports jobs, that guarantees economic activity and that secures our future. Those opposite should do their homework. It ought to be the norm and it will become the norm: we will continue to make appointments on the basis of merit.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr GARETH WARD:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. What progress has the Government made on major transport infrastructure projects?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is a pleasure to update the House on the progress that this Government is making in relation to public transport infrastructure. I do not want to dwell on the past but we know that in 16 years those opposite announced 12 different rail lines but built zero. They did build half of one rail line at double the cost they had previously announced. In contrast to the abysmal record of those opposite, I am pleased to update the House on the Government's progress on a number of projects that the previous Government did not have the competence to deliver.

Yesterday I was in north-west Sydney with some colleagues to witness the first major demolition that is part of the construction of the North West Rail Link. An office building was knocked down to make way for the brand-new Norwest station. It was a milestone and I am pleased that the community can now witness the progress we are making. This is in addition to the 18 tenders and 38 contracts we have announced for this crucial project. I am pleased to say that there is keen national and international interest from all parties who want to be involved. The O'Farrell Government is building another rail line in the south-west. Those opposite spoke about this project for years—

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** And we signed the contracts.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Dr Mac should keep quiet on this one. Those opposite did not lay one single sleeper. Since we came to Government we have laid more than 100 metres of track already.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fairfield will cease interjecting.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I make a correction: we have laid a thousand metres of track. Recently I was pleased to visit the brand-new Glenfield rail station and interchange, which was opened four months ahead of schedule. That is the kind of real progress we are making on this side of the House. Construction has begun on the inner west light rail extension. John Holland was selected to build the project. As with many projects, Labor talked a lot about that one but did nothing. This Government is building it. Having issued the contract and started construction, we have made sure to secure the rolling stock, which those opposite never bothered to even think about. Labor was planning to build something without having the rolling stock once the service was ready.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** What about the Greenway?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Marrickville should take particular interest in the northern Sydney freight corridor because the Federal Government offered her Labor Government \$800 million.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** Why do I care?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Because it is important. It impacts your electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We are also getting on with building the northern Sydney freight corridor after resolving a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth Government years after \$800 million was first offered to New South Wales Labor, which did nothing about it. I am pleased to say that early construction works have begun already at Strathfield on this important project which will benefit commuters and freight services. We have awarded the construction contract for the Wynyard Walk to Thiess. This major project will give thousands of people access to Barangaroo. At the moment about 8,000 pedestrians use the walkway to Kent Street. The new Barangaroo-Wynyard walk will make sure that about 20,000 pedestrians an hour will be able to use that access way. Under the Transport Access Program we are getting on with the job of building vital transport infrastructure across our State. Around 50 projects are underway.

Yesterday the Mount Druitt commuter car park opened and new ferry wharves have been opened at Rose Bay and Neutral Bay. I am sure the member for Balmain is looking forward to his new brand-new wharf in Balmain. We have given the green light also to long-awaited upgrades at Ingleburn and Oatley stations as well as a number in the Illawarra. The member for Kiama is particularly interested in those upgrades. We have a new Flinders station and car parks at Kiama and Oak Flats, for which the member for Kiama has vigorously lobbied. I could talk about so many other projects and upgrades. As I have stated, the Transport Access Program has 50 upgrades alone, and a number more will be rolled out. While Opposition members are asleep at the wheel, we on this side of the House are getting on with the job of building all these major transport projects.

**Question time concluded at 3.23 p.m.**

## **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

### **Report**

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, of the report entitled, "Investigation into the conduct of officers of Wagonga Local Aboriginal Land Council and others", dated September 2012.

**Ordered to be printed.**

## **OMBUDSMAN**

### **Report**

**The Speaker** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, of the report of the NSW Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2012.

**Ordered to be printed.**

## **AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the performance audit report of the Auditor-General entitled, "Monitoring of local government: Department of Premier and Cabinet, Division of Local Government", dated September 2012 received out of session and ordered to be printed on 26 September 2012.

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY**

### **Government Response to Report**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of the Government's response to report No. 155, entitled, "Inquiry into school zone safety" received out of session and ordered to be printed on 26 September 2012.

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Mr Stephen Bromhead**, as Chair, tabled the report of the Legislation Review Committee dated 16 October 2012 entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 26/55", together with minutes of the committee dated 16 October 2012.

**Report ordered to be printed.**

## PETITIONS

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

### Palliative Care Services

Petition requesting the provision of sufficient palliative care services to meet existing and anticipated future demands for such services in all areas of the State and in all types of institutions and places where such services are required and the provision of additional funds to support training of palliative care workers, received from **Mr Barry O'Farrell**.

### Inverell and Glen Innes Hospitals Redevelopment

Petition requesting the prioritisation of clinical service plans for and redevelopment of Inverell and Glen Innes district hospitals, received from **Mr Richard Torbay**.

**Discussions on petitions set down as orders 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**.

### Cooks River Sewage Flows

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

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

### Central Coast Palliative Care Services

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

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

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli—Hastings Public School Funding—lodged 12 September 2012 (Mrs Leslie Williams)

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli—Early Childhood Teacher Salaries—lodged 15 August 2012 (Ms Carmel Tebbutt)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Balmain Foreshore Land Leases—lodged 16 August 2012 (Mr Jamie Parker)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Randwick Education and Health Specialisation Centre—lodged 6 September 2012 (Mr Barry O'Farrell)

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian—Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport—lodged 4 September 2012 (Ms Clover Moore)

The Hon. George Souris—Port Macquarie Liquor Licence—lodged 12 September 2012 (Mrs Leslie Williams)

The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson—Pet Shops—lodged 4, 5, 6, 12 and 13 September 2012 (Ms Clover Moore)

The Hon. Robyn Parker—Container Deposit Levy—lodged 4 and 5 September 2012 (Ms Clover Moore)

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Business Lapsed**

**General Business Notices of Motion (General Notices) Nos 474, 482, 484, 492, 494, 496, 498, 500, 502, 503, 506, 513, 517, 524, 535 and 536 lapsed.**

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Removal of Business**

**The Speaker** advised the House that in view of the resignation of the member for Sydney and in accordance with past practice she ordered the removal from the Business Paper of General Business Notices of Motion (for Bills) No. 2 standing in the former member's name.

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Bills**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.28 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) To permit the passage through all stages, at this or any subsequent sitting, of the following bills:
  - (a) Director of Public Prosecutions Amendment (Disclosures) Bill 2012;
  - (b) Miscellaneous Acts Amendment (Directors' Liability) Bill 2012;
  - (c) Passenger Transport Amendment (Ticketing and Passenger Conduct) Bill 2012;
  - (d) Port Assets (Authorised Transactions) Bill 2012; and
  - (e) Swimming Pools Amendment Bill 2012.
- (2) On Thursday 18 October 2012:
  - (a) to postpone the consideration of the petition on the positron emission tomography scanner for Wollongong Hospital, presented by the member for Kiama, until Thursday 25 October 2012 at 4.15 p.m., or at the conclusion of Government business if concluded earlier; and
  - (b) to permit Government business to be considered until 4.45 p.m., followed by private members' statements.

I indicate to the House that the next petition to be discussed on Thursday at 4.15 p.m. is that presented by the member for Kiama. This motion is necessary as a substantial number of Government bills must be dealt with in the next two weeks. The discussion on the petition presented by the member for Kiama will be dealt with next week. I give an undertaking to the House that each matter on the paper will be dealt with before the end of the

year. Any remaining petitions will be dealt with in the remaining sitting weeks. The other issue relates to the bills. Members will be aware that one of the joys of being a member of the Legislative Assembly is that we have to consider the requirements of the Legislative Council.

The Legislative Council this year has determined that it requires legislation from this Chamber to be sent to that Chamber by the end of next week. In order to permit that to occur I will be moving a suspension of standing orders to permit all stages of a number of bills to be moved through this House. Having said that, can I say a couple of those bills are in the domain of the Attorney General, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Local Government. Each of those Ministers has indicated that they would be most willing to meet or have their staff meet with the shadow Ministers this afternoon if they wish but certainly tomorrow morning to make sure there is a full briefing available to them on these bills on issues that need to be addressed.

**Ms Linda Burney:** How generous.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I heard the member for Canterbury say, "How generous". I do not recollect in my 16 years in opposition that offer ever being made.

**Mr Michael Daley:** I did.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member for Maroubra says he did. We can pick off the ones that did. The reality is that it did not happen.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It is a new paradigm.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** That offer being made is a new paradigm. Unfortunately, towards the conclusion of each session it is always the case that the public sector seems to find these bills in a great rush. I am indicating that whilst the matters have to be dealt with, they will be done with propriety and appropriateness by the offering of those briefings to the shadow Ministers. I should indicate by way of early warning to members that over the next few weeks on Wednesday nights when Parliament sits legislation will be dealt with in appropriate ways. Members will be required to be in attendance for a number of the bills to be dealt with. I will soon move to suspend standing orders to formally put in play the number of speakers who will be speaking on the infrastructure debate—which will be three from each side. Tomorrow night there will be business of the House and members should make those arrangements now.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.35 p.m.]: The Opposition does not agree to the motion. I am happy to stick up for the member for Kiama. For most of this year the House has been in slow motion in terms of the scarcity and quality of legislation. It is quite obvious that the conscious decision the Government has made to attack the public service has resulted in a scarcity of legislation before this House. We have seen some strange offerings such as the Library Amendment Bill—I do not mean in content. That bill had more Government speakers than there were words in the bill. By contrast, it took the Government eight months to return to this place to remedy a shortcoming in legislation that will allow deregistration of motorcycle gangs.

There is a very good reason why bills are supposed to lay on the table for five days: so that all members of this place, regardless of their political colour, can study them and consult with their communities and stakeholders about them. We have bills of some moment such as the Director of Public Prosecutions Amendment (Disclosures) Bill, a significant bill; the Miscellaneous Acts Amendment (Directors' Liability) Bill, potentially of some consequence; the Passenger Transport Amendment (Ticketing and Passenger Conduct) Bill; and the one that I am particularly interested in, the Port Assets (Authorised Transactions) Bill. In that bill the Government will no doubt try to wrap up into a single legislative instrument the flogging off of Port Botany and Port Kembla.

The Opposition wants to examine that bill closely and yet the Government seeks to rush it through in order to hide the details of the transaction. The last piece of proposed legislation covered by the motion is the Swimming Pools Amendment Bill. I can understand that there may be one or two bills at this stage of the year that require urgency and special treatment: indeed the Leader of the House will be the first to acknowledge that where there has been urgency and the Government has a legitimate reason to rush bills through the House the Opposition has been most cooperative. But attempting to push six bills through the House simultaneously reeks of two things—a lack of organisation and a hidden agenda with regard to the Port Assets (Authorised Transactions) Bill. The Opposition wants time to look at that bill.

In relation to the petition, the rule for dealing with petitions signed by more than 10,000 persons was a creation of this Government. The Premier made great fanfare about its introduction. An important petition has been put forward by the member for Kiama from certain citizens requesting a positron emission tomography or PET scanner for Wollongong hospital. The members representing the electorates of Wollongong, Keira and Shellharbour will want to contribute to that debate, yet the matter has been flogged off and put back with other business of the House so the Government can continue to cover up its shortcomings. The Opposition has been cooperative when exigencies have arisen in the House, but this is beyond the pale and the Opposition does not consent to the motion.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.37 p.m.], in reply: Whilst I take on board the esteemed contribution of the member for Maroubra to this debate and accept that he can put his perspective and that of the Opposition in relation to the legislative program, it is a perspective that the Government expects from the Opposition. In regard to the petition, the member for Kiama informs me that the members representing the electorates of Heathcote, Wollongong, Shellharbour and Keira have a slightly better command of the circumstances than the member for Maroubra or I. Debate on the petition is being deferred until next week by agreement because there are various people coming from the local areas to speak on it. It is unfortunate that the agreement was not communicated to the member for Maroubra prior to the motion. The postponement was by arrangement in that sense. That does not mean that the member cannot make his points in regard to the legislation and there will still be a division, because that is the path we are on.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 60**

Mr Annesley	Mr Fraser	Mr Rohan
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mr Rowell
Mr Ayres	Ms Goward	Mrs Sage
Mr Baird	Mr Grant	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Gulaptis	Mrs Skinner
Mr Bassett	Mr Hartcher	Mr Smith
Mr Baumann	Mr Hazzard	Mr Speakman
Ms Berejikian	Mr Holstein	Mr Spence
Mr Bromhead	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Mr Casuscelli	Mr Issa	Mr Stoner
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Toole
Mr Constance	Dr Lee	Ms Upton
Mr Cornwell	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Coure	Mr O'Dea	Mr Webber
Mrs Davies	Mr Page	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Dominello	Ms Parker	Mrs Williams
Mr Doyle	Mr Patterson	
Mr Edwards	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Elliott	Mr Piccoli	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Evans	Mr Provest	Mr Maguire
Mr Flowers	Mr Roberts	Mr J. D. Williams

**Noes, 23**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Speaking Times

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.47 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the following speaking time limits on the notice of motion given this day regarding the State Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2032:

- (1) mover—15 minutes;
- (2) member next speaking—15 minutes; and
- (3) four other members—10 minutes each.

As I indicated earlier in addressing the House in regard to the previous suspension of standing orders, this is very much a procedural motion but it has to be formally moved by way of a suspension motion. I have indicated that it is most likely that tomorrow evening we will deal with Government Business but in all likelihood—I am not saying definitively but just letting members know it is likely—we will deal with the State Infrastructure Strategy debate tomorrow night from 7.30 p.m. to around 8.30 p.m. or 9.00 p.m.

## CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

### Western Sydney Infrastructure

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [3.49 p.m.]: The motion that this House supports the New South Wales Government's commitments to improve infrastructure for western Sydney should be accorded priority because this Government is getting on with the job of building infrastructure. This motion should be accorded priority because investing in infrastructure is critical to growing our economy and creating new jobs. That is why I am a member of a Government that will deliver nearly \$62 billion for infrastructure over the next four years. As the Premier stated in question time today, that is one billion dollars more than in previous years and \$2 billion more per year if we exclude Building the Education Revolution projects.

This motion should be accorded priority because two weeks ago the Premier announced that he has given the green light to proceed with the Infrastructure NSW recommendation to deliver the WestConnex motorway to link Sydney's south-west to the airport precinct—that includes the duplication of the M5 East, complementing the current work that is underway on the M5 West. Infrastructure was neglected by the former Government across the State, but none more so than in western Sydney and in my electorate of Camden. I could talk about the 16 years of neglect and wanton waste by those on the other side of the House that have led to the huge infrastructure backlog we have today. I could talk about successive Labor Premiers who all lauded the term "infrastructure before people". That was laughable. The former Labor Government earmarked the Camden electorate to grow in population by more than 400 per cent over the next three decades. The former Government released land, but did nothing to provide the much-needed infrastructure.

I could talk about the Leader of the Opposition, who has held almost every portfolio available and failed miserably as transport Minister. The Premier pointed out only today that the Leader of the Opposition is as lazy in Opposition as he was as a Minister. It is great that we now have a competent Minister for Transport, who is getting on with the job and delivering the north west and south west rail links. But I will not talk about those things. The provision of infrastructure is so critical to New South Wales that this Government has put up its hand and has taken responsibility to provide it. We are getting on with the job of delivering where those on the other side failed so miserably. This House should support this priority motion that this House supports the New South Wales Government's commitment to improve infrastructure for western Sydney. The provision of infrastructure, so sorely lacking thanks to those on the other side, is a priority: it will create jobs and it will get this State going.

### Department of Family and Community Services Budget

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY** (Auburn) [3.52 p.m.]: Last Friday an extraordinary cover-up was exposed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and was confirmed in budget estimates: the Government has cut half a billion dollars from the Department of Family and Community Services budget. This motion should be accorded priority because the real cost of these cuts needs to be debated urgently. The Minister for Family and

Community Services is not taking the road that the Ministers for Health and Education have taken in being upfront about the cuts they are making and will make in the future. The Minister for Family and Community Services is cutting by stealth and covering up with spin. The Minister thinks she can get away with it because she is taking from some of the State's most vulnerable people—people who are too busy trying to survive to expose these cuts through well-organised lobby groups.

Let us look at the people the Minister is taking from: abused and neglected children; foster carers; grandparents raising their grandchildren; child protection workers in western Sydney, who were wondering why their former colleagues' positions were never filled; and organisations that are already totally overwhelmed by the needs they are presented with. The leaked document the *Sydney Morning Herald* referred to last week makes blatantly clear what many have suspected since budget day: the Minister is trying to cover up what we already know from the budget papers—at least \$50 million has already been cut this year alone. Those cuts are being made to child protection workers in high-needs areas such as Bourke and Bathurst. Is that why the Minister is bizarrely claiming that there is no record of any more vacancies in this area?

The Minister said in budget estimates that she would not stop indexation on carer allowances. But the truth is that no indexation on carer allowances was paid between January and July last year, and it is happening again this year. The Minister has cut legal services for the Department of Family and Community Services. She is holding back support for grandparent carers, who suddenly cannot access things such as respite care or the services of psychologists, occupational therapists and specialists for kids who have endured years of abuse and neglect. The Minister is making savings by not properly funding non-government organisations for out-of-home care services. The O'Farrell Government should immediately stop any plans to make further cuts to programs such as those that help women and children suffering from domestic violence; child sexual assault services; the child protection hotline; contingency payments for kinship carers; and Anglicare's child protection services in Moruya and Goulburn. [*Time expired.*]

**Question—That the motion of the member for Camden be accorded priority—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 54**

Mr Annesley	Ms Gibbons	Mr Rohan
Mr Aplin	Ms Goward	Mr Rowell
Mr Ayres	Mr Grant	Mrs Sage
Mr Barilaro	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Sidoti
Mr Bassett	Mr Hartcher	Mrs Skinner
Mr Baumann	Mr Hazzard	Mr Smith
Mr Bromhead	Mr Holstein	Mr Speakman
Mr Casuscelli	Mr Humphries	Mr Spence
Mr Conolly	Mr Issa	Mr Stokes
Mr Cornwell	Mr Kean	Ms Upton
Mr Coure	Dr Lee	Mr Ward
Mrs Davies	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Webber
Mr Dominello	Mr O'Dea	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Doyle	Mr Page	Mrs Williams
Mr Edwards	Ms Parker	
Mr Elliott	Mr Patterson	
Mr Evans	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flowers	Mr Provest	Mr Maguire
Mr Fraser	Mr Roberts	Mr J. D. Williams

**Noes, 23**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Pursuant to sessional order business interrupted and motion lapsed.**

## **SNOWY MOUNTAINS CLOUD SEEDING TRIAL AMENDMENT BILL 2012**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 19 September 2012.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.03 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Amendment Trial Bill 2012 in this place. The shadow Minister with carriage of the matter in the other place is the Hon. Steve Whan. The Opposition will not oppose the bill in this Chamber; however, we reserve our position to move amendments in the other place. The object of the bill is to replace the current trial of cloud seeding operations in the Snowy Mountains area as provided for in the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Act 2004 with a scheme to provide for ongoing cloud seeding operations in a larger part of the Snowy Mountains area. In particular the bill authorises cloud seeding operations, which are operations designed to increase precipitation by the discharge of a seeding agent into passing clouds, to be carried out by or on behalf of Snowy Hydro Limited [SHL] subject to specified conditions.

The bill also requires the use of approved seeding agents, approved tracing agents and approved methods of discharge in the cloud seeding operations, specifies certain approved agents and methods, and sets out the approval process for other agents and methods. The bill also requires the preparation and approval by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the Minister for the Environment of an environmental management plan relating to the cloud seeding operations. The bill requires Snowy Hydro Limited to prepare a report on its cloud seeding operations each year. It also provides that the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] is to review each such report and cloud seeding operations in general from time to time, and report any findings and make any necessary recommendations to the board of the Environment Protection Authority, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the Minister for the Environment. The bill also extends the operation of chapter 7 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to the exercise of powers in connection with the principal Act, which has other consequential and related objects.

In 2004 the then Government introduced legislation allowing the commencement of a trial of cloud seeding to produce snow in the Snowy Mountains. The trial has been scientifically monitored and has been the subject of extremely thorough scientific assessment. That assessment has shown that the seeding activities have been successful in producing a significant and measurable increase in snow. Initially the trial was in a small area, but after several years it was extended to a wide area of the Kosciuszko National Park. In 2010 the Natural Resources Commission assessment showed that the seeding had produced a 14 per cent increase in snowfalls with no adverse environmental impact. The commission recommended that it was appropriate to keep the cloud seeding going but, even though it had been unable to find any evidence of the seeding agent silver iodide in the environment, it recommended that seeding continue as a trial until studies could find evidence of whether the silver iodide was collecting anywhere. That recommendation was made despite the scientific studies being unable to find any trace of the seeding agent or any environmental impact.

At the time the then Government decided to accept this advice and continue with the seeding as a trial, although changing it to allow Snowy Hydro to seed all suitable weather systems and not just random systems. Snowy Hydro, the ski industry and the local community were concerned about this recommendation and suggested it imposed unnecessary costs and uncertainty on the operation. Snowy Hydro has now put in place a scientific project to address what is happening to the seeding agent and has ongoing monitoring of the success of the seeding operations. This bill will convert the trial to a permanent operation. It will bring the monitoring under the Environment Protection Authority, removing the Natural Resources Commission. It will require annual reporting by Snowy Hydro. It will make the Minister responsible for approving an environmental management plan and any change to the cloud seeding agent, the tracer agent or the delivery method. It will also prohibit locating any cloud seeding equipment in wilderness areas and enable national parks to charge a fee for any costs they may incur.

Overall the Opposition views this as a positive bill. As I understand it, very few concerns have been raised over recent years about cloud seeding. The Opposition has a concern that the bill only says the Minister

"may" require environmental and scientific studies prior to the introduction of any new cloud seeding agent, tracer or delivery method. The current agents went through extensive scientific trials and studies to prove that they are effective and safe. It would seem reasonable that before any new agent is approved for long-term use it should also be required to have scientific proof. We will consider further our position and reserve the right to move amendments on that point in the other place.

Cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains brings very positive environmental and economic benefits. They include: increasing snow cover at a time when global warming is seeing decreased snow cover and a rising snow line, which is having a number of negative impacts on threatened species such as the mountain pygmy possum; increasing the water available to generate hydro-electric power, thus reducing reliance on coal-fired generation; increasing water flowing down the Murray and Murrumbidgee systems; and producing economic benefits for the ski industry in New South Wales, which is the major economic driver of the Snowy region and for Snowy Hydro returning revenue to the Government. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO** (Monaro) [4.09 p.m.]: I support the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Amendment Bill 2012. The bill will allow the current trial to extend to full operation of cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains. Ongoing cloud seeding is great news for tourism operators and communities in the Snowy Mountains as well as the Monaro electorate. Full operation of cloud seeding is expected to improve snow depth and the length of the ski season, making the area more attractive to tourists. While this year we have seen the best season in the Snowy Mountains in a long time, we want to give local businesses every chance of bumper seasons in years to come, particularly as we appear to be moving into another El Niño cycle, which is associated with an increased probability of drier weather conditions.

Maintaining good snowfall will enhance the significant contribution that alpine recreation makes to the local and New South Wales economy. It will provide a boost to many businesses that rely on the ski season and tourism. It is a big win for the New South Wales ski fields as well as the whole of the Monaro. Cloud seeding will play a large part in fulfilling an election commitment I made during the 2011 campaign to make the New South Wales ski fields number one again. The Natural Resources Commission, which has monitored the cloud seeding trial, found no evidence that cloud seeding operations have had any adverse environmental impact or that the chemicals have accumulated in soils, sediments, water or moss. The Government is committed to maintaining the high environmental integrity of the cloud seeding operations.

What is cloud seeding? Cloud seeding is a weather modification technique that involves the introduction of a seeding agent into suitable clouds to encourage the formation and growth of ice crystals or raindrops, thereby enhancing the precipitation falling from the cloud. In 2004 Snowy Hydro began a trial program in the Snowy Mountains to understand whether cloud seeding could markedly increase snowfall in the area. The Natural Resources Commission was responsible for supervising Snowy Hydro's cloud seeding operations and reporting on the environmental impact of those operations. The Natural Resources Commission reported that the trial was conducted in compliance with the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Act 2004, that its methodology is of a high scientific standard, and that the evaluation plan is sound.

That is why the Government accepts the findings of the 2010 Natural Resources Commission's report that the trial has been successful. The Natural Resources Commission confirmed that cloud seeding has had a positive effect on increasing snowfall in the target area. The trial demonstrated a statistically significant increase of 14 per cent in precipitation over the trial period in the overall target area. There is no evidence that the cloud seeding operations have had adverse environmental impacts. Environmental monitoring has shown no evidence that the chemicals used as a seeding agent, silver iodide, and as a tracer agent, indium sesquioxide, have accumulated in sample soils, sediments, water or moss.

There is no evidence of impacts on snow habitats or of a difference in the concentrations of ammonia or nitrogen oxides in seeded and unseeded snow. The monitoring results have detected no adverse impacts on rainfall or in downwind areas. The trial program was authorised under the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Act 2004 and subject to strict conditions. What will the full operation of cloud seeding actually achieve? The proposed regime under this legislation for permanent cloud seeding activities will retain most elements of the trial regime, which is important. However, it is proposed to adopt the following additional elements to provide appropriate regulatory oversight of the ongoing operations and expand the scope of activities permitted.

The legislation will terminate the existing trial and therefore the role of the Natural Resources Commission; include a requirement for Snowy Hydro Limited to prepare and implement an environmental management plan that must be approved by the relevant Ministers; provide the Environment Protection

Authority with regulatory oversight of the cloud seeding operations; expand the target areas of the Snowy water catchment, which is an area of 5,117 square metres, or slightly more than the current trial area; allow for aerial seeding whereas currently all the Snowy cloud seeding is from ground-based generators; provide for the use of other prescribed seeding and tracer agents; and ban the establishment of new cloud seeding infrastructure within wilderness areas on public land within the Snowy water catchment. Snowy Hydro has been paying for the cloud seeding operation up until now, so there will be a saving on cessation of the trial.

Multiple benefits will be provided to the public, the environment and the local economy by increased precipitation in the Snowy Mountains region. It is a win-win for everything. There will be more snow for the alpine environment, which will lead to improved snow depth and length of the ski season. This will enhance skiing and tourism opportunities for increased trade among local businesses; provide additional water for regional communities; increase water flows through the Snowy and Murray river systems; help to replenish water storage systems on the Snowy and Murray river systems during times of drought; increase green energy through hydro-electric production; provide more consistent energy production; contribute to the habitat of water-dependent native species; provide more water for irrigators and the environment; and provide greater flexibility in water use.

It is proposed to expand the target area of the cloud seeding activities to the Snowy water catchment to 5,117 square kilometres, which is slightly more than double the trial area. The volume of increased precipitation from cloud seeding activities is a function of environmental variables, the ratio of possible cloud seeding events being utilised, and the total square kilometres of the area seeded. The Snowy River Shire Council and its local community, the Cooma Monaro Shire Council, the New South Wales Irrigators Council, local businesses and individuals have written to the New South Wales Government in past years and in recent times to support cloud seeding operations. Results from the trial and the Natural Resources Commission's review have been the source of considerable local media attention and debate. As we know, the Act was introduced in 2004 and amended in 2008 following consideration and debate by Parliament. In both instances legislative changes were made during times of significant drought.

But in 2008, despite the Natural Resources Commission indicating that there were no adverse impacts, especially on the environment, from cloud seeding the former Labor Government chose not to make a decision or demonstrate leadership, probably in line with its desire to attract The Greens preferences in the lead-up to the 2011 election. However, cloud seeding was a project that I championed locally, and it was the O'Farrell Government that showed the required leadership and support for the tourism and ski industries to attain all the net benefits of the project for the Monaro region and for the State. The trial made a number of significant discoveries and has resulted in the production of 32 scientific papers and presentations in national and international journals and forums. The Natural Resources Commission has produced four independent reports on cloud seeding activity. The trial is widely considered to be the most complete and in-depth body of work into specific cloud seeding activity conducted to date.

On many occasion environmental groups and The Greens have urged the Government to look to science when making decisions that may have some impacts on the environment. In this case we know clearly that the science backs the report, cessation of the trial and full implementation of operations relating to cloud seeding. Of course, as I have said, this represents a win for tourism, a win for the environment, especially the river systems, and a win for the Monaro region. But, more importantly, it is also a reflection of the commitment I made during the election. I stated that I would take this issue to the Government and make sure that the facts and science back up what we have been saying and what we have seen for a number of years as a basis for allowing cloud seeding to proceed to full operation. My commitment was to make the New South Wales ski fields number one. This legislation represents only one part of achieving that goal.

As many people who have watched the ski season this year with interest would know, we have had a fantastic season. Recently I met with tourism operators at Perisher and Thredbo. Their visitor and tourist numbers have increased by approximately 30 per cent. This year has been one of the better seasons for the ski industry, which has done it tough over past years, especially throughout the drought. There has been a trickle effect from heavy and consistent snowfalls. We know that the Monaro is marginal snow country and that we need to do whatever is possible to increase the chance of snow. This legislation will also benefit businesses right along the Monaro Highway and in the Monaro region, but significantly will benefit the local economy. Our stronger local economy assists local youngsters at a time when there is a struggle to find employment in regional communities. It also provides opportunities for youngsters to upskill and take on trades or management positions within the ski and tourism industries.

Boosting the tourism and ski industries is an issue I champion consistently. It is important to continue investment in infrastructure and services and make good common-sense policy and legislative decisions. By doing so we will create an environment in which the private sector will want to invest and generate employment in regional and rural communities, which is so important. If tourism were taken out of the Monaro and other regional and rural communities there would not be much left. Fortunately, the Monaro has great backup from Snowy Hydro, which is a great local company and corporate citizen. Snowy Hydro always invests in the community and is regarded as a strong company that is supportive of local employment and community groups. I also champion the work done by Snowy Hydro, whose Chief Executive officer, Terry Charlton, has led the debate on cloud seeding becoming fully operational. I point out to members that this legislation represents one of the most important benefits for the ski industry, the tourism industry and the Monaro region generally. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.19 p.m.]: I support the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Amendment Bill 2012. As other members have said, this bill authorises Snowy Hydro to undertake full cloud seeding operations within the Snowy water catchment as prescribed under the terms of the bill. The main portions of the bill relate to the amendment of section 4 of the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Act relating to the authorisation of cloud seeding trials. This is because of the long period of research over the past eight years known as the Snowy Precipitation Research Enhancement Project, which showed a statistically significant 14 per cent average increase in snow under suitable operating conditions within the trial area. That is a significant finding compared to cloud seeding trials conducted in other parts of the world, which have shown increases of 10 per cent and, in the case of Tasmania over many years, an increase of 8 per cent. We are seeing a significant result, which is why this bill makes such good sense to the community of New South Wales.

Since the Second World War cloud seeding has been continued in many parts of the world in such disparate areas as Israel, South Africa and Texas. In Israel, for example, cloud seeding has been going on for the better part of the past 50 years. It is proven technology. Obviously, the concerns that the trial has been seeking to address are environmental concerns. I am used to reading environmental assessment reports and it is difficult to find a report that is so strong in its endorsement of the fact that there is no evidence that these operations have had adverse environmental impacts, as the Natural Resources Commission reports and as its peer review also reports.

Other members have articulated the reasons why this bill and cloud seeding will have benefits across the range of activities undertaken by people in New South Wales. I want to focus in particular on the renewable energy perspective. New South Wales is the largest generator of renewable energy in Australia, and the largest element of our renewable energy generation in electricity production is from hydropower. Across Australia over 60 per cent of all electricity generation from renewable energy is sourced from hydro electricity. Well over half of all Australian hydroelectric capacity is installed in New South Wales. In New South Wales we have about 4,300 megawatts of installed hydroelectric power capacity, 3,800 megawatts of which is from Snowy Hydro—an incredibly important part of our renewable energy infrastructure.

It is an important source of power for three reasons. Firstly, it displaces fossil fuels. The Clean Energy Council has estimated that one megawatt hour of hydroelectric power displaces about one tonne of carbon dioxide which is a significant displacement. Hydro power, in particular, from Snowy Hydro, is an important source of renewable energy that should be encouraged. It also has the benefit of low operating costs and a high ramp rate, which means that it will meet the needs of power that is able to be dispatched—peak energy and also baseload power. All this adds up to it being a cheap source of electricity—a topic close to the hearts and minds of people across this State. Hydroelectricity is the type of power and electricity generation that we want to support. Therein lies one of the problems that this bill will address and tackle head-on.

I refer to the Australian Energy Resource Assessment 2010, which found that the problems experienced by hydroelectricity in Australia are high variability of rainfall, a problem of water availability, competition for scarce water resources and broader environmental factors that are constraints on the future growth in Australia of hydroelectricity generation. To illustrate the impact of variability of rainfall in electricity generation from hydropower it points to the fact that between 1999-2000 and 2007-2008 that drought period saw hydropower generation or electricity from hydropower fall by about 4.2 per cent per annum in each of those years. We have a real problem with rainfall variability, which this bill is seeking to address head-on, which is why it is so important to pass this legislation today.

I understand that there may be concerns relating to some of the environmental impacts. I am completely satisfied that the exhaustive research that has been undertaken to date and the research that will be funded by

Snowy Hydro in the future show that this is a safe way to proceed. We need to look at the environmental management big picture. Every activity has an impact but the point that we must consider is whether the environmental impact of cloud seeding in this case outweighs the benefits of displacing the use of fossil fuels. It is clear that the benefits of cloud seeding in the Snowy area outweigh the benefits of continuing to generate that sort of energy from fossil fuels.

I take this opportunity to commend the member for Monaro for championing this bill. I noted in my research on the bill a media release from Snowy Hydro that directly acknowledged "the work done by local MP John Barilaro to achieve this positive outcome for all stakeholders in the tourism industry and the local community". Many members can point to people that they might have helped in their communities or to local infrastructure to which they might have contributed, but it is a rare and special opportunity for a member to have such an impact in promoting to his community legislation that has such broad benefits at an environmental, social and economic level.

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [4.26 p.m.]: Back in the 1950s—the dawn of space exploration and the birth of a new form of music called rock 'n' roll—the first cloud seeding trial was undertaken in the Snowy Mountains. This trial delivered positive results but research was discontinued and for a time the technology and expertise were lost to Australia. The vision of those days was bleak: in seeking to preserve its snowfields Australia would be fighting a lost cause. Independent data supported a view that precipitation was in decline, the snow pack was diminishing, and the ski industry was doomed. But cloud seeding is about much more than snow sports and alpine holidays. Snow melt provides substantial water flows to our river systems in the south-east of the State. It also contributes to energy generation through hydro schemes and reduces our reliance on burning coal. Snowy Hydro says that permanent cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains will lead to increased electricity generation, which in turn will provide benefits for the wider community.

Snow also is an important factor in the lifecycles of a range of plants and animals. Indeed, the environmental impacts of snowfall are extensive. Jobs also are on the line. In framing legislation we must be mindful of the jobs that could be won or lost. At the top of the mountain range we have the ski industry, while down the hill we have towns with local economies based on tourism and recreation, such as fly fishing and adventure sports. Then, of course, we have the farms and their produce for the nation and for export markets. In September Terry Charlton, Managing Director of Snowy Hydro, told the ABC:

If we go back into drought and given that cloud seeding increases the snow pack by 14 per cent—it can be much more in some events—that means the drought year will have additional inflows that we would not otherwise have. Which means in the subsequent year we won't be in a position where we have to reduce our releases under the water licence to the irrigators.

So the picture is painted on a vast canvas as we consider this bill to turn the trial of cloud seeding in the Snowy Mountains into a permanent feature on the landscape. Part of the Snowy Hydro system is within my electorate of Albury. My involvement goes back to 2007 when, during the winter season, I took the opportunity to visit cloud seeding sites with representatives of Snowy Hydro. I attended a trial where I observed the generator near Khancoban. As I noted at the time, the process "created no more noise than a backyard barbecue". Having seen the operation in the Snowy Mountains area and having visited a seeding site and monitoring station at Cooma, I saw firsthand the rigour that is involved in monitoring, evaluating and working this project.

The following year I supported the introduction of the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Amendment (Extension) Bill 2008, which increased the trial period and expanded the 2004 program. The trial area was increased by approximately 1,000 square kilometres and the trial timetable was extended to 2014. Monitoring of temperatures in the early 1960s had shown minor increases in both maximum and minimum winter temperatures for the alpine region. This change in pattern helped to bring about a decline in the maximum snow depth and in mid-late season snow depths in Kosciuszko National Park. In 2008 I noted that these events appeared to be part of climate change and presented a very real threat to Kosciuszko National Park.

In 2008 early research suggested that the expected average annual increase in snow pack resulting from the cloud seeding project was approximately 10 per cent over a 10-year period. Four years later we now are discussing a further amending piece of legislation. In accordance with existing legislation, the Snowy Hydro's Cloud Seeding Trial, known as the Snowy Precipitation Enhancement Research Project, would wind up in 2014. Looking back on eight years of this trial, we now know much more about its success in achieving the aim of increasing snowfall from clouds passing over the Snowy Mountains target area. We are informed that the trial research project shows a statistically significant 14 per cent average increase in snow under suitable operating conditions. These results are supported by two separate independent peer reviews. We can now talk with some confidence about the effects of cloud seeding in this region and of its potential economic and environmental impacts.

On 5 July this year in reporting to the Minister, Dr John Keniry, Commissioner of the National Resources Commission, said the trial "continues to comply with the Act and to be of a high scientific standard". He says that there is no evidence of adverse environmental impacts or of adverse impacts on rainfall in down-wind areas. The State's alpine areas are a rich and varied environment that must be protected. The Minister confirms that there is no evidence of negative environmental impacts caused by the seeding agent silver iodide and the tracer agent indium sesquioxide. The Natural Resources Commission report supports this conclusion. However, the bill amends the Act to add further stringent reporting requirements. Present legislation gives discretion to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to require information on cloud seeding operations, and for the preparation and implementation of an environmental management plan, but this bill goes further.

The bill amends the Act by including a statutory requirement for Snowy Hydro to prepare and comply with an environmental management plan that must be approved by the relevant Ministers. Government has the option to call for an independent scientific assessment of operations where they may differ from authorised procedures. The New South Wales Environment Protection Authority will be authorised to conduct its own review of cloud seeding operations, in addition to current powers to review the annual reports of Snowy Hydro Limited. Clauses 4A and 4B of schedule 1 to the bill provide a process for the approval and use of seeding and tracer agents other than silver iodide as a seeding agent and indium sesquioxide as a control tracer. Legislation needs to be flexible to take advantage of any improvements in technology and chemical agents, for cost savings or simply to enable the use of more environmentally sensitive compounds when available and desirable. A health risk assessment must accompany any application for approval of a new chemical agent or tracer. We have done this.

Not content to simply sit still on this point, Snowy Hydro has commenced a three-year research project to determine the fate of the cloud seeding agents silver iodide and indium trioxide in the environment. The research is set for completion in 2014. The amendments also mean that aerial delivery will be available, allowing for more efficient and targeted delivery of the seeding and tracer agents. This move will reduce the demand for new infrastructure for ground-based delivery systems and will allow us to keep plant and equipment out of wilderness areas. Under clauses 4 (2) (j) to 4 (2) (l), Snowy Hydro must consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service before carrying out any new operations involving a land-based method of discharge of seeding or tracing agent within any area of land reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. New facilities for cloud seeding operations must not be installed within any wilderness area, within the meaning of the Act, and seeding agent is not to be discharged from land-based generators in any wilderness area.

These serious moves help to protect the State's valuable wilderness areas. It makes sense also to expand the primary target area from a particular patch of the Snowy Mountains to include the whole of the Snowy water catchment, as defined in the Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Act 1997. This step doubles the trial area to some 5,117 square kilometres. In so doing, we are aligning the seeding area with the entire territory managed by Snowy Hydro, which should increase the amount of precipitation obtained by cloud seeding. Snowy Hydro estimates that additional precipitation resulting from full operation of cloud seeding will produce an increase on the trial by about 50 per cent or about 20 gegalitres per year. As well as environmental benefits, this could see additional production of hydroelectricity. Minister Andrew Stoner has said that this will result in reductions of over 28,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually—the equivalent of not burning more than 12,000 tonnes of black coal.

As I have mentioned, cloud seeding has been with us for at least 60 years in this country and in the United States. I encountered cloud seeding by aerial dispersion in Africa 40 years ago. A significant body of experience has accumulated since then. We know it works and that it can be managed safely and with due protections for the environment. It is time to make the trial permanent. It is appropriate also to reflect on what has been learned from the trial and to take the necessary steps to raise environmental safeguards and reporting processes to contemporary best practice. The trial has been performed to the highest scientific standards and we all wish to see this rigour carry over to the choice of chemicals used and the most appropriate and safe procedures for cloud seeding. Local councils and businesses support the bill. In the Snowy River *Echo* newspaper of 6 October Peter Brulisauer, chief executive officer of Perisher, said:

Snowy Hydro Limited [SHL] have been very open with their reporting of additional snowfall and the impacts in what is essentially a sensitive environment in an iconic national park.

Mr Brulisauer added:

We look forward to continuing the relationship with SHL and most of all, I congratulate them for their persistence. They've worked very hard with the previous Government and haven't given up. Thankfully, this Government has listened and I think they've done the right thing.

This is an important endorsement of the Government's action and of this bill. I too endorse the action and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ANDREW STONER** (Oxley—Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services) [4.36 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on the Snowy Mountains Cloud Seeding Trial Amendment Bill. Of course, the bill will authorise Snowy Hydro Limited to carry out full cloud seeding operations targeting the Snowy Mountains region. As members have noted, the eight-year Snowy Precipitation Enhancement Research Project has shown a statistically significant 14 per cent average increase in snowfall at suitable operating conditions. I stress that under scientific trial conditions Snowy Hydro Limited targeted clouds that it knew would provide snow and precipitation as well as other clouds—the 14 per cent increase is quite conservative. Furthermore, comprehensive environmental monitoring over those eight years has shown conclusively no evidence of adverse environmental impacts from the seeding and tracer agents, as members mentioned. In response to the member for Liverpool, I am advised that the relevant Ministers will act on the advice of their departments in approving the environmental management plan.

With regard to proposed cloud seeding operations that differ from the trial, it is anticipated that departmental advice will be of a precautionary nature. As such, it is extremely unlikely that changes to cloud seeding operations will occur without a public review or consultation process, or independent scientific assessment. By enabling the full operation of the Snowy Hydro cloud seeding project this bill will increase snowfall in the Snowy Mountains, which in turn will provide multiple benefits for this State, and particularly for that part of regional New South Wales. These benefits include additional water for regional communities; increased water flows through the Snowy River and Murray River systems; helping to replenish water storage systems on those river systems in drought times; increased green energy—as the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy mentioned—through hydroelectric production; more consistent energy production; contributing to the habitat of water dependent native species; more water for irrigators and the environment; greater flexibility in water use; and more snow for the alpine environment.

Indeed, the member for Monaro has been an absolute champion of cloud seeding operations in the Snowy region. I was present on Mount Blue Cow when the Government announced its intention to proceed with this bill. The magnificent snow was everywhere after a bumper season, but it was increased by the cloud seeding operations. The potential for increased snowfall continues from this point without limitation and without additional cost to Snowy Hydro Limited through red tape, trial conditions, monitoring, assessment and so on. Of course, this means greater enhancement of skiing opportunities and for tourism through that entire region of Cooma, Jindabyne, Thredbo, Blue Cow, Perisher and Queanbeyan.

On the day the announcement was made there was a constant stream of traffic heading down the highway through Bredbo, Cooma and Jindabyne. Tourist traffic will be enhanced by the greater consistency and quality of snow into the future. That is a good thing for local businesses. That is what this Government is about. I acknowledge the former Labor Government and former Minister Ian Macdonald, who proceeded with the trial in 2004. The Coalition and I, as Leader of the Opposition at that time, wholeheartedly supported that trial. It gives me great pleasure to present a bill that will take it from trial to standard practice and that will deliver benefits to the people of New South Wales and to regional New South Wales in particular. 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 Mr Andrew Stoner 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.**

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT (POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) AMENDMENT (KINGS CROSS AND RAILWAYS DRUG DETECTION) BILL 2012**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 19 September 2012.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.42 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012.

The Opposition does not oppose the bill in this place. The object of the bill is expressed to be to authorise the use by police officers of dogs for general drug detection without warrant in public places in the Kings Cross precinct. The bill also adds additional train lines on which police may use drug detection dogs without a warrant. As I understand it that now means that all suburban train lines on which CityRail operates train services are covered by these types of provisions.

Section 148 of the principal Act, the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 broadly provides police with the power to use a dog to carry out general drug detection without a warrant in relation to people in or entering a place where liquor is sold or consumed; to people at or entering a public place where there is a sporting event, concert, artistic performance, rave party, parade or other entertainment; to people on or entering a public passenger vehicle on a route that is prescribed by regulation; and to people in or entering premises police are authorised to enter under the Tattoo Parlours Act. The bill will amend section 148 of the principal Act and clause 38 of the 2005 regulation proclaimed pursuant to the principal Act. Schedule 1 to this bill will amend section 148 by adding paragraph (e) to subsection (1). Paragraph (e) reads as follows:

Persons at any public place in the Kings Cross precinct (being the area including and bounded by the parts of streets specified in schedule 2 to the Liquor Act 2007).

The explanatory notes to the bill provide a map that clarifies precisely where these boundaries are. That seems to be an accurate rendition of schedule 2 to the Liquor Act. These amendments include other groups of people who can now be subject to random drug dog detection tests without warrant other than those specified in section 148. The first group that is added are those people in a public place in the Kings Cross area. The phrase "public place" is defined in the principal Act. Section 3 of the Act provides this definition:

Public place includes:

- (a) a place (whether or not covered by water) or part of premises that is open to the public or is used by the public, whether or not on payment of money or other consideration, whether or not the place or part is ordinarily so open or used and whether or not the public to whom it is open consists only of a limited class of persons; and
- (b) a road or road related area, but does not include a school.

As the Attorney General noted in his second reading speech, this is a very wide definition. Schedule 2 to this bill will amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Regulation 2005 by adding a number of railway lines to those already specified under this regulation. As I understand it, it will now allow police to use drug dogs generally without a warrant on all suburban train lines on which CityRail operates train services. Of course, precisely the same result could have been achieved by proclaiming a new regulation. That would have been far quicker than introducing a piece of legislation. If this is as important as the Attorney General pretended it was in his second reading speech he should not have used this method—he should have done it as quickly as he could by way of regulation. One is inclined, therefore, to think that this part of the bill is little more than a stunt. The Attorney General shied away from a further aspect of the bill in his second reading speech. There is a pretty big question mark as to whether drug detection dogs are an effective tool at all. I quote from the Ombudsman's summary of his review of the original 2001 legislation in which he states:

Our review found that despite the best efforts of police officers, the use of drug detection dogs has proven to be an ineffective tool for detecting drug dealers.

I presume it is those considerations that led the Attorney General to conclude his speech by saying that the effectiveness of drug dogs is not based on arrests but is about creating a general deterrence and providing a visible response to drug-related crime. In plain English, it will not do anything about drug-related crime but it will look like the Government is doing something when really it is not doing anything. A further issue was not dealt with by the Attorney General in his second reading speech. Kings Cross is the location of the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre and there is potential significance in this legislation for that centre. I understand that the centre has not been contacted or consulted in relation to this legislation. Currently standard operating procedures are adopted by the police that are relevant to the centre. I seek a clear commitment from the Attorney General that this legislation will not alter, or cause to be altered, the currently existing standard operating procedures.

I seek a commitment that there will be immediate consultation with the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre over the proposed legislation and ongoing liaison with it about any issues that arise as a result of this bill. The centre is a legal health facility with bipartisan support. The standard operating

procedures have been implemented largely without a great deal of controversy. The commitments I seek are hardly onerous. The Opposition does not oppose the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012.

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS** (Upper Hunter—Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts) [4.47 p.m.]: I support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012 and indicate at the outset that, as Minister with responsibility for hospitality, I have been involved in all matters to do with liquor licensing, the emergence of issues concerning Kings Cross and the development of government responses to the plan of management. This bill sends a clear message to users and to sellers of illicit drugs that they are not safe from detection and that the Government has a strong commitment to ensure that the streets of Kings Cross are a place where the community may go comfortably for an enjoyable night out. Currently police are allowed to conduct searches using drug dogs only of persons in or seeking to enter or leave licensed premises and on certain rail lines.

The bill will authorise the use of dogs by police officers for general drug detection, without warrant, on the streets and in other public places in the Kings Cross precinct. It will ensure that police are able effectively to target the flow of drugs across all suburban and outer suburban rail lines on which CityRail trains operate—an important step in preventing drugs from being carried into licensed venues. Importantly, the bill will also help police to detect the carriage of illegal drugs in the Kings Cross precinct, an area which the Government proposes to expand, with the intention of preventing the growth of licensed premises venues on Macleay Street, Potts Point and along William Street between Victoria Street and McElhone Street.

These measures preventing the possession of illegal drugs on trains and in Kings Cross are a key part of the Government's plan to clean up the Cross. Certain drugs such as amphetamines have been linked to an increase in irrational, aggressive and violent behaviour. The propensity for violent behaviour to occur while people are affected by illicit drugs can often be intensified when they consume alcohol. These measures complement the significant liquor regulatory initiatives announced by the Government in August and September as part of its plan to improve safety and reduce alcohol-related violence in Kings Cross. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [4.50 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012 based upon a very narrow premise contained in the Attorney General's second reading speech. He said:

Apart from the benefit of using these dogs for specific operational objectives, their use offers many policing benefits, including creating a general deterrence and providing a visible response to drug-related crime.

There is no doubt that the presence of police provides a visual deterrence and the presence or appearance of sniffer dogs provides a visual deterrence to those who may be in possession of drugs. However, I take issue with the suggestion by the Attorney General that this is a get tough on drugs policy and that the Government is sending messages to society that it does not condone illicit drugs. If there were any substance to that assertion by the Attorney General he may well have referred to the finding of the Ombudsman published in June 2006. When powers were vested in police officers under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, enacted by the Parliament when Michael Costa was the Minister for Police, the Ombudsman was required to examine the effectiveness of the legislation after two years of operation. The member for Liverpool referred in part to the comments by the Ombudsman. I shall read in full what he said about the effectiveness of sniffer dogs. In 2006 the Ombudsman said:

Our review found that, despite the best efforts of police officers, the use of drug detection dogs has proven to be an ineffective tool for detecting drug dealers. Overwhelmingly, the use of drug detection dogs has led to public searches of individuals in which no drugs were found, or to the detection of (mostly young) adults in possession of very small amounts of cannabis for personal use.

The Ombudsman continued:

These findings have led us to question whether the Drug Dogs Act will ever provide a fair, efficacious and cost-effective tool to target drug supply. Given this, we have recommended that the starting point, when considering this report, is to review whether the Drug Dogs Act should be retained at all.

If one is seeking to allocate resources to police to be effective in drug detection one does not allocate resources simply to take the low fruit off the trees. If drug dogs are not as effective as the Government asserts, it might as well have police walking around with chihuahuas: that would have the same effect. Rather than allocating all the

resources to sniffer dogs wandering around the streets of Kings Cross in an effort to target drug dealers, perhaps the police should be allocated resources so that they have better technology for surveillance and forensic examination. In this way the drug dealers, who have operated for decades with impunity in Kings Cross, will be targeted rather than a 17-year-old kid who probably should not have \$20 worth of cannabis in his pocket.

Alternatively, if the Government is seeking to increase its statistics for drug deal arrests, police could walk up and down with the sniffer dog outside the safe injecting rooms. That would be successful. At the end of the day only 24 per cent of searches by sniffer dogs result in people being in possession of drugs. It would be interesting to know whether a Government member innocently walking down the street and wrongfully stopped by police officers, put in the back of a van and told to drop his strides would still be in firm support of this type of legislation, which can be wrong. I do not take issue with the use of sniffer dogs on public transport or on trains. That does not require legislative amendment. It could simply be done by regulation. The Opposition supports the legislation on the basis of its being a visual deterrent: people know that the police are present. However, this is not a great solution to the war on drug dealers, who seem to operate with relative impunity in the Kings Cross area.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [4.56 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. This bill is very straightforward in authorising police to use sniffer dogs for drug detection in public places in Kings Cross, including on the streets of Kings Cross, without a warrant. The Kings Cross precinct, as defined in schedule 2 to the Liquor Act 2007, will be expanded. This bill will also cover additional passenger rail lines and will include all suburban and outer suburban rail lines on which CityRail trains run.

This bill is logical and reasonable. If people are out for a genuine fun-filled evening in Kings Cross with no intention of breaking the law or using illicit drugs that can cause harm to themselves or to other people, they have absolutely nothing to fear or worry about with the introduction of this bill. The same applies to anyone travelling on the CityRail network. I take up the point made by the member for Heffron. I am not sure whether he supported the bill. He said that he did but he then seemed to spend 10 minutes speaking against it or of its potential evil. However, I do not agree with his concerns about members on this side being hauled into paddy wagons and being asked to drop our daks. If we are doing nothing wrong I would expect that will not occur; indeed, I know that will not occur. The civil libertarians and the member for Heffron should be ashamed of this type of scaremongering. At the end of the day that will not occur: it is not the intent of the bill.

In introducing the bill the Attorney General referred to the comments of Commissioner Scipione that train commuters would be happy to share a carriage with others who are not drug affected, carrying drugs or taking the train to pick up drugs. The Commissioner of Police has also been quoted as welcoming these new police powers for the use of drug sniffer dogs in Kings Cross and on the train network and recognising the changes in this bill as a red tape removal strategy. I completely agree with those comments. I am sure that CityRail staff, who do a great job and whose jobs are often interrupted by people affected by drugs, will be happy to know that police can now literally sniff these people out of their workplace.

We cannot allow our trains—and I mean the New South Wales taxpayers' trains—to be used for the purposes of someone carrying drugs either for their personal use or to supply them to someone else. These lawbreakers will now be on notice when this bill passes that the CityRail train network will no longer be a safe means for people to transport illegal drugs. The effect of these new police powers will be significant and will allow members of the public to get from A to B knowing that this Government has added another level of deterrence to lawbreakers and another level of security to the CityRail network. I believe that will also be the case with public places in Kings Cross. People in public places in Kings Cross should be on notice that having an illegal substance on them, no matter what their intentions are, can be picked up by a sniffer dog without the need for a warrant. Again, I highlight the deterrent effect this legislation will have.

It is said that prevention is better than cure. Let us help prevent a person from carrying drugs on a train line or in the Kings Cross precinct. Those people do not want to get caught or want their night ruined by being picked up by a sniffer dog. Let us help those people realise that they do not need drugs to have a good time, that they can still go out and have a great time without drugs—a much safer time for themselves and for those around them. As I have done with previous legislation, I have discussed this legislation with three very good sounding boards: Zarth, JMacks and Dunky from the office of the Minister for Health. They all agree that this legislation is positive and they all agree that following its passage they would feel safer having a night out in Kings Cross or using the CityRail network—in Zarth's case with his wife or in JMacks' case with his girlfriend. That is what this legislation is trying to achieve: to make people not only feel safer but to be safer whilst using our CityRail network or having a night out in Kings Cross.

This Government does not want to stop people having a good time but it wants to stop those few who ruin it for everybody else by breaking the law to have what they perceive is a good time. Quite often people who are affected by drugs are violent, quarrelsome and aggressive. Those people cause the unprovoked attacks and incidents that can leave members of the public maimed, scarred for life or, in the worst cases, dead. These amendments will have no impact on people who are doing the right thing and are not carrying drugs—those people will continue on their merry way in Kings Cross or on the CityRail network.

The President of the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties, Cameron Murphy, has insinuated that drug detection dogs are failures and that these amendments would make it very difficult to link arrests to the use of these dogs and that police would cloud the figures. What Mr Murphy has publicly said about police clouding figures is derogatory to the Police Force and is completely unacceptable. It undermines the wonderful work the NSW Police Force does daily for our community. We need to do everything we can as a government to ensure that the extremely hardworking men and women of the NSW Police Force have every assistance in ensuring our public safety.

I worked in the hospitality industry for more than 20 years in a family hotel and I was involved in the Camden Liquor Accord. We welcomed police walk-throughs and drug detection dogs coming to our licensed premises. On the whole, the dogs and the police are most welcome within licensed premises to the majority of law-abiding citizens because they know that both the police presence and the dog's presence is for their benefit—for their safety and security. I welcome the introduction of this bill. I believe that as a result of this legislation our rail network will be much safer, the Kings Cross precinct will be safer and our extremely hardworking men and women in the Police Force will have another tool to do the wonderful job they do.

Having worked in licensed premises for more than 20 years, I will not say I have been sniffed regularly, but I have had it explained to me that by the time the dog goes to a person it has already sniffed at least five people. People should fear not: the process is very unobtrusive. If the worst thing that happens to a person on a Friday night out in Kings Cross or on a CityRail train is being sniffed by a sniffer dog, knowing that the level of protection they are being afforded by the NSW Police Force has improved out of sight, they are having a good evening. I say to the civil libertarians who do not want this legislation that they should get sniffed once or twice, become at ease with it and see how unobtrusive it is. This is very good legislation: it is needed and it adds another level of security. I applaud the Government and the Attorney General for bringing forward this legislation.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [5.05 p.m.]: I understand that part of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012 could have been dealt with by regulation. Nevertheless, the Opposition will not oppose the legislation. I am sure that all members of this House, with the notable exception of The Greens, are concerned about the impact of illicit substances throughout New South Wales. The University of New South Wales Drug Policy Modelling Program estimates that alcohol and drugs cost our community approximately \$23.5 billion. Of that, some \$7.1 billion is spent on crime-related costs, largely comprising illicit substances. Those are staggering figures. But, even more disturbingly, operators of the Drug Policy Modelling Program admit that these are conservative figures and that the true cost is likely to be much higher.

On an individual level the figures are similarly massive. An individual dependent on heroin costs the community, on average, just over \$105,000 per annum. That compares with a non-dependent or recreational user, who costs approximately just under \$2,000 per annum. Whatever people's individual views are on the issue of illicit drugs, I think we can all agree that we wish we could spend that money elsewhere. Of course, the monetary cost of illicit substances is only one dimension. A far greater cost is that of human suffering. Globally the illicit drug trade is estimated to be worth about half a trillion dollars. That is rough the equivalent of 1 per cent of the global economy or 50 per cent of the Australian economy. The drug industry literally destroys lives. One of the downsides of the global economy is the globalisation of crime. We should always remember that, as destructive as illicit drug use is on our community, it is even more destructive in the developing world.

I draw these issues to the attention of the House because drug enforcement is an important issue that affects communities on every level—local, regional, statewide, nationally and globally. All tiers of government play a role in drug enforcement, whether it is councils instituting safer-by-design policies, State governments amending criminal laws and funding our police, or the Federal Government policing our borders. I also note that drug enforcement is usually an issue that has bipartisan support. Both sides of this House support drug enforcement and successive Labor and Liberal governments have worked to counter the effects of illicit substances on our community. This bipartisan attitude differs greatly from the situation in jurisdictions overseas and even in other parts of Australia, where drug enforcement is used as a political football.

The heavy lifting for drug enforcement on a State level falls, of course, to our brave and hardworking police officers. Our police see firsthand the cost of drugs in our community. Police in every local area command have to deal with drug enforcement, but I particularly commend the work of the drug squad at the State Crime Command as well as the regional drug enforcement units throughout New South Wales that have particular responsibility for this issue. The bill aims to amend existing police powers to allow police officers to use dogs without a warrant for drug detection throughout Kings Cross and on railway lines. Presently police are able to use drug detection dogs at the entry to licensed establishments, sporting and other entertainment venues and public transport routes as prescribed by regulation. Earlier this year the Opposition supported the Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012, which supported the right of police to use drug detection dogs in tattoo parlours. The bill will extend the areas where police are allowed to use drug detection dogs to the streets and other places throughout Kings Cross. I note that the Attorney General has stated on record that private homes will remain exempt from this provision.

Drug detection dogs are an important asset in drug prevention policy. As the Attorney General noted in his second reading speech, as well as detecting drugs the dogs act as a deterrent to would-be participants in the drug market. A visible presence of police officers accompanied by drug detection dogs is the kind of sight which makes drug dealers and users think twice about buying and selling illicit substances. The bill also contains a definition of Kings Cross as described in the Liquor Act 2007 and a map of Kings Cross which clearly outlines the area in question. The bill also amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Regulation 2005 to allow police to use drug detection dogs on all suburban trains in New South Wales. Presently drug detection dogs are allowed on parts of the Bankstown route, the inner west line, the eastern suburbs and Illawarra line, the northern line to Newcastle, the western line, the Olympic Park route and the north shore line.

The bill will extend coverage of this provision to the Southern Highlands line, the Blue Mountains and Richmond lines, and the East Hills line. In my experience most people welcome high-visibility policing. They feel safer in the presence of police. I am sure that the majority of commuters would welcome the sight of more police on trains throughout New South Wales. Furthermore, we should be doing all that we can to make the job of our police officers easier, and wherever appropriate we should remove obstacles to them doing their job. The legislation extends powers to police in relation to drug enforcement. Unlike The Greens, the Opposition trusts the police to use these powers responsibly. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [5.12 p.m.]: I support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. From the outset I commend Attorney General Greg Smith and the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts, the Hon. George Souris, for their planned approach to dealing with the issues in Kings Cross. The object of the bill is to authorise the use by police officers of dogs for general detection, without first requiring a warrant, in places in the Kings Cross precinct. The bill also adds additional train lines on which police officers may use dogs for that purpose so that all suburban train lines on which CityRail operates train services are covered. The bill was prompted by the history of violence, in particular drug-related violence, in the Kings Cross precinct. The bill updates the train lines on which police may now use drug detection dogs to include the entire CityRail network. This is the first time the network list has been updated in a decade.

The bill amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Regulation 2005. It now includes persons at any public place in the Kings Cross precinct, as defined, as persons upon which police officers may conduct searches without a warrant using drug detection dogs and includes additional passenger rail lines as prescribed routes on which police officers may use drug detection dogs. The bill will broaden the ability to use drug dogs in any public place within the Kings Cross precinct. That area is defined in schedule 2 of the Liquor Act 2007. This will enhance police efforts to locate drugs and prosecute for their misuse, thereby helping to make the streets of Kings Cross safer.

Currently police are only empowered to conduct searches without a warrant using drug dogs on persons in certain circumstances, including either at or seeking to enter or leave licensed premises and on certain rail lines. The bill will also update the list of the prescribed train lines in the regulation for the first time since 2004 to include all suburban and outer suburban rail lines on which CityRail trains operate. This will make it easier for police to detect offenders seeking to transport drugs across Sydney on public passenger routes. It also will enhance the efforts of the new Police Transport Command to ensure the safety of passengers travelling on the CityRail network.

It was interesting to listen to the member for Liverpool when he said that these things could have been done by regulation and that this was only a stunt. Legislation is the best way to introduce changes. That is what

this bill is doing. It is part of a suite of legislation that this Government has introduced in relation to law and order and safety issues across Sydney. The member for Heffron quoted a 2006 Ombudsman report. That is five years old. One straightaway asks why the previous Labor Government did not do something about it when it had a report from the Ombudsman in 2006.

It is obvious that the members for the electorates of Liverpool and Heffron are totally ignorant when it comes to police investigation. You locate the local user and arrest him for having and using the drug. You then question him. He will often tell you who he bought it from. You then make inquiries and investigate the information that he has given you. You then look at the person that he said he purchased the drugs from and target that person. Ultimately you go in and you arrest that person. You then interview him and he will tell you where he purchased the drugs from. From that you then target the next person and you go up the food chain. For members to say that this bill only targets low-end users shows that they have no idea about drug investigation. A member opposite quoted the Ombudsman, who said that sniffer dogs are an ineffective tool. We are increasing the areas where sniffer dogs can be used. Allowing police to use sniffer dogs in public places will enable them to target the people who are supplying drugs in those places.

The member for Heffron said that dealers have been acting with impunity in the Kings Cross area for years. Labor was in Government for 16 years and what did we see? Sixteen years of increased crime and inaction by Labor. Members opposite want to increase the penalties but they did absolutely nothing to target the issues. What has this Government done? We now have 16,011 police officers, which is more than at any other time in the history of New South Wales. We have brought in a suite of legislation. We have targeted gangs and amended consorting laws and gun laws. For 16 years Labor members did absolutely nothing about these issues but the Government is doing something. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [5.18 p.m.]: I will address the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. Members may have predicted that The Greens stand with the much-maligned civil libertarians. We stand for individual liberty. We believe that this bill is moving in the wrong direction on civil liberties. The bill will authorise the use of sniffer dogs without a warrant for drug detection in a defined area in Kings Cross. It adds train lines to areas where dogs can operate, which means they will have access to the entire CityRail network. A range of different schedules will be amended by this bill by broadening the categories of persons who will be covered, by allowing a search by drug detection dogs without a warrant in Kings Cross and on the rail network, and by providing a very broad definition of a public place.

It is worth discussing the definition of a public place as a place, whether or not covered by water, or part of premises that is open to the public or that is used by the public, whether or not on payment of money or other consideration, whether or not the place or part is ordinarily so open or used, and whether or not the public to whom it is open consists only of a limited class of persons, and a road or road related area, but does not include a school. That is an incredibly wide definition of a public place. It is important to note that because we know a lot about the history of drug detection dogs in Sydney and in other parts of New South Wales. We also know that this is part of the Government's so-called plan to clean up Kings Cross. A press release relating to this legislation states:

Mr O'Farrell said the government was determined to clean up Kings Cross and the tough measures announced today should sound alarm bells for thugs and hooligans.

The Premier's statement reflects great intentions and sends a very positive message, but unfortunately the substance does not measure up to the announcement. The press release was triggered by the very tragic death of Mr Thomas Kelly after he was assaulted. He died after having been hit by a stranger in the street in Kings Cross. What is not surprising is that the Australian Hotels Association supports this legislation because it believes it is unlikely to affect the bottom line of hotel proprietors. In other words, patrons will still be able to drink beyond the point of intoxication at bars and hotels while hoteliers reap the financial rewards of alcohol addiction. What is clear is that according to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research there has been a decline in the rates of assault in Kings Cross over the past five years. The question that I pose during this debate is: Where is the evidence? There is no clear evidence that existing assault rates are linked to drugs.

The concern is that this legislation will only marginalise people, particularly young people and people who use the public transport system. I welcome the example cited by the member for Myall Lakes who referred to the drug trade chain. He suggested that when someone lower down the chain is arrested there is a better chance of arresting someone higher up in the chain. Let us see the evidence of that. I welcome the Government

presenting evidence on how many convictions have been recorded for supply and achieved as a result of the use of drug detection dogs. The evidence we do have shows that 80 per cent of drug detection dog searches result in false positives. We also know from the Auditor-General's report and from newspaper reports that in four out of five instances drug detection dogs get it wrong. For example, an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported:

The figures obtained from the state government in response to parliamentary questions on notice show 14,102 searches were conducted after a dog sat next to a person, indicating they might be carrying drugs. But, in 11,248 cases, no drugs were found.

People had been ritually sat down, all their possessions were examined and there was intrusion into their privacy just because they were going about their normal business and were not engaged in any illegal activity. On the Government's own figures, if drug detection dogs worked effectively and did not result in so many false positive results, I could understand the Government's argument. But the evidence demonstrates that that is not the case. While it is argued that drug detection dogs are part of some type of harm minimisation strategy, the dogs are not reducing the transportation of drugs for supply. What they are doing is getting it wrong 80 per cent of the time, producing false positive results, and picking up the occasional personal user. The Attorney acknowledged that fact. He stated in his second reading speech that the statistics relating to the dog drug detection program reveal that it has been a failure:

The Government does not judge the effectiveness of drug detection dogs solely based on the apprehension of drug traffickers.

He referred to the deterrence function of the dogs, but there is no evidence that that is any better than basic policing. The Greens are big supporters of high-profile basic policing—policing being done on the beat. Dogs that are sniffing people and 80 per cent of the time getting it wrong while wasting police time is not the way to deal with this problem. However, there has been a case of supply to which I wish to refer. The New South Wales Ombudsman's first report into the sniffer dog program that was used on trains stated that out of more than 2,500 searches not one trafficable amount of any drug was found—not one trafficable amount. In his second reading speech the Attorney identified one incident in which a search on a train by the dog unit uncovered a trafficable quantity of ecstasy. However, the dearth of additional examples suggests that that may have been a lucky one-off. If enough people over a number of years are searched, no matter how inaccurate the reasons for the search may be, something eventually will be found. The challenge I pose to the Minister is that The Greens want the Government to be able to clean up Kings Cross, we want to reduce crimes including assault, and we want to reduce the trafficking of drugs, but is this legislation the most effective way of implementing that policy? Charles Waterstreet in his column in the *Sydney Morning Herald* makes this point:

The herding of drug-sniffing dogs along Kings Cross streets to sniff the pockets of partygoing patrons instead of examining the drug ledgers, telephone records, bank records, cash-counting machines and drug scales of the dealers is police bullying the most vulnerable.

That is the concern that The Greens have. We also believe that police time should be invested in the most effective methods of policing. The Greens believe that police time should be invested in situations in which significant progress is achievable. A report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* cited the experience of a Mr Matthew Pels of Erskineville, who is a hospitality student. It states:

Matthew Pels, 22, of Erskineville, a hospitality student, said he was one of the thousands searched in a public place and found not to be carrying drugs.

Mr Pels said a police dog sat next to him at Redfern station before he underwent a search ... When his pockets were emptied, a packet of dog treats was found.

"The whole thing was unnecessary," he said. "I think it was a violation of my privacy."

That example illustrates the very genuine and serious question of striking the correct balance between individual liberty and people's civil liberties and whether or not we should be relying on drug detection dogs that we know get it wrong most of the time. The evidence of that is very clear and calls into question whether drug detection by dogs is effective policing and an effective use of police time. As I mentioned previously, The Greens take the view that if the Government wants to reduce hooliganism and antisocial behaviour, it should go to the heart of the problem, and that is alcohol. Alcohol is at the heart of the problem in Kings Cross. The Government needs to get tough to make sure it cleans up Kings Cross and all areas where assaults and other forms of antisocial behaviour are occurring. That needs to happen now, and in a very determined manner.

The Government has undertaken a whole range of initiatives, such as the Last Drinks Campaign, by people on the front line, people in the trade union movement, ambulance officers, paramedics, emergency service personnel and police. Those people have a plan, but this Government has not sought to take on that

plan—a plan that people in the front line to whom I referred think is the best way forward to deal with these issues. I take seriously the Government's approach to this legislation. All members of this House care very deeply about assaults, other forms of violence and other forms of antisocial behaviour. Anyone who has been subjected to that could verify how deeply and seriously it affects people. The Greens would like to see a very effective and capable system of responding to the incidences of violence. The evidence shows that this legislation is not the solution.

If the Government can point out evidence that shows this bill will make a real impact on the supply of drugs, let us see it. If the Government has evidence to show that drug detection dogs are more effective than having police on the beat, let us see it. What this legislation needs is evidence to support the position the Government is adopting instead of relying on statements such as, "Well, we think so." This legislation should be based on evidence that shows the policy that is most effective. For the reasons I have stated, I will not support the bill. I encourage the Government to examine this issue more deeply and engage in more research so that we have the most effective form of policing that will stop the harmful use of drugs in our community and in particular will stop supply.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.28 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I contribute to debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012, which is intended to enhance the capacity of New South Wales police in the suburb of Kings Cross and on the CityRail network to locate drugs and prosecute for drugs misuse as well as to ensure the safety of passengers who travel by train. Members of this House know that for many years I was a licensee of some of the leading venues in Sydney and in the southern part of the Gold Coast region at Tweed Heads.

I have had personal experience with licensed venues and have seen the effectiveness of officers and drug dogs in licensed premises. A nightclub strip on the Gold Coast, which is similar to that in Kings Cross, has for many years experienced a high incidence of alcohol-fuelled violence and illicit drug use. It is a dangerous area for local people and this activity has had a significant impact on the tourism industry within that area. I for one applaud the Attorney General and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for seeking to ensure the safety of the people of New South Wales. That is the key issue. In recent times the Campbell Newman Government in Queensland has taken the initiative to increase the number of drug dogs and police officers on the beat in that strip.

The member for Balmain talked about anecdotal evidence and facts and figures. In the last six months the amount of violence and illicit drug use on the streets of the Gold Coast has dropped significantly—about 50 per cent. At the moment there is significant debate to continue the program because of its great effect. The Gold Coast attracts many tourists, as does Kings Cross, here in Sydney. We need to do everything possible to ensure the safety of young kids going out every night. No-one condones the use of illicit drugs, and I have seen that toxic combination of some of the modern designer drugs with alcohol and caffeine-based drinks. The personalities of those who use such substances change, both male and female. If we can, in some small way, limit the amount of illicit drugs going into such areas, we will go a long way towards protecting the people of New South Wales.

The bill will also expand the use of drug detection dogs by police officers in Kings Cross to enable any individual to be subjected to a search without a warrant. The current law which provides that a person may be searched without a warrant only when either seeking to leave or enter a licensed premise will be amended to accommodate that provision. Broadening the scope of police search powers will not, of course, impede on the privacy of residents of Kings Cross. The bill will not allow police to use such powers in private homes, including in such areas as the lobby of residential buildings, despite members of the public being able to access such areas.

The provision extends to rail services. Police officers using drug detection dogs will have the power to search passengers so as to effectively target the flow of drugs across Sydney. This amendment is a direct response to the request by New South Wales police to extend that provision to allow the use of drug detection dogs on train services. I hope members on both sides of the House stand behind the hardworking men and women of the NSW Police Force. I have been fortunate to go out in the middle of the night, to be on the road at three or four in the morning, with general duties, highway patrol and even tag operations. These hardworking men and women take an oath to protect the good people of New South Wales. They risk life and limb, and there is great personal sacrifice by their families. It behoves everyone in this place to give them the powers they request to keep our streets safe.

Everyone in this place has friends and families who like to go out and socialise and enjoy themselves in this great State. We need to take all reasonable steps to ensure that they can do just that in a safe and legal fashion. It is time to get tough on drugs and this bill is an important step. Its provisions extend to all suburban and outer suburban rail lines on the CityRail network: trains that operate on the Southern Highlands line, the Blue Mountains line, the Richmond line, and the Hunter line, to Dungog and Scone, from Clyde to Carlingford, Epping to Chatswood, Wollongong to Port Kembla, and to the airport and East Hills line. This will enhance the capacity of officers to ensure the safety of passengers on the CityRail network and will deter individuals who seek to transport drugs across Sydney.

The use of drug detection dogs cannot be underestimated. As the member for Balmain told us, in May this year officers detected, by using drug detection dogs, a man on a train between Central and Kings Cross who was carrying 200 ecstasy tablets. The use of dogs not only increases the chances of police apprehending drug traffickers, it also promotes an atmosphere of safety and general deterrence to drug crime in Sydney. In the past there have been discussions about the role of drug detection dogs in apprehending drug traffickers and their subsequent potential to infringe on personal rights and liberties. However, this Government believes that the increase in drug-related violence in the Kings Cross suburb necessitates an expansion of the powers of the police operating in this area. Similarly, the expansion of police powers on the rail network is based upon the need to improve safety on our public transport system for all residents in and around the Sydney area.

This is an important move. As I said earlier, there is evidence from interstate that such measures are effective. Recently the electorate of Ballina, which is held by the Minister for North Coast, hosted a large number of functions at Byron Bay—Splendour in the Grass, the Blues and Roots Festival and so on. Drug detection dogs were in use at those events, at which every year a large volume of illicit drugs are detected. It behoves us to support our local police to ensure that they have adequate powers and tools to protect the good citizens of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [5.36 p.m.]: The object of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012 is to authorise the use by police officers of dogs for general drug detection—without warrant—on the streets and other public places in the Kings Cross precinct. The bill also provides that police officers may use dogs for general drug detection on all suburban train lines on which CityRail operates train services.

Drug use and abuse are blights on our society. My electorate of Cabramatta knows only too well the devastating effects that rampant drug use and addiction can have on individuals, families and the community. In the early 1990s Cabramatta was painted by the mainstream media as the drug and heroin capital of Australia—indeed, every train that passed through the electorate was called the Heroin Express, and passengers filing off those trains were greeted by drug dealers openly plying their trade. I witnessed this activity firsthand. In those days, the drug dealers used to walk inside the banks and walk down a line of perhaps 20 people queuing to do business in the bank asking them if they wanted drugs. They even went up to a 60- or 70-year-old lady to ask if she wanted drugs. I am told that she told them to get lost but her daughter advised her to be careful, warning that they might do something to her. Drugs were rampant in that area at the time, and that was well known, even to older people.

I wish that police at that time could have been able to use dogs to walk the streets of Cabramatta—not only on the trains but anywhere it was thought necessary to detect drugs. If dogs could have been openly paraded in locations where police believed drugs were being used, and they were able to detect people carrying bags of drugs on their person, I think Cabramatta could have been cleaned up long before it was. And that was much earlier than the 16 years we were in government. That was in the years of the Greiner Government, which could not care less. That Government left Cabramatta as the drug centre of Sydney. It was not until Bob Carr became Premier that Cabramatta started to be cleaned up. The drugs started in the Greiner years and he did not care less. Thankfully all of that has come to an end. With a larger and more visible police presence and the installation of monitored closed-circuit television cameras in Cabramatta the drug problem has been reduced. These effective crime deterrents have helped Cabramatta rehabilitate itself and re-establish as a shining diamond in south-west Sydney—a fantastic example of true multiculturalism.

The increased use of drug detection dogs is commendable given the popularity of party recreational drugs among young people—and the not so young—especially in our inner city areas and around activity hubs such as Kings Cross. The bill refers specifically to Kings Cross as it is a known trouble spot on Friday and Saturday nights. For some people it has become a no-go area, no thanks to the violence and associated drug and alcohol fuelled crime. The bill will allow New South Wales police officers to extend the use of police dogs

without warrant for general drug detection in the streets and other public places in Kings Cross. Currently, police can use drug detection dogs without warrant in licensed premises and public entertainment venues and on prescribed public transport routes. This legislation will give drug dealers fewer places to hide.

Our New South Wales police dog units are amongst the best in the world. The units comprise various breeds of dog, including German Shepherd, Labrador, Rottweiler, Malinois and English Springer Spaniel. Apart from drug detection, New South Wales police dogs provide special canine services, such as the detection of general-purpose firearms, explosives and human remains. Although a recent Ombudsman's report found that drug detection dogs were ineffective in detecting drug dealers, a possible effect of these proposed legislative changes may be that dogs will provide a general deterrent to drug activities on the streets. This general deterrence is already apparent at airports, in that people will not try to bring in any substance that could be detected when the dogs are present. People will be more conscious of the presence of drug detection dogs on our streets and will ensure that they do not carry anything that can be detected by them.

The bill will amend the regulation to extend dog drug detection coverage on public transport routes to the Southern Highlands from Campbelltown to Goulburn; the Blue Mountains and Richmond lines; the Hunter line to Maitland, Dungog and Scone; from Clyde to Carlingford; the Epping to Chatswood line; from Wollongong to Port Kembla; and the airport and East Hills line. Currently, only certain parts of Sydney's rail network are covered with regard to drug detection. These changes would have been achieved by simply amending the regulation, rather than a stunt by O'Farrell to reintroduce this legislation and try to beef it up. This bill is similar to the stunt by Barry O'Farrell with the introduction of the Library Bill.

**Mr Lee Evans:** Point of order: The member should refer to the Premier by his proper title.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind the member for Cabramatta that all members should be referred to by their correct titles.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** I mentioned the O'Farrell Government, which I believe is quite okay. This bill is another shameful stunt from the Coalition Government. Efforts to fight the war on drugs need to be strategic and well resourced. I hope the outcome of this legislation is fewer drugs in Kings Cross and more drug dealers caught and dealt with to the fullest extent of the law. I was the mayor of Cabramatta during its roughest times and saw the devastating wreckage left by drug abuse. I applaud the NSW Police Force for continuing the war on drugs. I commend and congratulate the local police in Cabramatta, led by Superintendent Wayne Murray, on their vigilance in ensuring that Cabramatta's drug problem remains firmly in its past. This side of the House does not oppose the bill.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.43 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012, which will authorise the use of drug detection dogs without warrant on the streets and in other public places of the Kings Cross precinct, which is close to my electorate of Vaucluse. It will permit their use also on all suburban and outer suburban CityRail lines. Currently, New South Wales police are permitted to use drug detection dogs from the Dog Unit to carry out general drug detection without warrant in relation to people on licensed premises and at public entertainment venues or on some public transport routes.

The definition of "public place" in the Act is broad. The public transport routes currently prescribed do not cover the entirety of suburban Sydney or areas such as Newcastle, Wollongong and the Blue Mountains. In fact, the number of train lines covered by the regulation has not changed in over a decade. During that time drug and alcohol related violence has escalated. The bill will expand the use of drug detection dogs to include public places in the Kings Cross precinct. I welcome that expansion as the member for an electorate that is impacted by activity in Kings Cross that has caused our community such concern. However, the bill acknowledges that many people visit the area for many purposes and that people actually reside in Kings Cross—they and their families live in the area—and accordingly police will not have the power to enter private homes.

The bill will ensure that our police officers, who perform an absolutely stellar and wonderful job, are able to deploy drug detection dogs in this area when and how intelligence-based policing indicates they are best utilised. The proposed amendments will ensure that police officers will effectively target the flow of drugs throughout the entire city rail network. I welcome this commonsense approach to long-term unaddressed problems. This bill will ensure that all train commuters can benefit from the deterrent effect of the presence of drug detection dogs. I welcome the comments of the member for Cabramatta in that regard and how drug detection dogs can have some good effect on people's behaviour. That is evident to people arriving at Sydney airport from overseas or domestic destinations.

In short, this bill will allow police to use drug detection dogs without a warrant in places where they presently cannot be used. The Government is absolutely determined to clean up Kings Cross and acknowledges that as the clear response to recent occurrences. The Government is determined to put an end to the type of alcohol and drug fuelled unprovoked and mindless attack that tragically claimed the life of Thomas Kelly in July—an innocent young man with so much to live for. Thomas Kelly's death is not the first death or serious injury to occur in Kings Cross as a result of alcohol or drug fuelled violence, but arguably it is one of the most tragic in recent memory. That is why the community wants this Government to act. The New South Wales Government is leading the way in implementing measures to prevent another similar tragedy.

No-one suggests these issues are new to Kings Cross; that they have developed overnight. But this Government is determined to make Kings Cross the safe place it should be in which the community can enjoy a good night out, not one in which they fear for their lives. The Government recognises the particular challenges of Kings Cross, and that is why it is committed to delivering a comprehensive suite of actions aimed at reducing alcohol and drug related violence, and antisocial behaviour, and making that precinct a safer and more enjoyable place to visit, and in which to live and work. The announcements by the Premier on 18 September are a welcome step towards ensuring that outcome. The Vaucluse electorate, which I represent, has a western boundary close to Kings Cross. Residents in my electorate regularly go to Kings Cross for a night out, to the theatre, and to visit friends and family. Their teenage children also may seek out the entertainment and the lure of the area. Consequently, antisocial behaviour in Kings Cross is a frequent conversation topic amongst parents at local schools.

People and, indeed, their teenage children, should feel safe in Kings Cross having a night out without potentially putting their lives at risk. The Government has already delivered a range of actions to combat alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour across New South Wales. The bill builds on our tough actions to deliver a competitive approach to alcohol and drug related violence that impacts only too seriously on the lives of innocent people. We make no apologies for introducing these tough new powers to help New South Wales police, who do such a great job, make Kings Cross a safer place. People carrying illegal drugs within Kings Cross should not be under any illusion that they will be safe from drug detection. The Police Transport Command, established by the Government in May, already has had success on train lines using drug detection dogs without a warrant.

Previous speakers to the bill have mentioned that on 25 May, using a drug detection dog from the Dog Unit, New South Wales police officers detected a man on a train between Central and Kings Cross railway stations carrying many ecstasy tablets—the strategy works and I support it. This Government does not judge the effectiveness of drug detection dogs solely on the apprehension of drug traffickers. Many benefits are gained from the visible presence of drug detection dogs and police on the street. While the Government recognises the benefits of using drug detection dogs for specific operational objectives, their use also offers many policing benefits.

The Government supports these benefits. They provide a visible response to drug-related crime in New South Wales and the Government makes no apology for using these wonderful animals to send a message to society that we do not condone illicit drug use. This is part of a welcome response the Government has had to escalating matters of violence, and drug and alcohol abuse. As a member of Parliament whose electorate is very close to this area I strongly support the bill. Kings Cross should be a place that is free of drug and alcohol related violence, and a safe place to live. For those who are searching for a good night out, Kings Cross should be a suburb they can visit without fear for their lives.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [5.51 p.m.]: In speaking to the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012, I echo the sentiments of the member for Vaucluse. The member's electorate borders the suburb of Kings Cross, which is a place visited by people from Sydney, greater New South Wales, Australia and around the world. As proud New South Wales residents we would like an area to visit or to take guests that is free of violence, an area where we can have a good night out without having to worry about whether we will be attacked by someone fuelled with alcohol or illicit drugs. The object of the bill is to authorise the use by police officers of drug detection dogs without warrant for general drug detection on the streets and other public places in the Kings Cross precinct.

The bill aims to extend the number of train lines on which police officers may use drug detection dogs for that purpose, so that all suburban trains on which CityRail operates train services are covered. The NSW Police Force can currently use drug detection dogs without warrant in relation to people at licensed premises and public entertainment venues and on prescribed public transport routes. Drug detection dogs can be used on

public transport routes that are prescribed by legislation. Presently part, but not all, of suburban Sydney is prescribed for these purposes. The bill will expand legislation to allow police to use powers in public places throughout the Kings Cross precinct. The bill will allow police officers to subsequently deploy drug detection dogs into troubled areas when new information is received, and intelligence-based policing will indicate how to take action given the situation at hand.

The amendments to this legislation set out in schedule 2 to the bill focus on extending coverage to the following lines: the Southern Highlands line from Campbelltown to Goulburn; the Blue Mountains line, which is currently not covered past Penrith; the Richmond line, which is currently not covered past Blacktown; the Hunter line past Newcastle to Maitland, Dungog and Scone; from Clyde to Carlingford; the Epping to Chatswood line; from Wollongong to Port Kembla; and the airport and East Hills line. Drugs are an ever-growing scourge within our communities. Drug abuse is a problem that affects the community as well as the individual not only with associated health problems and family stress but also with ensuing crime. The member for Cabramatta spoke of the experiences in Cabramatta all those years ago, which was highlighted this year in a documentary on *SBS*.

As a result of a former Labor Government under Premier Bob Carr, Cabramatta is now a vibrant community. A lot of people frequent Cabramatta for food, fashion and to have a good time. That is what we want. We want vibrant communities in New South Wales, and we want to make sure those families living or visiting the area can do so knowing that the area will be free from drug and alcohol fuelled violence. As a father and as a former teacher, this continuing violence troubles and concerns me. I fear a future in which drug dealers and drug addicts run rampant with no concern for those around them or the lives they are ruining. If the police do not have the power to deter and stop them, what does this mean for our future and our children's future? I believe that firm action to prevent and deter drug users and drug dealers from leaving their mark on our society is an important stand. The prominent alcohol and drug fuelled violence throughout Kings Cross must cease.

The member for Vacluse spoke of the tragic death of Thomas Kelly. As legislators but also as members of this community we must fight and make sure that Thomas Kelly's death was not in vain. I was deeply affected by his death. I think we all were. I was saddened to find that a former student of mine was one of the young men who was assaulted prior to Thomas' tragic death. That has had a significant impact on families in the Fairfield electorate and the schoolchildren that I taught in the Fairfield area. It could have been one of our sons or daughters who were attacked. Thomas' death was tragic and pointless. The pain that his family has to endure is unimaginable.

Many suburbs throughout western Sydney have benefitted significantly from providing police men and women with the power they need to serve our communities. I believe that giving police stronger powers to curb these issues is an important step. Any assistance that government is willing to provide to the police will be welcomed. I support our brave police officers in Kings Cross, Fairfield and Cabramatta, and throughout the State. I am thankful for the diligent work they perform on a daily basis. I support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012.

**Mr TONY ISSA** (Granville) [5.56 p.m.]: I support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. This important bill should put into perspective for those who oppose it in the name of being free to have a good time and to let their hair down. Imagine your 18-year-old brother, son, cousin or friend is going out for a good night with his friends. It is his first night out to a nightclub district and you are a bit nervous and excited for him. You wait anxiously and anticipate that soon he will tell you all about the experience. But what if you do not hear from him? What if you never hear from him again and all you are left with is a body to bury? This was the reality for the family of Thomas Kelly who was the victim of drunken violence in Kings Cross. Thomas's father stated:

Most people have no idea how a single act of violence can affect so many lives.

This bill is controversial and today I will bust some myths. One of those myths is that the passage of the bill will stifle business and promote the use of drugs. In response to that suggestion I say that a human life is more important than the making of a dollar. Kings Cross has built itself a poor international reputation, one that the Government aims to curb by using measures to increase the safety of the district in order to encourage business and promote tourism. Sadly, Kings Cross is reputed as the most dangerous red light district. This is a reputation that stifles business. The legislation seeks to address ongoing safety concerns.

In response to issues raised by the community, extra buses will be introduced, more security guards will be stationed at taxi ranks and a trial of prepaid taxis will be introduced. A bus will be run to Central Station

every eight minutes and to Town Hall every 15 minutes between 1.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m. Additional security staff at taxi ranks will reduce waiting times and reduce antisocial behaviour among those who may be under the influence. Traffic changes will also be introduced to make access to transport easier for passengers. To support these measures, a sobering-up centre will be set up to service the precinct so that drunk people are off the street and have a safe space to recover.

To promote business and tourism, the Government proposes measures to make Kings Cross a cleaner and safer environment. The bill increases police powers by authorising the use of drug detection dogs without warrant on the street and in other public spaces of the Kings Cross precinct. The definition of public space, while broad, does not intrude on spaces that are intended to be accessed only by residents and their visitors. Currently only some prescribed public transport routes on the CityRail network are permitted to employ drug detection dogs. The bill proposes to extend the use of drug detection dogs across the entire CityRail network. No warrant will be required. This will enhance police powers to tackle crimes across the transport network and benefit commuters by providing a visible response and deterrent effect to drug-related crime. It made no policy sense that commuters on some lines benefit while others may travel with drug-affected or drug-supplying persons.

To support these measures, the Police Transport Command was established in May this year, bringing together 300 officers. This will be expanded to 610 police officers by December 2014. The Government is committed to a crackdown on the use and supply of illegal drugs. These measures will not suppress people's desire and right to enjoy themselves. It cannot be overstressed that a safer environment will give people the security to fully embrace the nightlife without the fear of attack, and alcohol and drug related violence. We understand that drug and alcohol abuse, and violent behaviours are a deeper social problem beyond Kings Cross, but it is at King Cross where these issues have come into sharp focus and it is at Kings Cross that they must be curbed so that its tourism value is strengthened.

More people will come into the area knowing that they are safe and this may perhaps open the Kings Cross nightlife to those who, in the past, have felt apprehensive about visiting Kings Cross because of its reputation. On the other hand, the Government is unapologetic about sending the message to visitors that they must respect the rights of others. This bill is not about suppressing people's enjoyment; it is about protecting them from violence. It is about never again hearing stories such as that of Thomas Kelly. Linked identification scanners will be introduced to licensed premises. This will mean that a person ejected from one venue will be banned from all other licensed venues in the precinct so that other patrons at other venues can enjoy themselves without the hassle of troublemakers. Offenders will also face the risk of being banned for longer periods by police. The Government envisages that this will create another incentive for good behaviour. In summary, there will be zero tolerance on violence. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [6.04 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. However, I must say that it is with some sadness that members in this place speak to this legislation. Whilst regrettable, illicit drug use is an all too prevalent aspect of modern society and something that Government members are committed to stamping out. I have no doubt that Opposition members also are supportive of these measures. This bill is one part of the equation and I commend the Attorney General on yet another bill that he has brought before this place that will make our streets safer. This is tough legislation. We on this side of the House make no apologies for that. We want our police to have all the powers necessary to reduce the number of people carrying illegal drugs within Kings Cross.

The message will be clear: you cannot run; you cannot hide. Many younger residents of the Rockdale electorate—and I suppose older residents too—which is not very far from the city and therefore within easy reach of Kings Cross visit the area for a good night out. I am sure that many of those young adults will benefit from this bill. I am sure that many parents of teenagers who are on the cusp of turning 18 will be relieved to know that when their children are in Kings Cross, police will be equipped to detect possession of drugs on individuals who endeavour to sell them. It is true that the vast majority of people going to the city for a night out do so acting responsibly. However, there are some who go out with every intention of selling and consuming illegal drugs.

These individuals who sell illicit drugs should be made aware that the police will have tough new powers to catch them. Drug use alone is a problem, we know this, and the NSW Police Force does an exemplary job in bringing offenders to justice. In order for our police officers to do their jobs as effectively as possible, this Government will provide them with every resource available to ensure that potential offenders are kept off the

streets of Sydney. I digress for one moment to acknowledge that this year marks the 150th anniversary of policing in New South Wales. It is important that we recognise the essential role police play in protecting our local communities. As members representing diverse electorates with varied needs, I have no doubt that we all recognise just how crucial these men and women are to ensuring our communities remain safe, day in, day out. The object of the bill is to authorise the use by police officers of dogs for general drug detection without warrant on the streets and other public places in the Kings Cross precinct.

The bill also adds additional train lines on which police officers may use dogs for that purpose so that all suburban train lines on which CityRail operates train services are covered. The Kings Cross precinct is defined in schedule 2 to the Liquor Act 2007. The bill will extend the use of drug detection dogs without warrant to public places throughout this precinct. This will make Kings Cross a safer place to visit. It will allow police officers to use drug detection dogs in a public place without a warrant. This is a serious and necessary amendment to the Act with potentially life-saving implications. Under previous legislation, police officers were permitted to use drug detection dogs on public transport if the routes were prescribed by regulation. We can improve upon this by extending the prescribed routes. As the Attorney General said, this will allow the NSW Police Force to cover the entire CityRail network, effectively halting the flow of drugs into Kings Cross. In fact, it will allow drug detection dogs to catch anyone on our trains possessing illicit drugs.

This Government takes this issue very seriously and the bill reflects that. The Police Transport Command—which is to be at full strength of 610 officers by the end of 2014—will now have access to the Dog Unit. I know that commuters appreciate the increased police presence on our trains and I have no doubt that they will welcome this legislation. This Government could not be more serious about drug detection, and this Government could not be more serious about increasing the powers of police where necessary to halt crime, especially in Kings Cross. I am proud to be a member of the O'Farrell Coalition Government, which has a determined Attorney General, a Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and a Minister for Hospitality and Racing who are committed to protecting our community and improving safety in Kings Cross. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER** (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [6.09 p.m.]: I support the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. I will relate a story to the House. Approximately four years ago, I think it was a Sunday evening, or it may have been a Friday evening, I was at home in Coffs Harbour when the phone rang. A sergeant of police—I cannot remember his last name but his first name was Simon—asked me where I was. I told him I was at home. He said I could not be at home because he was standing in my lounge room. When Parliament sits I reside in Potts Point. The reason he rang me was that a person, who we found out later was, in the vernacular, off his face on ice, had broken into my apartment, which was occupied at the time by my elder daughter.

There are six apartments in that part of the building and this man had banged on the doors of the other apartments, people had yelled at him and he had left. He did the same thing to my apartment door, but because no-one was home he smashed the door off its hinges, taking the door jamb out in the process and absolutely wrecked the door. I was told afterwards that this man smashed his way through the door with his shoulder—it was an old-style door about 2.5 metres high and about 1.5 metres wide with a solid core. Not only did he break the door but he literally took the door off its hinges. Someone called the police and when the police arrived he was sitting in the lounge with a pile of computers and other gear of value on his lap. By that stage he had calmed down, the police arrested him and they took him away. The reason I relate that story is that people need to understand—especially the member for Balmain—what users of illicit drugs can do.

When I went to Kings Cross police station to make a statement the police officer told me how lucky we were that no-one was at home that evening because someone who is as badly affected by ice as was that man can injure or kill someone. Yet we have just heard the member for Balmain pleading the case for civil liberties and saying that police would be bullying users if sniffer dogs were used in Kings Cross and on trains. If that is what civil libertarians really believe they should understand that every one of us has a right to feel safe in our homes and on the street. People who go to Kings Cross for entertainment or to a restaurant—which I often do if I am in Sydney for the weekend—need to feel safe in the knowledge that the police are doing everything they can to keep the users of illicit drugs off the street as well as the peddlers, because it is the users who can damage property or injure people.

We have seen media footage of incidents at Kings Cross. Often four or five police officers are needed to arrest drug-affected people who, at the time, seem to have inhuman strength as a result of the effects on their bodies of the drugs they have taken. I know Superintendent Mike Goodwin who runs the dog squad in this State.

He is a good man who has served in Coffs Harbour and I met him recently in Broken Hill. He does a fine job. Having sniffer dogs on trains in Kings Cross and across all area commands—we now have sniffer dogs in Coffs Harbour—is an essential part of modern policing. It sends a message to the users of the drugs that drugs are illegal and it sends a message to the users that if we minimise the use of these drugs the dealers will not have a market in which to sell them.

I commend the Attorney General, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and the Minister for Hospitality and Racing for this legislation and for doing something to try to take the violence out of Kings Cross. Having sniffer dogs in the area and allowing the police to do their jobs will go a long way to sending a huge message to those users of illegal drugs that we as a Parliament do not accept it and that we as a society want this Government to act on the sale, possession and use of these drugs to ensure that we live in the safest possible way. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [6.15 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Liverpool, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Heffron, the member for Camden, the member for Bankstown, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Balmain, the member for Tweed, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Vaucluse, the member for Fairfield, the member for Granville, the member for Rockdale and the member for Coffs Harbour for their contributions to debate on the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012. Some members raised specific points, which I will now seek to address.

The comment was made that the Ombudsman has already determined that drug detection dogs are ineffective as a policing tool; therefore, why is the Government expanding their use without a warrant? This Government and the NSW Police Force consider drug detection dogs to be an extremely useful policing tool both in terms of detecting illicit drugs, and preventing their sale and use. The review of the Office of the Ombudsman found that 26 per cent of people searched as a result of a drug detection dog indication were found to have drugs. This figure has been widely quoted by those opposed to the use of drug detection dogs. But that figure is not the end of the story. When admissions of recent contact with drugs are taken into consideration, the figure rises to 70 per cent.

It could also be the case that anyone who is searched following a drug detection dog indication has quickly discarded the drugs they were carrying when they saw police, or that a police search has simply not been thorough enough. It is also possible that a person could be searched following a drug detection dog indication and that the drugs they were carrying were secreted in such a manner that police could not find the drugs during a simple street search. These situations cannot, of course, be reflected in statistics, and neither can the deterrent effect of drug detection dogs, which is another extremely important aspect of how and when drug detection dogs are deployed and used. Deterrence is a big part of the reason why we are expanding police powers to use drug detection dogs in Kings Cross: the word will get around and people carrying drugs will largely stay away for fear of being caught out by the drug detection dogs.

Another issue raised was whether the focus of drug detection dogs as a policing tool is on catching drug dealers or drug users. The focus of drug detection dogs is on drug crime—that includes supply and it includes possession, which means both dealers and users. The dogs cannot distinguish between a supplier and a user; they are trained to detect the scent of illicit drugs in the air. When a drug detection dog detects the scent of illicit drugs the dog is trained to sit down next to the source of the scent. It is a crime to possess illicit drugs, and that includes possession for supply and for use. Many users are also small dealers who deal just to keep their drug habit going. But, where appropriate, police will refer users into treatment or will issue a caution.

The focus of drug detection dogs should not be limited to catching drug dealers. This stance understates the usefulness of drug detection dogs. By contrast, Victoria Police states that it has broader goals in using drug detection dogs, which include specific operational objectives, reducing drug use, diverting offenders into treatment, providing a visible response to drug-related crime, increasing community perceptions of safety, and sending a message that society does not condone illicit drug use. The Victorian perspective is equally applicable to New South Wales. During debate a question was raised regarding what measures police will take to avoid deterring drug users from attending the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre.

Police advise that local dog handlers are aware of the location of the centre and they do not stand outside the centre, or target clients who may wish to use the centre. This bill will form a key part of the Government's plan to reduce crime and violence and improve safety in the Kings Cross entertainment precinct. Allowing police to freely deploy drug detection dogs on all trains will provide an effective deterrent to carrying

and using drugs on the rail network and assist in increasing the amenity of trains. Importantly, it will discourage potential users from carrying illegal drugs to and using them in areas such as Kings Cross or at large events such as dance parties and festivals. 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 Mr Greg Smith 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.**

## **STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2012**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 20 September 2012.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [6.22 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012. The Opposition will not oppose the bill but I have a couple of minor questions that I will bring to the attention of the Treasurer during my contribution. I hope that he will answer them satisfactorily. If that is not the case we reserve the right that we hold in any event to make amendments in the other place. The objects of the bill are:

- (a) to amend the *Duties Act 1997*:
  - (i) to clarify the liability to duty on a transfer of a partnership interest that occurs as a result of the retirement of a partner or the admission of a new partner, and
  - (ii) to provide a duty concession in respect of transfers relating to managed investment schemes, and
  - (iii) to exempt from duty an application to register a new heavy vehicle trailer, and
  - (iv) to make other minor miscellaneous amendments, including amendments of a statute law revision nature,
- (b) to amend the *Health Insurance Levies Act 1982* to reflect changes to reports published by the Australian Statistician,
- (c) to amend the *Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act 2011*:
  - (i) to extend the scheme to a purchase of vacant land in a regional area that is planned to be the site of a new home, and
  - (ii) to extend the scheme to the purchase of a long term lease of land in a regional area, and
  - (iii) to make other minor changes to the scheme,
- (d) to amend the *Taxation Administration Act 1996*:
  - (i) to clarify the power of the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue (the *Chief Commissioner*) to make compromise assessments, and
  - (ii) for statute law revision purposes,
- (e) to make minor miscellaneous amendments to other Acts.

I have read the Treasurer's second reading speech as well as the legislation regarding partnership interests. We accept without equivocation the reasons put forward as to why the amendments to the Duties Act in respect of partnership interests are required. I will say no more about that. We also do not disagree with the rationale and the proposition that heavy vehicle trailers which are new and purchased in New South Wales should be exempt

from duty. We understand that for some time there have been cases in which New South Wales transport operators were buying trailers for their heavy vehicles in other States. We accept the revision of that and the proposition put forward in this bill which the Government says will encourage transport operators to purchase heavy vehicle trailers in New South Wales. We also do not take exception to the amendment of the Health Insurance Levies Act 1982.

I say in all seriousness that the amendments to the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act 2011 embodied in this bill are an attempt retrospectively to beef up the numbers of this unqualified legislative flop. I remember when the legislation was introduced by the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier spoke on it during debate. On the Government's own numbers we should be not quite there but well on our way to about 12,000 processed and approved applications. At the estimate committee hearings last week we heard that the take-up of the regional relocation grant, in the words of the Deputy Premier, "has been under expectations"—the political understatement of the year. As at 30 September this year not 12,000 but only 1,232 grants have been provided under the scheme which is a flop. In the face of an embarrassing flop the Government retrospectively amends it to beef it up and make it look better.

On the passage of the original bill the Deputy Premier said, "Simply stated, this is good policy from a good Government." Wrong, wrong. The Deputy Premier went on to say, "The bill delivers on yet another election commitment by the Liberal-Nationals Government to support and encourage growth in regional New South Wales." No, it has not encouraged much at all. My friend the Treasurer spoke about the fact that the grant scheme would reduce population pressures in Sydney. Those 1,232 people have made a big difference. The Treasurer said:

A grant of \$7,000 provides a very real benefit to families relocating within New South Wales, promotes growth in regional New South Wales and, obviously, reduces congestion pressures within Sydney.

I do not think so. I said at the time, "... this is not a measure that is going to drive growth and it is not going to assist the economy of the State". The Deputy Premier replied:

The member for Maroubra's bizarre contribution to the debate reminded me of a bloke with two wooden legs who is caught in a house fire—he did not have a leg to stand on.

When I said that it would not assist the economy of the State I did not envisage that it would help the economy of The Star casino, which is where some of the unspent money from this flop has gone. An amount of \$8.5 million has gone to The Star casino for global financial crisis offset payments. I am not sure whether that was ever envisaged but the casino will think that was money well spent and say, "Thank you very much." We should have done with this scheme what the Leader of the Opposition said last year in his budget in reply speech. He said that the money that was erroneously set aside for this scheme, which we predicted would be a flop, should have been redirected to create and retain 44,000 jobs in agriculture and manufacturing in the regions over the next four years.

It would have been much better to spend the money on the Regional Agricultural and Manufacturing Promotion Scheme, or RAMPS, as proposed last year by the Leader of the Opposition in his budget reply speech rather than on this embarrassing flop. If members need proof that this amendment is intended to beef up the numbers and not do very much else, the scam inherent in this bill is the fact that the provisions are retrospective. That shows a blatant attempt to cover up and to beef up the numbers. For example, for someone who has already moved into a retirement village on a long-term lease and applied unsuccessfully for a grant, the Treasurer says that the scheme has been administered with those sorts of people in mind for some time in anticipation of these amendments.

The original scheme was said to have been about encouraging people to move. I stand to be corrected if I am wrong but the bill will provide that a \$7,000 grant be paid retrospectively to somebody who has already moved. That provides no encouragement; it is just a blatant attempt to beef up the results of this flop of a scheme. I expect the Treasurer will soon wander into the House to beef up the numbers, which would otherwise make the Government look bad, and say that Waratah bonds will be free. That is exactly the type of approach that is inherent in this bill. The Opposition poses a couple of questions in relation to the extension of the grant to the purchase of vacant land.

The vacant land will attract a grant so long as its value does not exceed \$450,000 as opposed to the maximum value of \$600,000 for a completed home, and the laying of foundations 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. It is not clear which guidelines, if any, the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue must follow when allowing the grant for a longer period. The grant will be widened to allow persons who purchase a home in a retirement village or other such long-term lease that the chief commissioner is satisfied provides a degree of permanency of security of tenure that is the equivalent of ownership. I am not sure there are too many long-term leases in real estate, unless we are talking about Port Botany or Port Kembla, that would provide the equivalent in tenure of ownership in fee simple.

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** There are a lot of retirement villages.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** That is correct. Retirement villages do have long-term leases. However, my question is: What guidelines will the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue be bound to follow when exercising those two apparent delegations? We are talking about taxpayers' money. The Opposition argues that the chief commissioner should exercise what I will term a delegation of his powers in those two instances according to transparent, pronounced, published and fixed guidelines, but not by just delegating to a public officer such as the chief commissioner. Opposition members ask the Government to let us know during the reply where we can find the guidelines that should be published to provide certainty in respect of the exercise of two delegated powers, if I may refer to them in that manner. Apart from those concerns, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [6.32 p.m.]: My contribution to debate on the State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012 will be brief. The bill is part of the necessary and regular revision of State revenue legislation. The bill will amend the Duties Act 1997, the Health Insurance Levies Act 1982, the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act 2011 and the Taxation Administration Act 1996 as well as miscellaneous amendments to other Acts. The objects of the bill state:

- (a) to amend the Duties Act 1997:
  - (i) to clarify the liability to duty on a transfer of a partnership interest that occurs as a result of the retirement of a partner or the admission of a new partner, and
  - (ii) to provide a duty concession in respect of transfers relating to managed investment schemes, and
  - (iii) to exempt from duty an application to register a new heavy vehicle trailer, and
  - (iv) to make other minor miscellaneous amendments, including amendments of a statute law revision nature,
- (b) to amend the Health Insurance Levies Act 1982 to reflect changes to reports published by the Australian Statistician
- (c) to amend the Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act 2011:
  - (i) to extend the scheme to a purchase of vacant land in a regional area that is planned to be the site of a new home, and
  - (ii) to extend the scheme to the purchase of a long term lease of land in a regional area, and
  - (iii) to make other minor changes to the scheme,
- (d) to amend the Taxation Administration Act 1996:
  - (i) to clarify the power of the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue (the Chief Commissioner) to make compromise assessments, and
  - (ii) for statute law revision purposes,
- (e) to make minor miscellaneous amendments to other Acts.

First, I will discuss one of the amendments to the Duties Act that exempts new heavy vehicle trailers from vehicle registration duty. As the Treasurer stated, the Government wants to encourage transport operators who are based in New South Wales to register their truck trailers in their own State. Moreover, we also want them to buy their truck trailers in New South Wales to increase the profitability of businesses across New South Wales that build truck trailers. The Government wants to assist local businesses and inject revenue into the State through increased registration. Second, the regional relocation grant already benefits residents in metropolitan areas who pursue interests in regional New South Wales.

This Government is making their transition a little easier as they relocate from a metropolitan community to regional areas. Financial assistance will be payable when someone disposes of a metropolitan

home and relocates to a regional area, thus making the regional home his or her principal place of residence. The bill corrects an existing anomaly in the Act by providing that only one applicant in the case of multiple applicants must comply with the relocation requirement of the regional relocation grant. In the past, an applicant may have been found to be ineligible for a grant in the event that more than one of the joint owners was not relocating from a metropolitan area. The grant currently applies to the purchase of a completed home or to a purchase off the plan.

The bill also will extend the regional relocation grant to the purchase of vacant land on which the owners intends to build their home. It must be stated that construction of the home by laying foundations must commence within six months of purchasing the land, and the value of the land must not be in excess of \$450,000. People who purchase a long-term lease, which the chief commissioner considers provides a degree of permanency and security of tenure that is equivalent to ownership, will be eligible for the regional relocation grant as a result of this bill. I am pleased to support those measures. I know that the Treasurer will continue to implement sensible and practical State revenue amendments, when necessary. This is a Treasurer who understands the economy of New South Wales and the needs of both those who contribute to it and those who benefit from it. I commend the bill to the House.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro):** Order! Before the member for Keira commences his speech, I ask Government members to cease interjecting. They will have an opportunity to make a contribution to this debate. I warn Government members that I will have no hesitation in calling them to order if they continue to interject.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)** [6.37 p.m.]: This is a bad day for Government members. Earlier when I spoke to the member for Toongabbie and the member for Macquarie Fields we discussed the regional relocation grant. Today is a very enjoyable day for me, but a very dark day for Government members. From day one I have consistently said how pathetic this regional relocation grant is. Now the Government wants to amend the Act to make a dog of a scheme an even bigger dog of a scheme. This is one hell of an ordinary scheme. Government members should not take my word for it—I know that they never do. I refer to the member for Northern Tablelands, a good friend of Government members who put up his hand for Nationals preselection. What did the member for Northern Tablelands say about this scheme? One would have thought that he would support it; that it was a noble scheme and that he would support it. That is not what he said. In November 2011 the member for Northern Tablelands said:

I really wanted this money to be spent back into regional New South Wales.

During estimates committee hearings last week the member for Maroubra, my good friend the Hon. Mick Veitch in the other place—

**Mr Michael Daley:** And the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** —and the Leader of the Opposition said that we wanted the money that had not been spent on this dog of a program to be spent in regional New South Wales, which is a reasonable request. The member for Northern Tablelands went on to say:

The Treasurer failed to give the assurance I was seeking and would not give a clear answer to this question. That makes me very suspicious that we could lose funding which was specifically earmarked to boost population and economic development in regional areas. It is a four-year program but the response of sea and tree changes so far has been less than enthusiastic.

This member, who has joined The Nationals, is saying that this is a dog of a program and that any money that was not spent should be directed into regional New South Wales. I find staggering that members of The Nationals—a party that I assume, reasonably, once represented country people—are beating their chests and saying not only that they will make a bad scheme worse but also that money that was not spent will not go to regional New South Wales but be directed to their friends at The Star casino. I am assuming that the good folk in country New South Wales will not be happy to know that their country members are today supporting a Government that directed \$8.5 million not into regional infrastructure services but into The Star casino, which is astonishing. Last week at the estimates committee hearings the Deputy Premier said:

I am advised that as at 30 September this year some 1,232 grants had been provided under the scheme.

How many grants do members think have gone to Armidale? How many have gone to the electorate of the member for Northern Tablelands?

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: My point of order relates to tedious repetition under Standing Order 59. The member has made this speech seven times already. We have heard these lines before. The member should be asked to come up with some new material or take his seat.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro):** Order! That is not a point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** How many grants have gone to Armidale? Only one grant has gone to Armidale. This Liberal-Nationals Coalition is looking after country New South Wales. Heaven help the people west of the Great Dividing Range if this lot opposite is representing them. The Government expected to get 40,000 people to join the scheme but to date only 1,232 have joined. In the Northern Tablelands, where the good member joined The Nationals—which was once the Country Party—he is getting only one extra person. I feel sorry for members of The Nationals. They have to go back to their electorates and say, "We implemented a scheme and expected 40,000 to join it but, tragically only 1,232 have joined"—problem number one. They also will have to say, "We implemented a scheme that was designed to attract investment and growth in regional New South Wales."

The problem is that the money that was not spent was directed to The Star casino—problem number two. I do not know how that will go in downtown Armidale or downtown Dubbo, and I am not sure how it will go west of the Great Dividing Range, but Government members will have to have this conversation with those who come into their offices. I have had a problem with this scheme from day one as a number of issues are involved. Members would be aware that a \$7,000 grant, which will be paid retrospectively to somebody who has already moved, will not make much difference to those who are moving from Sydney to regional New South Wales. Despite the fact that the Illawarra is recognised as regional New South Wales in the Government's latest infrastructure plan, conveniently it is not included as a region in this place. Let us be careful about this because I noticed that my friends from the Central Coast are not in the Chamber while this bill is being debated.

Why would members representing electorates on the Central Coast not be feverishly in support of these measures? Like the Illawarra and the Wollongong local government area in which the electorate of Keira is located, people on the Central Coast have been treated like Sydneysiders and, unfortunately, have been included in Sydney's infrastructure plan. I feel sorry also for my Central Coast colleagues who will be affected by this bad policy. This is bad policy. We could move any number of amendments in this place but the best amendment would be to put a line through this policy and to redirect the money into infrastructure and job creation in regional New South Wales. It would do all those in this place and their communities a world of good.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [6.47 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Maroubra, the member for Rockdale and the member for Keira for their contributions to debate on the State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012. In particular, I thank the member for Keira for his wisdom, even though it is his own construct. The New South Wales Government is committed to implementing best practice revenue laws. The State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012 makes important amendments to the Duties Act 1997 to ensure that the legislation is current and consistent with best practice administration. I wish to address a number of issues that were raised by those members who contributed to this debate.

The member for Maroubra highlighted certain inconsistencies and shortcomings in the regional relocation grant. Like any new scheme, these issues were addressed as the scheme was rolled out. The regional relocation grant amendments were identified and announced last December, so no-one missed out. There may have been slight changes to the allocation criteria, but no-one missed out. Those people who moved in good faith on the basis that this fund would be paid were paid. I stress that the amendments are not to beef up the grants, as suggested; they are part of the Government's broader intent to ensure that the legislation is current and consistent, as I said, with best practice tax administration.

The relocation grant has no specific guidelines, but works similarly to the stamp duty scheme. The Office of State Revenue takes great care to check if, for example, building work has commenced and, therefore, the applicants are entitled to the grant. Finally, I note the enthusiasm and energy particularly from the previous speaker about Star City, which seemed to be a preoccupation for the Labor Party in recent years, either because it was enjoying it or picketing it. Payments to Star City arose—interestingly for those on the Opposition benches—under arrangements the previous Labor Government put in place with the introduction of the GST in 2000 and have been applied in every budget since. I am sure the shadow Treasurer was aware of that before he embarked on his dissertation in this place.

A number of items in the bill address issues raised with the Office of State Revenue by taxpayer representatives or through court decisions. They include clarification of the trust concessions by introducing a concession for the transfer of dutiable property from a trustee of a wholly owned sub trust of a managed investment scheme to a custodian of that scheme, inclusionary of an exemption to ensure that the personal property securities law does not impact on mortgage duty, treating securities listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange the same as other major world exchanges for a duties purposes, and clarifying that the definition of "land" extends to anything affixed to a mineral lease or claim. 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 Mr Brad Hazzard, on behalf of Mr Mike Baird, 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 12 September 2012.**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [6.52 p.m.]: I support the Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012. It is good that the hard-working Minister, the Hon. Robyn Parker, has introduced this bill after 16 years of Labor neglecting this State, and after 16 years of corruption. The Independent Commission Against Corruption door was revolving as Labor Party members went in and out and back in again. The boofhead for Maroubra has not been called to the Independent Commission Against Corruption on this inquiry. Coastal erosion may not be so important for Labor members, and they can laugh and snigger across the room because it is of no concern to them. They do not represent any electorates in rural and regional New South Wales so they would not know about this important issue to the seat of Myall Lakes and in places such as Old Bar, Harrington and Lake Cathie in the Port Macquarie area. Coastal erosion is a big issue further up the coast and we take it seriously. Those who were part of the 16 years of the previous, incompetent Government would not understand the importance of this legislation.

Coastal erosion in New South Wales is managed under the NSW Coastal Policy, the Coastal Protection Act 1979 and the Coastal Protection Regulation 2011. The NSW Coastal Policy involves local councils, with financial and technical support from the State, undertaking coastal hazards studies and developing coastal zone management plans. Private landowners in specific locations are permitted to place sandbags under strict conditions to prevent coastal erosion and damage to their property during storms. For any other coastal protection works, landowners must lodge a development application. Currently coastal erosion threatens at least 200 homes in New South Wales, according to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Robyn Parker, who said in the second reading speech:

Red tape restrictions have prevented landowners from taking immediate action to protect their properties. Local councils have been under severe financial and regulatory constraints with ratepayers on this issue. Local councils have been desperately seeking help from the New South Wales Government.

... The coastline, including its low-lying estuaries, needs to be sheltered from extreme weather events and landowners need to be able to protect their properties in the face of those events.

The object of this bill is:

to amend the *Coastal Protection Act 1979*

- (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 bill and the Government's reforms aim to reintroduce a commonsense approach to managing our coastline after the previous Government's reforms in 2010 that have caused concerns to many coastal communities. In considering the science behind sea level rise benchmarks change is the one constant that emerges. For some years more and better models will predict sea level rise, which will be informed by more and better data enabled by rapid advances in fencing, positioning, computational and imaging technologies. New South Wales is fortunate to be able to draw on considerable expertise in the field relevant to sea level rise projections, monitoring and planning with several centres of expertise within local universities and other research organisations. This will enable interpretation and adaptation of global models to build more precise local models specific to various New South Wales coastal locations.

Untying some of the unnecessary red tape around temporary coastal protection works is an example of how this Coalition Government supports vulnerable landowners. This Government will support local councils in managing coastal erosion. The Minister for the Environment, in the second reading speech, noted the challenges councils face in dealing with this issue. One of the first steps this Government will take is preparing guidelines for councils on appropriate section 149 certificate notations relating to coastal hazards and flooding. These notations have caused great distress to local communities in some council areas. The new guidelines will clarify the notation wording to ensure accuracy and appropriateness. Accurate notations on section 149 certificates need accurate mapping of coastal hazards.

The Government will develop guidelines for councils on how to map current coastal hazards appropriately and consistently. This will help councils prepare credible maps to use with the community to develop appropriate approaches to managing these hazards. When preparing coastal hazard mapping, councils now will be able to adopt sea level rise projections that properly consider their local conditions. No longer will they be required to use statewide benchmarks. To help councils develop projections the Office of Environment and Heritage will provide on its website appropriate information on historical and projected future sea level rise. The Government also is looking into options for councils to access independent expert advice on coastal management. The Chief Scientist's report recommended this as a mechanism for supporting local councils. The Coalition recognises that these stage-one reforms will result in the need for councils to change and update some of their coastal management activities.

The Office of Environment and Heritage will be delivering workshops for council staff along the coastline to help them develop appropriate transitional arrangements. The Minister for the Environment will be writing to councils that have been directed to prepare coastal zone management plans to give them an extra 12 months to prepare plans with their communities. This will give councils extra time to incorporate the Government's reforms into their plans. The Minister highlighted that there will be a further round of coastal reforms. These stage two reforms will include further initiatives to support councils in managing erosion risks to local communities.

On the last occasion that this matter came before the House the member for Marrickville, who does not live near the beach, made it quite obvious she did not know what she was talking about. The member said that the present legislation is doing the job. That legislation has failed. Communities have called for change, consistency and well-drafted legislation that will allow them to know what the requirements and duties are and what they can and cannot do. This proposed legislation does that. This bill is accorded high priority in the House. During debate members from the Opposition have spoken against the bill and people being able to defend their homes. I commend the bill to the House.

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

## **HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

### **Matter of Public Importance**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY** (Riverstone) [7.02 p.m.]: This evening I bring to the attention of the House the issue which is top-of-mind in thousands of New South Wales homes at this time of year: the Higher School

Certificate. From the beginning of the examination schedule yesterday, with English exams, until the afternoon of November 8, when students undertake the Visual Arts (Art Criticism and Art History) exam and jump the final hurdle, there will be young people across the State focusing their energies and efforts on achieving their best possible results. Their family members, friends and teachers will be doing their best to support them through the experience.

Across New South Wales 73,397 students are undertaking the Higher School Certificate in 2012. After 13 years of school life that no doubt involved a mixture of hard work, studious attention, conscientious effort, a bit of frivolity, more than a few light-hearted moments and perhaps a sprinkling of mischief, our young people across New South Wales are facing up to the significant challenge of these end of school exams. Of the 73,397 students 30,856 are enrolled in at least one vocational education and training course, 1,625 are enrolled in at least one life skills course and 68,611 are enrolled in an English Higher School Certificate course and sitting their exam yesterday.

The written exams occurring during this period are in addition to the major works and practical performances presented over time by many students in a range of creative subjects. The conduct of the examinations is a major undertaking overseen by the Board of Studies each year. This year there are 117 different exam papers and 760 examination centres, including a small number interstate and overseas. In my own region of metropolitan north-west there are nearly 10,000 students completing the Higher School Certificate. I take this opportunity to offer my encouragement and best wishes to the Higher School Certificate students of Glenwood High School, Windsor High School, Wyndham College, Terra Sancta College, Bede Polding College, Rouse Hill Anglican College, St Mark's Catholic College and Australian Christian College at Marsden Park, and, just outside the boundary of my electorate, Arndell College.

I commend all of the students in the State who have worked hard to prepare themselves for these exams. I trust that they will achieve the results which their talents and efforts have earned. I also reassure Higher School Certificate students that there is life after the Higher School Certificate. While the exams do have an important role in measuring academic achievement, they are not the only measure of success in life. For many of us opportunities arise that were never anticipated or planned for, and school experiences will prepare you for these in a wide variety of ways. Higher School Certificate students need to find the balance between focusing on doing their best in the exams and looking after themselves during this stressful time. Planning for both work time and relaxation time is important—as are eating well and getting enough sleep.

On behalf of the community of New South Wales I thank the teachers in all our schools—whether teaching year 12, year 9, year 4 or kindergarten—who have played a part in preparing these 73,000 young people for this next step in their lives. Every teacher contributes not only to the growth in knowledge of the students in their care but also to their growth as people. Teaching is a challenging calling and no doubt one which makes a real difference to the future of our community. It is also important to acknowledge the role of parents who have contributed so much to the lives of their sons and daughters. In many cases it has involved a great deal of sacrifice and they deserve credit for raising the young men and women now reaching the end of their school days.

As a parent I cannot but add a word of caution about how this milestone in young people's lives will be celebrated. We all want our children to be safe. At this time of year, unfortunately, we all too often hear of car crashes involving students that have just finished school. I urge Higher School Certificate students who are celebrating the end of their exams to do so safely and not to forget the normal rules: Do not drink alcohol if you are going to drive, do not drive if you have been drinking alcohol and do not let your mates break those two rules—look out for each other so that everyone can enjoy themselves and make it home safely. The same warnings apply whether you are at home or away somewhere enjoying a schoolies break. While the Higher School Certificate exams mark the end of school years, they also represent the beginning of a new chapter for these 73,000 young people across our State. I wish the best of luck to all of them.

**Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT** (Marrickville) [7.07 p.m.]: I join the member for Riverstone in wishing all the very best of luck to the more than 73,000 students sitting the Higher School Certificate at more than 760 exam centres in Australia and around the world. The Higher School Certificate is the culmination of 13 years of study. It is a challenging and stressful time for many students and their families. I am sure they will all breathe a sigh of relief when it is over on 8 November. While this can be a difficult time, it is also an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they have learnt and is a rite of passage shared with their classmates marking the end of their formal schooling—something they will no doubt remember for the rest of their lives.

While many students will be placing great emphasis on their performance in these exams—as they should, given the time and effort they have put in—it is also the case that there are many paths to achieving your end goal. The Higher School Certificate is not the be-all and end-all of life and success. Those students who do not get the results they are wishing for will usually turn their sights elsewhere or find an alternative path into their chosen area. How many in this Parliament would have thought when they were sitting final school exams—whenever that might have been—that this is where they would be.

We are very fortunate in New South Wales to have a world-class credential in the Higher School Certificate. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to former education Minister John Aquilina, a former member for Riverstone, and former Premier Bob Carr for the foresight they had in appointing Professor Barry McGaw to conduct the most extensive review of the Higher School Certificate in its 30-year history when Labor was first elected to Government in 1995. The review confirmed key community concerns: there were too many courses, a decline in the number of students studying advanced level courses, and the assessment and reporting system was based on scaling marks and ranking students rather than describing the standard that students had achieved.

Making changes to an end-of-school credential as important as the Higher School Certificate is not without challenges but Minister Aquilina and Premier Carr, after much consultation with teachers, principals, academics and the community, accepted recommendations to reform the Higher School Certificate. The new Higher School Certificate was a standards-based curriculum and a fairer system of assessing and reporting student achievement against set standards. It was designed to challenge students to reach high standards and give meaning to marks by providing descriptions of the standards of knowledge and skills students have acquired in each subject. The new Higher School Certificate, as it was then called, was described as being harder, more varied and more detailed than its predecessor.

In more recent time vocational education and training opportunities have been expanded, and of course the national curriculum is in the process of being developed for senior secondary courses. The Higher School Certificate is awarded both here and overseas. It has been used as a model in other States and countries. New South Wales has long been recognised as having a gold standard curriculum, with the Higher School Certificate as its crowning glory. The O'Farrell Government takes great pleasure in pretending that the 16 years of Labor Government in New South Wales was a wasteland where nothing was achieved. In fact, in the estimates committee the other day I heard the Minister for Education modestly claim that his Local Schools, Local Communities reforms, which from what I have seen so far amount to not much more than a couple of pages of fact sheets, are more far reaching than anything Labor ever did in office. He said words to that effect. We all know that a bit of exaggeration occurs in politics but the Government would be well placed to remember the Higher School Certificate reforms.

These were real reforms, genuinely new, grounded in expert advice and consultation. They have benefited and will continue to benefit generations of New South Wales students. It was a fine legacy. It continues to be well regarded in Australia and it continues to be lauded by the current Government. This is in no small part due to the professionalism and dedication of the staff at the Board of Studies. I pay tribute to the staff there as well. In my time as Minister for Education and Training I was extremely fortunate to have Professor Gordon Stanley as President of the Board of Studies. He was a competent, extremely intelligent, hardworking and genuine public servant. The current President, Tom Alegounarias, continues this fine tradition. I pay tribute to the students, their parents, teachers, carers and markers. They all have a critical role to play in preparing students for the Higher School Certificate, nurturing them on the way towards these difficult exams and helping to celebrate or pick up the pieces, whatever the case may be, once the results are known. I wish them all well.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [7.12 p.m.]: I extend my very best wishes to the students now sitting their Higher School Certificate [HSC] examinations across New South Wales. The Higher School Certificate exams can be a particularly stressful period of time for not only the students but also the teaching staff and parents. As a former teacher of students preparing for their Higher School Certificate I appreciate the hard work and commitment that both staff and students demonstrate on a daily basis to ensure that students achieve to the best of their ability.

Year 12 students will no doubt be relieved to be coming to the end of their secondary education. In many ways this is a double-edged sword. On the one hand students can look forward to a welcome summer holiday and a life beyond school, yet the hurdle of the exam is now upon them. However, I hope that 2012 especially marks a successful year for Higher School Certificate students and I congratulate not only the students but also the staff who, year after year, encourage and have become mentors to the students. In my electorate of Rockdale James Cook Boys Technology High School, Moorefield Girls High School and the

Marist College at Kogarah, which many students from my electorate attend, all enjoy a fine reputation within the local community. This in very large measure is due to those who undertook leadership roles, including the school captains, prefects and all those students who continually strive to do their best.

You have been role models to your peers and to the younger children. There can be no doubt that the years spent in high school are not only some of the best of years of your life; they are also some of the more challenging. There is no challenge that you will face during your time at high school—including the Higher School Certificate—that cannot be overcome by sheer tenacity and hard work, and no challenge that you will face when you leave school that cannot be overcome in the same way. In both cases maintaining a positive attitude is important. Sometimes in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, always do what you believe is right, and that is all anyone can ever expect of you. You will become, like those before you, good citizens.

It is important also to remember that education is a lifelong process and, whilst success in the Higher School Certificate is commendable, it is not always necessary for success in later life or throughout life. Therefore, approach the Higher School Certificate exams diligently but, one way or the other, the knowledge you have gained through infants, primary and secondary school will hold you in good stead as you embark on your chosen careers. I wish the 2012 Higher School Certificate students all the very best of luck.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY** (Riverstone) [7.15 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Marrickville and the member for Rockdale for their contributions this evening in support of the year 12 students as they confront their Higher School Certificate exams. I recall somewhat dimly when I sat my own Higher School Certificate exams many years ago, in 1976. From memory, they were all three-hour exams. We were all lined up in the hall in the traditional pattern—I think that is still the case—at individual desks, silent for the three hours. We sought to write down as much as we possibly could to ensure that we gave ourselves the best possible payoff from all those years of work and investment from our parents and teachers.

It is a stressful situation and can be very challenging. Some people react better to the situation than others. It is pleasing that over the years we have developed a system of assessments that contributes to the Higher School Certificate performance as well as exam marks, because some people certainly perform better under exam conditions than others and exams are not the only way of measuring a person's performance. As a teacher I was very interested—in fact, probably more interested than many of my students—to see their marks when they came out. It was one of those exciting moments of a teacher's career to see how well some of the students had performed in those important exams and, as the member for Marrickville said, sometimes to help pick up the pieces for those who did not do as well as they had wished.

It is true that teachers go into the profession wanting to do the very best for the children they teach and the young adults they work with at the Higher School Certificate level, and they are almost more excited by the successes of their students than they are of things that happen to themselves. I know at this time of year there will be a lot of nervous teachers around who hope that they have covered the syllabus fully and done everything possible to help their charges. They are probably saying a few quiet prayers for those who might need them. This is an important time for many students and people across our State experiencing enormous pressure. I join with all members of the House in wishing them all the best.

**Discussion concluded.**

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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### **WOLLONGONG STATE OFFICE BLOCK SALE**

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [7.18 p.m.]: Today I speak on behalf of the people of the electorate of Wollongong to condemn the O'Farrell Government on its decision to sell off the State Office Block, located in the heart of the Wollongong central business district and my electorate. Also I make my colleagues on both sides of the House aware that nothing is sacred under this money-grabbing, penny-pinching Government and they should all be extremely vigilant when it comes to their own electorates. The writing was on the wall when the first decision of the current Minister for the Illawarra was to close his office in the State Office Block, citing its existence as a waste of money.

It may very well have seemed a waste of money to him, considering he never came to Wollongong—and I note that he made the statement that if people want to see him as the Minister for the Illawarra they should

come to Sydney—but it certainly was not seen as a waste of money by the people of the Illawarra—the very people he purported to represent and to care about. The decision to sell off yet another government asset in the electorate of Wollongong is nothing more than a slap in the face to the people who trusted this Government to have their best interests at heart. It is simply another example of Barry O'Farrell's Sydney-centric money-grabbing tactics designed to take important revenue and employment out of the Illawarra and relocate it to Sydney.

This is a government that clearly has no regard for the people of Wollongong or for any regional community across New South Wales. I dare any member on the other side of the House to dispute that, given what has been happening in the electorate that I represent. The State Office Block houses the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Community Relations Commission, the Regional Office of the Department of Education and Communities, the Department of the Attorney General and Justice, Crime Prevention, Aboriginal and community programs, the Anti-Discrimination Board, the Department of Family and Community Services, and the Lake Illawarra Authority, just to name a few. What will happen to these important services and, more importantly, what will happen to the hundreds of jobs that these departments support? Are they to be cut, adding to the job losses? These are just some of the serious questions that the Coalition Government must answer as a matter of urgency.

The Government has already pulled significant funding from Health, Education, and the easy access upgrade of the Unanderra railway station, and it has made the decision to privatise the most profitable port in Australia—the port of Port Kembla—and to rip off the people of the Illawarra to the tune of \$400 million. All these issues I raise will affect the electorate of Wollongong. Where is the Minister for the Illawarra? Why is he not lobbying for the people of Unanderra and surrounds, who are unable to use public transport simply because they cannot get onto the station platform? Why is the Minister for the Illawarra not demanding that the port of Port Kembla remain in public ownership—securing jobs and assuring the people who rely on the port that they will have a steady wage and food on their table? That is right—he is off selling more of our assets. I question the economic rationale of selling a property such as the State Office Block, only to lease it back.

That approach simply equates to government departments having to slash more funds for services they provide the community to come up with the rent. One need only look at the slash-and-burn mentality this Government adopted regarding the Community Building Partnership funds—\$700,000 allocated under the former Labor Government to my electorate of Wollongong has been reduced to a measly \$300,000. It is inexcusable. I also take issue with the way these things are being done—a sly announcement that the State Office Block is gone during a parliamentary non-sitting week. Once again, the Government is selling off important infrastructure in Wollongong and the Minister for the Illawarra is nowhere to be seen. This Government is clearly all about taking from the people of Wollongong and providing nothing in return. The people of Wollongong are not fooled and they will not forget.

### DUBBO ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.23 p.m.]: Traditionally this is a time when we mark the beginning of the Higher School Certificate and celebrate students finishing their schooling after some 13 years. During the winter break I had the pleasure of visiting Ballimore Public School. There can be no better experience than watching children grow in a caring and nurturing environment right from the beginning of their school education. The sheer excitement of the children about their surroundings and the sense of wonder they had about each endeavour was a joy to witness. At Ballimore Public School I was met by an excited bunch of talented young performers who had recently brought great honour to themselves and their community. Their school choir, led by their teacher, achieved first place in the Dubbo Eisteddfod for their very own composition, *Ballimore for Me*. The school has picked up 11 trophies over the years at the eisteddfod.

This year's award went to the winner of the small schools choir competition instigated in 1996. I was fortunate enough to hear a spirited rendition of the song by all 10 students of this wonderful school during my visit and I was delighted to discover that the school had decided to adopt it as their new school song. No doubt future generations will be told of the song's significance and the role played by these students in its creation. Each small community tends to identify with one or a few local organisations and buildings that hold particular significance and play an important role in serving that community's needs. Ballimore Public School and its community play that important role in the local community. The State Government recognises its role in helping to foster these important community institutions and, where appropriate, assisting with the maintenance and upgrade of its infrastructure. I was pleased to see that investment continues at the Ballimore Public School. It is one of the best-kept, well-maintained and wonderfully presented schools in my electorate.

In addition to my visit to Ballimore Public School, during the winter break I also had the pleasure of visiting a number of other small community schools within my electorate, including Corinella Public School, which I have spoken about in this place; Wongarbone Central School, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary this Saturday, and I wish the school community all the very best; and Yeoval Central School. These three schools, in particular, in spite of their size, have been able to mark out a distinctive cultural identity that is uniquely their own, and my regular visits to the schools are always personally enriching experiences. The schools capture the essence of what it means to belong to a small, thriving community.

These schools are important institutions that deserve ongoing support to ensure that future generations of local children have access to the same benefits that their parents and grandparents enjoyed. I pledge this support to all the small schools within the Dubbo electorate. The schools also provide a vital link to the wider community where children and their families connect with others, share their experiences and develop a better understanding of their collective needs and responsibilities. I thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Ballimore Public School and I look forward to returning very soon.

### **SYDNEY UNIVERSITY SOCCER FOOTBALL CLUB YOUTH LEAGUE**

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [7.27 p.m.]: Tonight I acknowledge the success of Sydney University Soccer Football Club Youth League and its head coach, Stan Stamatellis, in the 2012 Football NSW Super Youth League competition. Strangely enough, in football—or soccer, as it was formerly called—representative football is characterised not by individual zones or areas but by individual football clubs, and Sydney University Soccer Football Club is where elite local players from the eastern suburbs get an opportunity to represent the area at the highest level possible. Finishing second to Central Coast in the club championship in the Super Youth League was a fabulous result for the season. Remarkably, of all five youth league teams that made it to the grand final, three were successful grand final winners, three of the five won their minor premierships and all five teams made it through to the semi-finals.

Eastern Suburbs is a relatively small soccer association area compared with other parts of Sydney and the association is not capable of supporting elite players or even properly managing its own local players in the sport for a variety of reasons. Accordingly, for some decades the eastern suburbs area did not do very well in representative football. However, four years ago the Sydney University Soccer Football Club Youth League team won the division 1 club championship and was promoted to Super Youth League. In successive years the team came second, fourth and second. The club has become a wonderful institution in the development of eastern suburbs children and has been providing them with a very good environment not only for playing football but also for developing young football players.

Over a number of years I have volunteered my time to chair the local Sydney University Soccer Football Club Youth League committee and in so doing I have watched in amazement the head coach, Stan Stamatellis, dedicate virtually all of his spare, and probably professional, time to the development of not only local children but also local soccer coaches. He has surrounded himself with local people to coach the children and he has taught them how important it is to be a role model for young children participating in sport. I have known Stan Stamatellis for a number of years. As a youngster he was a talented player and he has become a talented coach. For most of the years I have known him he has been a larrikin, but in recent years I have watched him mature into somebody who is a wonderful role model for children participating in a sport that needs all the role models it can get.

Last Thursday it was my privilege to attend the Sydney University Soccer Football Club Super Youth League presentation and present Stan Stamatellis with a citation for outstanding service to the sporting community. I was also present to watch the president of the Sydney University Soccer Football Club present to Stan Stamatellis the outstanding service award, which the university presents only on rare occasions when somebody makes an outstanding contribution to the club. It is my privilege to record the contribution of this man to the eastern suburbs community.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery)**: We all have a Stan Stamatellis in our electorates. On behalf of the House I thank the member for Heffron for his contribution. It was great to see the Jets thrash Sydney Football Club on the weekend.

### **LIVERPOOL ROTARY POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [7.32 p.m.]: I will share the achievements of local police who were honoured recently at the 2012 Combined Rotary Clubs of Liverpool Police Officer of the Year Awards.

Each year the Combined Rotary Clubs of Liverpool organise these police awards to acknowledge the important work our local police do and to thank them for their commitment to what must often be a difficult job. The award began locally in 1999 and has now been adopted throughout Australia. Our police are always out there working hard to protect our communities and to keep our streets safe. Their job requires them to risk their lives for the greater good and often with very little thanks or reward. Their families also deserve thanks for regularly sacrificing time with their loved ones. As always, this year's nominations were of an extremely high calibre and showed the wealth of talent in our Liverpool and Green Valley local area commands. For the top award 20 officers were put forward from Liverpool Local Area Command, which looks after my electorate, and 10 officers from Green Valley Local Area Command.

In the end the award was presented to Liverpool Detective Senior Constable Christie Houldin for her exceptional work on Strike Force Woodvale. Members may have heard of her work in the news when the story broke not too long ago about a child prostitution ring in Warwick Farm. It was believed that the child prostitution ring had been operating for at least two years at Warwick Farm, and Strike Force Woodvale was set up to address it. Back in May detectives from Liverpool Local Area Command arrested two sisters thought to be behind the prostitution ring, which is said to have consisted of at least seven girls aged 12 to 16. Detective Senior Constable Houldin was the lead detective in the arrest of the sisters. One was only 22 years old and had been arrested previously for the same crime, while it was the first arrest for her 19-year-old sister. Detective Senior Constable Houldin also coordinated the final stage of the investigation, which resulted in the charging of six people.

In total, the strike force investigators arrested six persons involved in child prostitution offences and laid 70 charges. It was Detective Senior Constable Houldin's compassion for the victims and her determination to catch those responsible that made her stand out to the nominations committee. From all reports, she carried out the investigations and interviews in a professional and caring manner, and she is a dedicated officer in the NSW Police Force. She should be congratulated on the time and effort she put in to the investigation. From Green Valley Local Area Command Senior Constable Mary Watson was awarded for her work with the community's at-risk youth to steer them away from becoming victims of crime, to improve the relationship between youth and police, and to break down any negative perceptions. Of particular note was a work experience program she devised and initiated for high school students who expressed an interest in a career in the NSW Police Force. This has generated fantastic feedback from the schools and students who have participated.

This is the third year that I have attended the awards and it marks the second year in a row that female officers have won both of the Combined Rotary Clubs of Liverpool Police Officer of the Year Awards. Both were worthy recipients of the awards and I congratulate them again. The big event was also attended by Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, Assistant Commissioner Frank Menelli, Liverpool Superintendent Ray King, Green Valley Acting Superintendent Dave Scrimgeour, and newly elected Liverpool Mayor Ned Mannoun and councillors. This year we are celebrating 150 years of policing in New South Wales and 75 years of the police citizens youth clubs. Like all good celebrations, there was cake.

President of the Liverpool Greenway Rotary Club and member of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Sam Cavallaro, of Cavallaro's Cakes, created a police-tape themed and delicious tribute to mark the occasion. I acknowledge the contribution of the Liverpool, Liverpool Greenway and Liverpool West Rotary clubs who join forces each year to choose the winners and who host this important event. It could not be staged without the sponsors and, of course, the hard work of June Young, OAM, who remains a tireless community member. June is not only the secretary of the 2012 Police Officer of the Year Committee but she also has a long history of community engagement.

June is active within Quota International, Rotary, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Legacy and the RSL, and she has been a Justice of the Peace for more than 30 years. She is phenomenal. In addition, she is also involved in numerous local committees and organisations, including Miracle Babies, which I have spoken about many times in this House. She even ran as an Independent mayoral candidate in the recent local government elections in Liverpool. To say that June is a busy woman is an understatement. I am definitely in awe of her strong community spirit. Even on election day she stood guarding a hole in the footpath so that no-one tripped over while she was handing out her how-to-vote cards. I take this opportunity to acknowledge her hard work for her local community and once again to thank our local police and all the supporters of the awards night.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ARCHBISHOP AGHAN BALIOZIAN**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [7.37 p.m.]: Last month we lost a very valuable and much-loved man in our community, Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of

Australia and New Zealand. Archbishop Baliozian was highly regarded in Australia and around the world for his wisdom and commitment to Christian unity, interreligious dialogue and peace building. More than 600 people farewelled him at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection in Chatswood, including guests from New Zealand and three archbishops from Jerusalem, India and Armenia. Willoughby City Council and the Armenian Church Council are in discussions about establishing a memorial to honour his support of Australian-Armenian relationships.

There are many people of Armenian descent in my electorate of Davidson. I am also privileged to chair the Australia-Armenia New South Wales Parliamentary Friendship Group. I share my electorate with executive members of the Armenian National Committee of Australia and with hundreds of Armenian students attending the nearby Armenian College at Ingleside. In fact, just a few weeks ago around 1,500 members of Sydney's Armenian community gathered on the college campus to celebrate the twenty-first anniversary of Armenia's re-establishing independence. Many Armenians in the electorate of Davidson attend the Armenian Apostolic Church in nearby Chatswood, of which Archbishop Aghan Baliozian was the spiritual leader. Always approachable and gregarious, the archbishop was captivating as a speaker. He never used notes. He would simply speak from the heart, capturing the attention of young and old in his congregation and developing a strong and loyal following. It is easy to understand why our community feels his loss so enormously.

Archbishop Aghan Baliozian was born after World War II in Aleppo, Syria, earlier a safe haven for Armenian genocide survivors. At the age of 22 he enrolled as a student of theology at the Armenian seminary in Jerusalem where he was ordained a priest before being appointed dean of the seminary in 1974. On a trip to Jerusalem earlier this year I met with a number of senior Armenian leaders who studied under him and spoke fondly of him. He was remembered for his love of sport and, in particular, soccer. He had a reputation for having a sure foot that could kick the ball right across the field and straight into the opposing team's goal, apparently with the greatest of ease. Archbishop Baliozian arrived in Australia in 1975 to serve as Vicar General of the diocese before being appointed as Primate of Australia and New Zealand in 1982.

As an active and passionate ecumenist, Archbishop Baliozian served as the first president of the National Council of Churches in Australia from 1994 to 1999. He also represented the Armenian Church on the World Council of Churches, and was president of the NSW Ecumenical Council. The General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, Reverend Tara Curlewis, honoured Archbishop Baliozian for his outstanding commitment to ecumenism, describing his role in promoting both Christian unity and the importance of interfaith dialogue as a continuing legacy for the churches. Ms Curlewis said that the fellowship of churches had been, "Touched by his leadership, passion for ecumenism and his encouragement of the youth and his love for people." Archbishop Baliozian was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1995, and in 2001 the Centenary Medal for his significant contribution and service to Australia and to the Armenian community.

It is well entrenched in Armenian history to excel, particularly in the fields of art and invention. I am sure I speak on behalf of all who knew him, Armenian or not, when I say that Archbishop Aghan Baliozian was most skilled in the art of communicating. He was skilled at bringing people together to talk, to discuss, to unite and to listen. He will be greatly missed. I express again my condolences, as I did initially through the Armenian National Committee of Australia, on his passing, while still celebrating his contribution to the Armenian community and to others whose lives this remarkable man touched.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 7.42 p.m. until  
Wednesday 17 October 2010 at 10.00 a.m.**

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