

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 25 October 2012

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

CANCER INSTITUTE (NSW) AMENDMENT BILL 2012

RAIL SAFETY (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) AMENDMENT (REMOVAL OF APPLICATION FEE) BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Mr John Robertson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [10.11 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This is a very simple bill but it is an important bill. It is a bill that keeps this Government to one of its fundamental promises before the last election, a promise it has since slithered away from. At present an application for government information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act costs \$30. This private member's bill abolishes the requirement to pay a fee. The bill also provides that if any processing charge is imposed the first hour of dealing with the application will be free. It is time for New South Wales to lead the way when it comes to accountability, transparency and scrutiny of government. The bill is a step towards that goal. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. The State of New South Wales is in uncharted waters. Never before has a Government come to office promising that a State needs more public servants, not less, and then initiated savage savings cuts to public services.

The Government promised to improve health. Instead, \$3 billion is being slashed from hospitals right across this State—3,600 jobs gone. Front-line worker Karyn Jarvie, who bravely came to Parliament yesterday to tell her story, is one of those people: she has lost her job. The Government promised to improve education. Instead, \$1.7 billion is being cut from our public schools, our Catholic and independent schools and our TAFE colleges. The Government promised to care for the most vulnerable people in our community. Yet a shocking document came to light during budget estimates which detailed savage cuts of \$500 million across the Department of Community Services. Programs in the firing line include child sexual assault programs, anti-domestic violence programs and funding to non-government organisations such as the Liverpool Women's Resource Centre.

This Government's cuts have placed the State of New South Wales in uncharted waters. Put simply, the public needs this bill. The people of New South Wales have a right to know exactly what this Government is slashing. The first step towards this is being able to initiate a freedom of information request without the existence of a cost deterrent. The bill that I introduced waives the \$30 application fee, exactly as the O'Farrell Government promised but has so far failed to deliver. It will allow every man, woman and child in New South Wales to demand answers from the Government as to how services are being delivered and how taxpayer dollars

are spent. It will allow media organisations and political parties to hold this Government to account. It will shame the most secretive government in our State's history into tossing out a few more crumbs of information and being a bit more honest with the people of New South Wales. The Government should have no problem supporting this bill, given its promise before the last election. I quote from the Liberal-Nationals campaign document entitled "Restoring your right to know—Improved FOI in NSW". It states:

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition believes that the community has a right to openness, accountability and transparency when it comes to Government decision making and information.

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition commits to open government through the highest standards of public access to Government information, including best practice in Freedom of Information (FOI) processes.

Citizens should not need to be forced into the position of having to demand information from Government—it should be freely available.

Key reforms under a NSW Liberal/Nationals Government will be ... Abolish FOI application fees.

Where is this reform after 18 months into the O'Farrell Government? Why has this Government slithered away from its promise? This is a government doing everything humanly possible to shield itself from scrutiny, a government chronically averse to transparency—even as it cuts billions of dollars from public services that will affect this State for generations to come. At a time when cynicism about the O'Farrell Government is at an all-time high, we need a better system of public access to government information as the last line of defence, because this is a government trashing every alternative mechanism, every check and balance to ensure transparency. One obvious example was the budget estimates process that was turned into a joke by Ministers stonewalling, running out the clock and hiding behind their bureaucrats. This year the Government delivered the most secretive batch of budget papers ever seen in the history of this State. The Government has suggested \$1.24 billion-worth of cuts to services and programs, but they were not broken down by department. All of those cuts are buried in the fine print.

The Government has gone out of its way to stop the release of the Booz & Company consultants report into RailCorp and it has attempted to claim privilege on WorkCover documents in a section 52 motion. This a farcical stance that was only overturned after the Opposition challenged the decision. You would have got more information out of the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev than you do under Barry O'Farrell in New South Wales. In recent weeks the Labor Opposition has literally asked hundreds of questions about government spending on important matters such as the amount of taxpayer dollars being wasted on advertising, the use of consultants, and the number of departmental staff and media advisers. But does this Government ever provide any answers to these questions? No. Instead we get obfuscation and lame answers that refer the Opposition to some dusty year-old report.

Under the previous Government the number of staff in each department was there for everyone to see in the budget papers, but not anymore—not under Barry O'Farrell. This Government fobs off all of the questions it is asked with weasel words such as "the employee numbers change from time to time". Well, no kidding. When 15,000 jobs are slashed across New South Wales it is a pretty drastic change. The point is that every person in New South Wales who relies on a Government service and every front-line worker delivering a vital service deserves to know what this Government has in store for them. Instead this Government is slashing staff across government departments and trying to cover it up. I now turn to the Government's approach to Government Information (Public Access) Act requests. We see the same sorry track record of obfuscation.

Agencies deliberately overcharge for processing requests, desperately trying to block the release of information in politically sensitive documents relating to the Star casino and the closure of Grafton Correctional Centre. The Labor Opposition requested the Infrastructure NSW board minutes. Eventually we received a letter saying that they were Cabinet-in-confidence and requesting more information. That was a lame excuse to drag out the process. Frankly, the average person would give up. The Opposition also requested access to a copy of the visitors book for Governor Macquarie Tower. Apparently 35,000 people are listed in that book. What was the Government's response to that request? It said that the request could be granted only after 35,000 people had been interviewed to ascertain that they did not object to their name being revealed. What is the Government trying to hide? Is it trying to hide the fact that Michael Photios regularly visits all the offices in Governor Macquarie Tower, or is it trying to hide someone else? One simply cannot make up this sort of thing.

The Premier promised a new era of openness, transparency and accountability and that he would abolish fees for freedom of information requests. However, after 18 months we see yet another failure and another broken promise. He has done absolutely nothing to fulfil that promise. He and his colleagues should be

ashamed. The Labor Opposition has introduced this legislation to ensure that the Government finally keeps one of its promises. It is a small but symbolic step to shed greater light on the most secretive government in this State's history. This Government has shamefully sought to hide the extent of its savage cuts from the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

General business notice of motion (for bills) No. 3 postponed by Mr Jamie Parker.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

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

TAFE NSW RIVERINA INSTITUTE

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates staff of TAFE NSW Riverina Institute on winning the Training Provider of the Year category at the NSW Training Awards.
- (2) Recognises the work that is necessary to be carried out by the staff to secure such an Award for vocational education and training.
- (3) Commends all staff for providing a wonderful environment allowing students to learn and grow whilst securing qualifications for their future.

DAVE AND GINA LETELE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Narrandera IGA supermarket owner, Dave Letele and his partner Gina, for their generosity assisting those who are in need, including the purchase of a car for a Narrandera resident whose uninsured car was torched.
- (2) Wishes them all the best in furthering their business in the Narrandera community.

NBN NEWS JUNIOR JOURNOS PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the importance of journalism and journalistic ethics to the proper functioning of a democratic society.
- (2) Acknowledges the value of the NBN News Junior Journos program, which gives primary school students the opportunity to experience the challenges and duties inherent in being a journalist.
- (3) Encourages the continuation of this program and the development of similar programs in the future.

MOLONG SHOW SOCIETY LIFE MEMBER DEBBIE HALL

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Debbie Hall on being made a life member of the Molong Show Society during the opening ceremony of the 2012 Molong Show.
- (2) Notes that Debbie Hall has been a tireless worker for the Molong Show Society for more than 30 years.
- (3) Recognises that she was chief pavilion steward for the 2012 Show and in the past has been chief steward in many sections of the show, been secretary for more than three years and has co-ordinated the Society's Miss Showgirl competition.

MUDGEES COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION HONORARY MEMBER SHIRLEY AULD

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Shirley Auld on being named the first honorary member of the Mudgees Country Women's Association on Country Women's Association Awareness Day.

- (2) Notes that honorary membership of the Country Women's Association is presented to people who are not members but whose work for the community is worthy of recognition.
- (3) Recognises Shirley Auld's voluntary work of pastoral care and community work through her involvement in the Anglican Church and recognises that she was a founding member of the Anglican Women's Association in Mudgee.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION HONORARY MEMBER MAYOR ANNE JONES

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House congratulates Wellington Mayor Anne Jones on being awarded honorary membership of the Country Women's Association on Country Women's Association Awareness Day, in recognition of the wonderful work she does for the town of Wellington.

YOUNG BUILDER OF THE YEAR ANTHONY LYNCH

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mudgee builder Anthony Lynch on being named Young Builder of the Year at the Master Builders Association NSW Awards.
- (2) Notes that Anthony Lynch is a member of the Lynch Building Group that won trophies in the categories of Contract Homes up to \$500,000 and the Best Use of Bricks, both for the company's display home at Kellett Drive, Mudgee.
- (3) Recognises that this was the first time in many years that the NSW Young Builder of the Year award has been awarded to a regional builder.

RETIREMENT OF RODERICK BROOKS

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Roderick (Rod) Brooks, the Principal of East Hills Boys Technology High School, is retiring after many years of dedicated service.
- (2) Congratulates Rod Brooks for his contribution to both the life of the school and to the East Hills community.
- (3) Commends Rod Brooks for his determination in transforming East Hills Boys Technology High School into an outstanding institution of education, instruction and learning.
- (4) Acknowledges the achievements of all the teachers and staff at East Hills Boys Technology School for their excellence in school education.
- (5) Wishes Rod Brooks and his family all the very best for the future.

BOER WAR 110TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 31 May 2012 marks the 110th anniversary of the end of the Boer War, fought between 1899 and 1902.
- (2) Recognises Australia's participation in the war marked the first time Australia fought as a nation rather than as members of colonial contingents.
- (3) Remembers the service and sacrifice of Australia's first military men and women who served in the war.
- (4) Commends the National Boer War Memorial Association for keeping the memory of the Boer War proudly alive.
- (5) Congratulates the New South Wales Committee of the National Boer War Memorial Association for its excellent and informative publication "Monumentally Speaking."

NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr GLENN BROOKES—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 29 September 2012 is National Police Remembrance Day, a day that holds special significance for police throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands.
- (2) Remembers and honours those police officers whose lives have been cut short while performing their duty as a police officer or who have lost their lives through illness or other circumstances.
- (3) Commends all police officers for the role they play in society in providing assistance, help and protection for the community.

SOUTH COAST REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION CHAIRMAN BRIAN LONGBOTTOM

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Brian Longbottom on being elected chairman of South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation replacing outgoing chairman Rob Pollock.
- (2) Acknowledges Brian Longbottom's ongoing excellent representation of local tourism operators as chairman of Kiama Tourism.

RETIREMENT OF ROSEMARY TURNER

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the retirement of Rosemary Turner as the president of the Robertson Show Society.
- (2) Notes Rosemary Turner's many years of service, dedication and hard work involved with the Robertson Show Society and her efforts towards funding the refurbishment of the Robertson Showground Pavilion.

ROBERTSON SHOW SOCIETY PRESIDENT LEESA STRATFORD

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Leesa Stratford on being elected the president of the Robertson Show Society.
- (2) Acknowledges Leesa Stratford previous role as the society's secretary and wishes her every success in her new role leading into the 2013 Robertson Show.

WENDY STUBBS COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wendy Stubbs of Albion Park for her hard work and contribution whilst serving on the Shellharbour City Council Traffic Committee.
- (2) Acknowledges Wendy's long history of involvement with community groups in Albion Park and her passionate commitment to the Illawarra region.

ACTIVATED GROUP

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dane Cornish from the Activated Group on being named Young Business Leader of the Year at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.
- (2) Acknowledges the Activated Group on being awarded as winner of the Outstanding e-Business category.

SILOS ESTATE

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Rajarshi and Sofie Ray of Silos Estate in Berry on being named Shoalhaven's Business of the Year at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.
- (2) Acknowledges the reputation of Silos Estate as a premier location in the Shoalhaven to host country weddings and corporate events.

SHOALHAVEN BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR JOHN LAMONT

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates John Lamont of Nowra Chemicals on being named Business Leader of the Year at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.
- (2) Acknowledges John Lamont's contribution to the Shoalhaven business community as the immediate past president of the Shoalhaven Business Chamber.

EAST COAST FIRE AND SAFETY

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House congratulates East Coast Fire and Safety on recently winning the Outstanding Home Based Business as well as the Retail and Personal Service Excellence categories at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

SOUTH COAST FIRST AID TRAINING

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House congratulates South Coast First Aid Training on recently winning the Outstanding New Shoalhaven Business category at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

ASSOCIATION OF BHANIN EL-MINIEH

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the fundraising efforts of The Association of Bhanin El-Minieh in its efforts to raise funds for Westmead Hospital's cancer department.
- (2) Congratulates the association for organising an exciting and fun filled event on 23 September 2012.

CENTRAL COAST KIDS IN NEED INC.

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises that in 2011 Central Coast Kids in Need supported 172 Central Coast families with children diagnosed with cancer or other life threatening illnesses.
- (2) Acknowledges that for the third year in a row Central Coast Kids in Need have received a grant from the Cecilia Kilkerry Foundation, which is only awarded to groups who deliver outstanding service.
- (3) Congratulates Central Coast Kids in Need for its outstanding work for families with illnesses.

CENTRAL COAST VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges and congratulates Doug Rose on being named the 2012 Central Coast Volunteer of the Year for his outstanding contribution in volunteering with the Peninsula Community Centre and also Bowls Central Coast.
- (2) Recognises and congratulates Vince Wiegold of Ettalong Beach on being named the Central Coast Senior Volunteer of the Year for 2012 for his work with Hammond Care in Woy Woy.
- (3) Congratulates the 2012 Volunteer Team of the Year, which went to the Lifeline Sudden Traumatic Death Response Team with a high commendation also for the Red Cross Gosford Volunteer Team.

TRIBUTE TO HEATHER MCKINLEY

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Heather McKinley for her work with the Coolamon Girl Guides for a period of more than 30 years.
- (2) Pays tribute to her work with the young members of the community.
- (3) Recognises the importance of role models in encouraging citizens of the future to participate in community activities and organisations.

TRIBUTE TO RON POTTER

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Offers condolences to the family of Ron Potter of Griffith who passed away recently.
- (2) Recognises the wonderful contribution that Ron Potter has made to the Griffith community and as a leader in the grape and wine industries.

LEETON CAN ASSIST PRESIDENT SHIRLEY WOOD

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Shirley Wood who has made a significant contribution to the Leeton Can Assist organisation as president for more than 30 years.
- (2) Wishes Shirley Wood a happy, healthy and successful future in her continuing roles within the organisation.
- (3) Recognises the importance of organisations such as Can Assist, particularly in rural areas where access to health services are limited and travel is expensive.
- (4) Notes the value of the organisation to local patients and their carers who are in need of financial and moral support in times of hardship.

BULAHDELAH SHOKOTAN KARATE CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Cathryn Guthrie, a member of the Bulahdelah Shokotan Karate Club, on being runner up in the NSW State Championship for point sparring as well as for continuous sparring at the Australian Martial Arts State Championships held in Sydney.
- (2) Notes that several club members participated in the championships, each of whom did well, including Elke Studdert who won the NSW State Championship for sumo.

STEBERCRAFT PTY LTD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bruce and Beryl Steber, founders of boat building company Stebercraft International, on winning the Bruce Cowan Memorial Award and the Manufacturing Business of the Year Award at the fifth annual Manning Valley Business Awards.
- (2) Notes that Bruce and Beryl Steber have spent 66 years in the boat building industry and started their business in Sydney before moving it to Taree in 1973.
- (3) Notes that Bruce and Beryl's three sons work alongside them in the company and that more than 100 apprentices have begun their careers at Stebercraft.
- (4) Acknowledges that Stebercraft has an outstanding and continuing commitment to the Manning region through its sponsorship of many clubs, service groups and charities.

WINGHAM AND VALLEY VETS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the staff of Wingham and Valley Vets, including Peter and Louise Rourke, John Dooley, Lisa Swannack, Peta Annos, Hannah Kranz, Natalie South, Robyn Thomas, Sue Cook and Donna Bouro, on winning the Business of the Year Award, the top honour at the Manning Valley Business Awards.
- (2) Congratulates Wingham and Valley Vets for also receiving the Professional Services Business of the Year at the awards.

TAREE WILDCATS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Taree Wildcats and their captain-coach, Ben Sedlen on winning the Mid North Coast Premier League, with goal scorers Ricky Campbell, Brad Thompson and Justin Atkins (2), who also won the man of the match award.
- (2) Notes that Taree defeated the Macleay Valley Rangers 4-2 in the first grade final and 1-0 in the reserve grade final.
- (3) Notes that Taree also won the title in 2001 and 2009 and that 2012 is the Wildcats' most successful season in the Premier League since the competition started in 2000.
- (4) Acknowledges that Ben Sedlen is retiring from football on a winning note, having also been a member of the 2009 premiership team.

ABOUT INCLUSION ORGANISATION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Notes that About Inclusion was formerly known as Manning Valley Respite Care Services Incorporated.
- (2) Acknowledges that the organisation has been active in the Taree community since 1986 with local people supporting residents with disabilities and their families to access their community through respite care and social support.
- (3) Congratulates the organisation's management committee of Peter Craig (president), Sue Doherty (vice president), Judy Hoppe (secretary), Mark Driscoll (treasurer), John Andrews and Mary Blackman (committee members).
- (4) Congratulates Nola Allan, service manager and her staff for their commitment to their roles and their efforts in providing such a vital service to those in need of the support of About Inclusion.

WINGHAM WARRIORS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Wingham Football Club on winning the Football Mid North Coast Men's All Age Premiership, the club's first premiership in 38 years.
- (2) Notes that Wingham defeated Bulahdelah 1-0 in the grand final.

- (3) Congratulates the Wingham Football Club on also winning the Football Mid North Coast Zone Championship by defeating 2011 champions, Pacific Palms 3-2 in extra time after the score was level at the end of normal time.
- (4) Congratulates Warriors' player of the match Dylan Cowie who scored two goals.

SAMMARA SCHMITZER NEWCASTLE JETS SELECTION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Taree born footballer Sammara Schmitzer on being selected by the Newcastle Jets to play in the women's W-League competition.
- (2) Notes that although Sammara now lives in Nabad, she travels to Newcastle to train at least four days per week and has had to resign from her job in order to fulfil her commitments to her new semi-professional club.

NATIONAL BREEM ANGLER OF THE YEAR RUSSELL BABEKUL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Russell Babekul of Wingham on being named the National Bream Angler of the Year, which is one of the most coveted fishing titles in Australia.
- (2) Notes that Russell won the title by participating in only four of the eight fishing tournaments across the country, winning two and finishing fourth and sixth in the others, with the best four counting towards competition points.
- (3) Acknowledges that Russell is now the number one ranked angler in the tournament with the largest lead over his competitors since the competition began in 2006.

CLIVE AND PATRICIA WILKES SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Clive and Patricia Wilkes of Taree on celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 23 August 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges that close to one hundred family members from across Australia came to the secret anniversary party held at Wingham Services Club, much to the surprise of Clive and Patricia.
- (3) Notes that both Clive and Patricia come from large families, having 18 siblings between them, as well as 8 children, 17 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

MAYOR RICHARD QUINN CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mayor Richard Quinn on his re-election to Hunters Hill Council and his election as mayor at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Mayor Quinn for his continuing contribution to the local community through his service on Hunters Hill Council.
- (3) Wishes to Mayor Quinn and his colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

COUNCILLOR PETER ASTRIDGE CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Councillor Peter Astridge on his re-election to Hunters Hill Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Councillor Astridge for his continuing contribution to the Hunters Hill community.
- (3) Wishes Councillor Astridge and his colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

COUNCILLOR ZAC MILES CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Councillor Zac Miles on his re-election to Hunters Hill Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Councillor Miles for his continuing contribution to the Hunters Hill community.
- (3) Wishes Councillor Miles and his colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

COUNCILLOR MEREDITH SHEIL CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Councillor Meredith Sheil on her re-election to Hunters Hill Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Councillor Sheil for her continuing contribution to the Hunters Hill community.
- (3) Wishes Councillor Sheil and her colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

JUSTINE MCLAUGHLIN CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Justine McLaughlin on her election to Hunters Hill Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Mrs McLaughlin for contributing to the local community by serving on Hunters Hill Council.
- (3) Wishes Mrs McLaughlin and her colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

MARK BENNETT CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mark Bennett on his election to Hunters Hill Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Mark Bennett for contributing to the local community by serving on Hunters Hill Council.
- (3) Wishes Mark Bennett and his colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

GARY BIRD CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Gary Bird on his election to Hunters Hill Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections.
- (2) Commends Gary Bird for contributing to the local community by serving on Hunters Hill Council.
- (3) Wishes Gary Bird and his colleagues every success on Hunters Hill Council for the next four years.

ROSS SHEERIN CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Commends Ross Sheerin on his long period of civic service to the local community as a councillor on Hunters Hill Council.
- (2) Notes that Ross Sheerin served on Hunters Hill Council from 1988 to 1999, then again from 2004 to 2012.
- (3) Notes that Ross Sheerin served as mayor of Hunters Hill Council from 1993 to 1995.
- (4) Wishes Ross Sheerin every success for his future and acknowledges his great contribution to his municipality.

MURRAY BUTT CIVIC SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS—That this House:

- (1) Commends Mr Murray Butt on his long period of civic service to the Hunters Hill community as a Councillor on Hunters Hill Council.
- (2) Notes that Mr Butt served on Hunters Hill Council from 1992 to 1996, then again from 2008 to 2012.
- (3) Wishes Mr Butt every success for his future and acknowledges his great contribution to his municipality.

ESSAY COMPETITION WINNER SHEREE KUAN

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 12-year-old Cherrybrook author Sheree Kuan for winning first prize in the *Sydney Morning Herald's* annual "What Matters" essay competition.
- (2) Wishes Sheree all the very best in her future as she pursues her dream of becoming a vet and part-time author.

TAEKWONDO WORLD TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Taekwondo World in Castle Hill on celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary on 7 October 2012.
- (2) Hopes the sports club has many more years of encouraging young children in the community to get involved in a worthwhile sport.

SWIMMER SCOTT KILBY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Wishes 15-year-old Scott Kilby of William Clark College all the best of luck at the 2012 qualifiers for the National Swimming Championships.
- (2) Congratulates Scott on his dedication to training and the sacrifices he has made to ensure he swims the 50 metre and 100 metre in his personal best time.

MOTORCYCLIST JACK PASSFIELD

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 14-year-old Castle Hill motorcycle racer Jack Passfield for coming second at both the New South Wales and the Australian Motorcycle Championships in 2011 and 2012.
- (2) Wishes Jack the best for the future on and off the track.

ST LUCY'S SCHOOL

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the important services institutions such as St Lucy's School at Wahroonga, which caters for students with disabilities, provide to the community.
- (2) Congratulates the more than 50 students of Gilroy College in Castle Hill, including James Gough, for participating in Without Words Week by not speaking for a whole day, in order to raise awareness of St Lucy's School.

CASTLE HILL ROTARY CLUB AWARDS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the police officers who received 2012 Castle Hill Rotary Club Awards, including:
 - (a) Hills Policeman of the Year—Senior Constable Rob Paterson,
 - (b) Police Employee of the Year for the Hills—Robyn Craft,
 - (c) Police Leadership Award winners—Sgt Mark Fehon and Sgt Paul Van Dyke, and
 - (d) New Officer of the Year—Constable Adam Davis.
- (6) Thanks these officers and all the other police officers who do great work in the Hills community.

REACH FOR THE RAINBOW FOUNDATION

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the more than 400 runners and the 1,500 strong crowd who participated in the 2012 Hills News M2 Run for the Hills which raised over \$30,000 for the Reach for the Rainbow Foundation that provides early intervention services to children with disabilities.
- (2) Commends the efforts of Yvonne Keane, Reach for the Rainbow founder and chairwoman of Run for the Hills, for her tireless efforts to change the lives of children with disabilities.

CLARENCE VALLEY BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that the Clarence Valley Business Excellence Awards were held on 1 September 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the members of the dedicated committee who ensured the success of the Awards, including:
 - (a) Chair—Sandy Stewart,
 - (b) Deputy—Chair John Robson,

- (c) Committee members—Dean Broughton and Helyn Davison,
- (d) Grafton Chamber of Commerce representative—Janeen Booth,
- (e) Yamba Chamber of Commerce representative—Lyn Watson, and
- (f) Treasurer—Denene Cavanagh.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE LEONARD

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bruce Leonard on having the Grafton Basketball Facility named in his honour.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and commitment Bruce has brought to the sport of basketball in Grafton and within the Clarence Valley.
- (3) Wishes Bruce many more years of involvement in the sport he loves and has been involved in for more than 60 years.

LIONS CLUBS 39TH DISTRICT CONVENTION

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the Lions Club 39th District Convention held in Grafton.
- (2) Congratulates District Governor Deyann McDonnell and the five Lions Clubs in the Clarence Valley for their collaborative work in ensuring the success of the event.
- (3) Acknowledges the contribution that Lions Clubs make within their communities with the many projects they undertake.

SPAR BRAND AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bob and Judith Little on having their Spar supermarket named Spar Brand Ambassador of the Year.
- (2) Acknowledges the strong bond Bob and Judith and their staff have forged with their community by providing the exemplary customer service, consistent standards and tailored local offers.
- (3) Wishes Bob and Judith many years of continued success.

CASINO SHOW SOCIETY

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Casino Show Society on the success of the 122nd Annual Show, held on 12 and 13 October 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the president of the Show Society, Doug Bennett and the honorary secretary, Susan Serone, together with the many volunteers who put the show together.
- (3) Acknowledges the three volunteers who were awarded life membership of the Show Society, Warren and Brenda Armfield and George Parker, for their commitment to the show over many years.
- (4) Congratulates this year's Miss Show Girl Hannah Brooks and runner-up Cathy Broadrick.

MARINE RESCUE PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER SHIRLEY CLARK

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution Shirley Clark from Shoal Bay has made to the community through her involvement with the Port Stephens unit of Marine Rescue NSW.
- (2) Acknowledges her work in various aspects of the organisation and in particular as a watch keeper in the search and rescue communications centre, with the ladies auxiliary and Inner Light Cottage Museum.
- (3) Thanks Mrs Clark for her volunteering efforts in the community.
- (4) Congratulates Mrs Clark for being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST BARRY GERAGHTY

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the valuable contribution Barry Geraghty, from Medowie, has made to the community through his volunteer work over many years with the Raymond Terrace Community Church and the Irrawang Public School breakfast program.
- (2) Congratulates Barry Geraghty for being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST DIANNE CLARKE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the valuable contribution Dianne Clarke, from Raymond Terrace, has made to the community through her volunteer work with the Raymond Terrace Community Church, and as a Kids Hope mentor at the Irrawang Public School breakfast program.
- (2) Congratulates Dianne Clarke for being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

NSW TOURISM AWARDS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the hundreds of tourism businesses across New South Wales that entered the highly contested 2012 NSW Tourism Awards.
- (2) Acknowledges the winners and finalists across a total of 31 categories.
- (3) Congratulates Oliver Philpot, CEO of Central Coast Tourism, who received the Gold Award for Young Achiever of the Year, and wishes him great success at the Tourism Australia National Awards.

PREMIER'S NSW EXPORT AWARDS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the export companies who were recipients of the 2012 Premier's NSW Export Awards.
- (2) Congratulates Sanitarium Health and Wellness, from Berkeley Vale in The Entrance electorate, for its outstanding achievement in receiving the Hunter/Central Coast Exporter Award.

BLUE LIGHT DISCOS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the outstanding role Blue Light discos play in the local community by providing supervised, drug and alcohol free events for young people aged between 11 and 17 years.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of The Entrance Blue Light Committee to keep the disco going and make continued improvements.
- (3) Congratulates Tuggerah Lakes senior constable Kerie Wells, who was named NSW Blue Light Police Officer of the Year.

WAVERLEY COUNCIL BRIGHTEST AND BEST BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the winners of the 2012 Waverley Council Brightest and Best (B & B) Business Awards, including:
 - (a) Broadest Smile—Retail—Rainbow Fantasy
 - (b) Broadest Smile—Cafe and Restaurant—Vacanza Pizzeria
 - (c) Broadest Smile—Health & Beauty—Bondi Beach Chop Shop
 - (d) Business with Bounce—AGOGA
 - (e) Brontasaurus—Sweetheart Florist
 - (f) Broadest Smile—Bio Pak
 - (g) Civic Heart—WAYS
 - (h) Green Footprint—Bambooty

- (i) Access All Areas—Charing Cross Pharmacist Advice
 - (j) Golden Bin—The One That Got Away
- (12) Notes the valued contribution all local businesses make to the Waverley community.

WAVERLEY ACTION FOR YOUTH SERVICES

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House congratulates Waverley Action for Youth Services for 12 years of service to the Eastern Suburbs community and wishes the service all the best for the future.

RANDWICK LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the new councillors elected to Randwick City Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections, including Cr Brendan Roberts, Cr Harry Stavrinou, Cr Noel D'Souza, Cr Pat Garcia, Cr Lindsay Shurey, Cr Kathy Neilson and Cr Greg Moore.
- (2) Congratulates the councillors re-elected to Randwick City Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections, including Cr Scott Nash, Cr Kiel Smith, Cr Ted Seng, Cr Robert Belleli, Cr Anthony Andrews, Cr Geoff Stevenson, Cr Murray Matson and Cr Tony Bowen.
- (3) Congratulates Cr Tony Bowen and Cr Noel D'Souza for their election as mayor and deputy mayor, respectively.

WAVERLEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the new councillors elected to Waverley Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections, including Cr Angela Burrill, Cr Andrew Cusack, Cr Bill Mouroukas and Cr Paula Masselos.
- (2) Congratulates the councillors re-elected to Waverley Council at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections, including Cr Sally Betts, Cr Tony Kay, Cr Joy Clayton, Cr Leon Goltsman, Cr Miriam Guttman-Jones, Cr Dominic Wy Kanak, Cr John Wakefield and Cr Ingrid Strewé.
- (3) Congratulates Cr Sally Betts and Cr Tony Kay for their election as mayor and deputy mayor, respectively.

BINGHAM CUP

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Sydney has been chosen to host the 2014 Bingham Cup.
- (2) Notes that the Bingham Cup is the world championship of gay and inclusive rugby, and is the second-largest men's 15-a-side rugby union competition in the world.
- (3) Notes that the 2014 Bingham Cup will be the first Cup held in the Southern Hemisphere.
- (4) Notes that the Sydney Convicts are Australia's first gay rugby union club, and are the most successful team in Bingham Cup history.
- (5) Congratulates the Sydney Convicts for winning the 2012 Bingham Cup in Manchester.
- (6) Wishes teams all the best in their preparations for the 2014 Bingham Cup.

YMCA NEW SOUTH WALES YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the YMCA of NSW Youth Parliament will run for the 12th time in 2013.
- (2) Congratulates Anne Wang, of Randwick, for her endorsement as the Member for Coogee in the 2013 YMCA of NSW Youth Parliament.
- (3) Commends the YMCA of NSW Youth Parliament for its commitment to empowering and developing young leaders.

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH—That this House notes that the Higher School Certificate examinations started on 16 October 2012 and wishes all Coogee students the best of luck for these examinations.

CROYDON PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House congratulates the Croydon Park Chamber of Commerce for being highly commended by the New South Wales Business Chamber.

CAMPBELLTOWN UWS COLLEGIANS ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates UWS Collegians Athletics Club on 40 years of success.
- (2) Acknowledges the countless volunteers and officials who have helped with the club's success and longevity.
- (3) Acknowledges all the children and adults who have participated over the years, including those going on to compete at Olympic level or to join professional sporting teams.
- (4) Notes the role that the UWS Collegians Athletics Club plays in educating and encouraging children and teenagers on the importance of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

THE COLLECTIVE BAND MEMBER JAYDEN SIERRA

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jayden Sierra on making the finals of X-Factor Australia as a member of the boys group "The Collective".
- (2) Notes that Jayden is a student at Macarthur Anglican School.
- (3) Wishes Jayden, along with other members of "The Collective", all the very best during their time on X-Factor and in their future careers.

ROTARY DOUBLE SAPPHIRE PAUL HARRIS FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS TONY PERICH AND TERRY GOLDACRE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tony Perich and Terry Goldacre on receiving the Paul Harris Fellow Double Sapphire Award for their generous contribution to the Rotary movement.
- (2) Notes that this award is the highest honour for a Rotarian and Paul Harris Fellow awards are a reflection of a member's actions and contribution in Rotary.
- (3) Acknowledges that Rotary provides a wonderful service within the community.
- (4) Notes that Tony Perich and Terry Goldacre are wonderful ambassadors for Rotary and are respected role models within the local community.
- (5) Wishes the Rotary Club all the best in its future endeavours

ATHLETE JOEL ASLAN

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 10-year-old Joel Aslan on his dedication to athletics and sports.
- (2) Notes that Joel competes in little athletics, soccer, touch football and rugby.
- (3) Acknowledges that Joel has been selected in multiple representative teams and has been nominated for the News Local Junior Sports Star Award.
- (4) Encourages Joel to continue developing his sporting career and wishes him all the best for the future.
- (5) Notes that Joel is a wonderful ambassador for his team mates, his school and the community.

CAMDEN RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Camden and District Rotary Relay for Life on its success in the Camden Relay for Life.
- (2) Notes that the 2012 relay was the largest in the event's five year history.
- (3) Acknowledges that the funds raised through this 24 hour event are donated to the Cancer Council.
- (4) Thanks the event organisers and volunteers for their hard work and dedication in ensuring the success of the Camden Relay for Life.

- (5) Acknowledges the teams who participated comprising those supporting people who are currently fighting cancer, those who have survived cancer and those honouring the memory of people who have died of cancer.
- (6) Wishes Camden and District Rotary Relay for Life all the very best in its future events.

YMCA MOUNT ANNAN LEISURE CENTRE STAFF ACTS OF BRAVERY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Cassie Healy, Luke Felton and the staff of YMCA Mount Annan for saving the life of a toddler.
- (2) Notes that Cassie Healy, with the assistance of Luke Felton, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the unconscious toddler who had been pulled from the water.
- (3) Notes that through the actions and quick response of Cassie and Luke the toddler quickly resumed breathing.
- (4) Acknowledges that all staff on duty at YMCA Mount Annan worked together as a team to save the toddler's life.

JASON TIPPETT AND BRAD TUCKWELL ACTS OF BRAVERY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jason Tippet and Brad Tuckwell on being commended for their brave conduct in pulling a truck driver from the cabin of his burning and overturned truck.
- (2) Wishes Jason Tippet and Brad Tuckwell all the best in their future endeavours.

MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION FINALIST JACOB ELLIOTT

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jacob Elliott on making the finals of the Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition.
- (2) Notes that Jacob attends Harrington Park Public School.
- (3) Wishes Jacob all the best for the competition which takes place in November 2012.
- (4) Notes that Jacob is a wonderful ambassador for his school and for his community.

CAMDEN HIGH SCHOOL INTERSCHOOL EQUESTRIAN CARNIVAL

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Camden High School on hosting the Interschool Equestrian Carnival held at the Camden Bicentennial Equestrian Centre.
- (2) Notes that the event attracted 300 students from 70 schools across New South Wales.
- (3) Acknowledges Camden High School staff, equestrian coordinator Carolyn James, teachers, parents and students who helped make the carnival a success.

CAROL COMPTON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Carol Compton, from Corlette, has made to the community.
- (2) Acknowledges her volunteer work over many years with the Marlin Centre within the Tomaree Community Health Centre at Nelson Bay, with the Tomaree Community Hospital Auxiliary and with Camp Quality.
- (3) Thanks Carol Compton for her volunteering efforts in the community.
- (4) Congratulates Carol Compton on being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST ANTONIA CREESE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Antonia Creese has made for many years to the community.
- (2) Acknowledges Antonia Creese's dedication to her volunteer work as a women's artistic gym coach with the Port Stephens PCYC in Nelson Bay.
- (3) Thanks Antonia Creese for her volunteering efforts in the community.
- (4) Congratulates Antonia Creese on being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST KEVIN COLMAN

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Kevin Colman, from Tanilba Bay, has made to the community.
- (2) Acknowledges Kevin Colman's volunteer work with numerous community organisations, notably with the Tilligerry Lions Club.
- (3) Thanks Kevin Colman for his volunteering efforts in the community.
- (4) Congratulates Kevin Colman for receiving the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Award.

NEWKULELE FESTIVAL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Newcastle for having Australia's highest number of ukulele players per head of population.
- (2) Notes that Newcastle will host the "Newkulele Festival" at the Wickham Croatian Sports Club on 26 October 2012.
- (3) Notes that the festival brings together ukulele educators and luthiers in separate sessions that provide Novocastrians with fruitful opportunities to learn from professionals.

DANCING WITH THE WALLSEND BUSINESS STARS EVENT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Maxine Johnson and her team at Maxi-Jazz Dance Studio, Wallsend, for their tireless efforts in organising the Dancing With the Wallsend Business Stars event.
- (2) Notes that the event raised \$6,000 for the Nicholas Trust for Paediatric Palliative Care.

REGAL CINEMA

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that contracts have been signed for the transfer of the Regal Cinema from Newcastle Council to the Regal Cinema Trust of Newcastle Pty Ltd.
- (2) Commends the collaborative efforts of Newcastle Council and the local community for making this transfer possible.
- (3) Thanks parliamentarians and key players in the Australian film industry for their continued practical support.

GO4FUN PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that simple messages about nutrition are the key to promoting better household health in the Hunter.
- (2) Acknowledges Maria Roberts and other health practitioners for leading the charge in the Hunter with a free public health program called "Go4Fun".
- (3) Commends John Hunter Children's Hospital for its involvement in the running of the program.

GO RED FOR WOMEN HEALTHY HEART CHALLENGE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 90 percent of women in Australia have at least one risk factor for heart disease and 50 percent have two or three.
- (2) Acknowledges the vital importance of the "Go Red for Women" campaign in raising awareness of heart disease amongst women.
- (3) Commends the ongoing commitment and dedication to the campaign by chief executive officer, Tony Thirlwell.

UPPER IRONBARK CREEK REHABILITATION PROJECT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Hunter community is getting busy and taking action along Ironbark Creek in an effort to protect and improve the habitat value and appearance of the creek.
- (2) Commends the continued contribution towards the Upper Ironbark Creek Rehabilitation Project by private landholders in New Lambton Heights, Cardiff Heights and Elernmore Vale.
- (3) Thanks the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Lake Macquarie City Council and The City of Newcastle for coming together as partners to improve the stability of the creek.

JESMOND LIONS CLUB

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of the volunteer members of the Jesmond Lions Club.
- (2) Commends club members for their involvement with the national tree planting project at the Pambalong Nature Reserve.
- (3) Notes that on 1 September 2012 branch members attended a maintenance visit where they repaired wire cages surrounding the trees as well as spreading mulch to further enhance the survival of the trees in the reserve.

NEWCASTLE JETS W-LEAGUE TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Jets Women's-League squad for encouraging female participation in football.
- (2) Welcomes American trio Tori Huster, Tiffany Boshers and Angela Salem to the all female team.
- (3) Extends its best wishes to the Jets W-League for the forthcoming season.

AUSTRALIAN KOOKABURRA KIDS FOUNDATION INC.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation on being presented with a New South Wales Carers Support Group 2012 Award.
- (2) Commends the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation for providing programs and activities for over 10 years to children living in a family affected by mental illness.
- (3) Thanks everyone associated with the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation for providing learning and support programs in a fun environment where children can socialise and for providing the opportunity for children to have a break from their responsibilities of caring for a family member with a mental illness.

NATIONAL HISTORY CHALLENGE COMPETITION WINNER EDEN TOKATLY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Eden Tokatly of Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School on being a State winner in the 2012 National History Challenge Competition in the Year 7 category.
- (2) Notes that Eden's accomplishment recognises her skills in research and inquiry directly related to Australian history.

PREMIER'S PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates On Track Community Programs on its nomination for the 2012 Premier's Partnership Award, particularly program participants Leone Craydon, Owana Stacey and Caroline Haydon.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the five organisations that work in partnership under the North Coast Accommodation Project, providing accommodation and support to individuals.
- (3) Encourages continued government support and partnership with On Track Community Programs.

NSW TOUCH ASSOCIATION LIFE MEMBER JIM YEO

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jim Yeo of the Mudgee Touch Football Club on receiving life membership of the NSW Touch Association.
- (2) Notes that Jim Yeo has been a driving force in touch football in Mudgee, as well as across New South Wales and Australia, for all of his adult life and has previously been honoured with life membership of the Mudgee Touch Association and the NSW Hunter Western Hornets Touch Club.
- (3) Notes that Jim Yeo's achievements in the sport of touch football include being appointed to referee at a World Cup.
- (4) Thanks Jim Yeo for his dedication to the sport and the influence he has had on many people involved in touch football.

YOUNG WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR JACOB STEIN

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jacob Stein, the winemaker at Mudgee's Robert Stein Winery, on receiving the Gourmet Traveller Wine magazine's 2012 Young Winemaker of the Year award.
- (2) Notes that this award is also an acknowledgement of the significance of the Mudgee district as a wine producing area.
- (3) Wishes 28-year-old Jacob every success as he continues his work as the third generation of his family in the wine industry.

HUGH BATEMAN LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mudgee Real Estate principal Hugh Bateman on being recognised for his service to the real estate industry at the annual Australasian Best Practice Awards Dinner held at Hamilton Island in September 2012.
- (2) Notes that Hugh Bateman was joined at the dinner by his wife Catherine when he was presented with a Lifetime Service Award.
- (3) Notes that Hugh Bateman has also dedicated much of his time and service to charities in the Mudgee region.
- (4) Wishes Hugh Bateman every success in the future.

PHILIP SHAW WINES

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Daniel Shaw of Philip Shaw Wines on his winery's success at the Orange Wine Show with its 2011 chardonnay being awarded Best Wine in Show.
- (2) Wishes Philip Shaw Wines future success with its wines.

PRINTHIE WINES

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates owner Ed Swift of Printhie Wines at Molong on being awarded Best Red Wine in Show at the Orange Wine Show for the 2011 Printhie Wines MCC Shiraz.
- (2) Wishes Ed Swift and Printhie Wines every success in the future.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.**Community recognition notices agreed to.****GLENDALE INTERCHANGE**

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.25 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates Argenton Public School on its recent edition in the *Newcastle Herald's* School Newspaper Competition and especially thanks Isabella Allen on her article in support of the Glendale Interchange; and
- (2) notes the students' disappointment about the lack of action on this project.

I commend Argenton Public School and student Isabella Allen for their support of the momentous Glendale interchange, the Hunter's most strategically important infrastructure project, which will deliver improved economic prospects, employment growth and much-needed traffic congestion relief in the region. The construction of initial works set to underpin the interchange and accommodate the forthcoming major works will commence next year, although it appears that the O'Farrell Government has shown no commitment to the second stage, which is the crux of the interchange. There is no mention of Glendale in the O'Farrell Government's Long Term Transport Master Plan and there is also no acknowledgement of Glendale in the recently released State Infrastructure Strategy devised by Infrastructure NSW. Why has the O'Farrell Government chosen to neglect such an important project that will deliver momentous economic and social benefits for the Hunter's booming population?

Development of the Pennant Street Bridge, the proposed railway station and bus interchange and infrastructure for taxis, buses and pedestrians are hardly negligible components of the plan that can be pushed

aside. Given the region's expected population growth and current lagging public transport system, it is imperative that the Government deliver these remaining aspects of the project in a timely manner. The O'Farrell Government claims that it does not have sufficient funds to go ahead with the project, although it is quite content to waste a colossal \$20 million renaming major roads across the State. These funds would have been better spent on road infrastructure rather than unnecessary signage amendments.

The O'Farrell Government needs to be reminded of the importance of this project, which will positively impact the people and businesses of Glendale and the lower Hunter. The need for prompt action is justified by the resounding support for the project offered by Lake Macquarie City Council, Stockland Properties, Knoll Group, Hunter Business Centre, Lake Macquarie Combined Chamber of Commerce, Hunter Sports Centre and all 11 Hunter councils. Estimates have suggested that the investment in roadworks could deliver \$600 million for commercial, industrial and retail development and economic and employment benefits for the region. The cost of this project is just a fraction of its expected economic benefits, so delivering the remaining components without further delay is crucial.

I acknowledge that the O'Farrell Government contributed \$15 million to the first stage of the project, but it has made no commitment to the second stage. It has had ample opportunity to endorse this project with the release of the Long Term Transport Master Plan and the State Infrastructure Strategy, but it has taken little action on the Glendale interchange. It is imperative that we plan the remaining phases of this project given the expected population increase of 60,000 to 70,000 people in Lake Macquarie over the coming decades. It does not take a genius to understand that an increase in population will lead to additional pressure on our existing modes of transport, be it road or rail. Modelling has indicated that approximately 16,000 vehicles will use the interchange each day, including 1,500 heavy vehicles. The Glendale interchange will clearly relieve traffic congestion in the area. NRMA Director for the Hunter, Kyle Loades, said

We need to implement a program of interchange improvements for all regional centres and transport gateways across the Hunter region. This includes Glendale.

Mr Loades also said:

With the right infrastructure choices, success will breed success, and with it the Hunter region will be able to thrive and continue to grow as the powerhouse of the New South Wales economy.

The Glendale interchange is the correct infrastructure choice and must be funded promptly for the region to reap its full benefits. The central hub will connect the industrial and retail areas of Cardiff and Glendale. Further development of the Stockland commercial precinct is said to depend on the construction of the interchange, which is a key to providing opportunities for economic development and job creation. Yet again I praise Argenton Public School and student Isabella Allen for supporting the Glendale interchange. That support highlights the project's importance to the community. We must invest in projects that will deliver significant economic and social benefits rather than waste money on signage. We must focus on delivering infrastructure that will benefit the Hunter as a whole, rather than constantly bicker about abolishing the railway line in Newcastle.

As decision-makers we must encourage commuters to use greener methods of transport such as rail and bus travel and devote funds to constructing roads that will reduce travel time for commuters. The Glendale interchange will achieve those goals. The full potential of this project will be delivered only when planning is commenced and when the entire project is completed. All spheres of government must work collaboratively to ensure that funding is forthcoming for these long-awaited components, but the State Government must take the lead. The O'Farrell Government must stop neglecting the needs of the Hunter and invest in the Glendale interchange.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [10.30 a.m.]: The Government congratulates Argenton Public School student Isabella Allen on her support for the Glendale Interchange. Obviously Isabella is a remarkable young woman who speaks out on issues that are important to her. The motion moved by the member for Wallsend notes the students' disappointment about the lack of action on this project. I share their disappointment because for a decade there was no action, which is one of the reasons I stood for Parliament. It gives me great pleasure to inform Isabella and her fellow students that the New South Wales Government is committed to the \$350 million Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund for projects in the Hunter region.

Under this fund a contribution of \$15 million is allocated for the construction of the road bridge and associated roads in Glendale by Lake Macquarie City Council. The planned road bridge at Pennant Street and

related upgrades are proposed for improved access to the shopping centre and surrounding growth areas, including the Cardiff industrial estate. Glendale is fast becoming a major regional centre in the lower Hunter, and the Government has demonstrated its commitment to the area by allocating \$15 million to this project. Criticism of the O'Farrell Government is wrong and misleading. I will give the history of the project. In the decade before we came to government small amounts of funding—perhaps half a million dollars—were committed for some scoping works. Before the election we gave a commitment that we would allocate \$15 million to the project, which has effectively kickstarted it. It was dead in the water until then. Since then Lake Macquarie City Council has committed \$10 million on the back of our \$15 million and the Federal Government then committed a further \$7 million last year.

The project now has a substantial financial commitment behind it. This Government has also been working on how it will unlock the necessary land. The Glendale Interchange, as it is broadly termed, is about more than just roadworks and public transport; it is also about the development of the area. Following a decade of complete impasse between RailCorp and Lake Macquarie council, this Government has proactively brokered a deal between RailCorp and the Hunter Development Corporation, which is now undertaking a site assessment. It is looking at the cost of remediating the site so that we can unlock the potential for local jobs growth. The Hunter Development Corporation is considering the cost of mine subsidence remediation and of rehabilitating the site because there are question marks regarding potential contamination of the land, which was owned by RailCorp for a long time. Once we have this information the Government will be able to work out a proper disposal strategy so that the land can be developed.

At the heart of this project is jobs. The member for Wallsend and I agree it is an important regional centre that has the potential to create jobs for our constituents and for people throughout the lower Hunter. This Government has been extremely proactive on this matter. Before we came to office nobody attempted to work out a disposal strategy with RailCorp. People said that RailCorp needed to unlock the land but there was never any follow-through. That was typical of the former Government: It was all back swing and no follow-through. This Government is genuinely moving forward on this project. The Hunter Development Corporation and Lake Macquarie City Council are currently working in concert to formulate a disposal strategy for the land and unlock the jobs.

It is certainly an exciting time for this project. As we speak, Lake Macquarie City Council has called for tenders—which close on 1 November—for the project design work. The frustration expressed by students from Argenton Public School is shared by the wider Hunter community because this project was mooted for a decade and was going absolutely nowhere until the Coalition made good on its election commitment and allocated \$15 million to it. It is unfortunate that the O'Farrell Government is not receiving bipartisan recognition for that because the project was dead until that \$15 million commitment was made.

Ms Noreen Hay: You took that from my lifts at Unanderra.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL: This project will unlock the potential for our region. I note the interjection by the member for Wollongong. We did not take money from Unanderra because the money from the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund was generated locally. The \$350 million was going to be spent on a dam at Tillegra but the O'Farrell Government, in its wisdom, realised that it had potential as seed funding for other important projects in our region. Over the next six to 12 months we will start to see some of that money being rolled out to kickstart important projects such as the Glendale Interchange. I share the frustration of the students. A key reason that I stood for Parliament was to get political leverage to secure money for important infrastructure projects such as Glendale.

This is a very exciting time. It is a big project and over the next decade we will see the Glendale development provide job opportunities and improve the lifestyles of my constituents and those of the member for Wallsend and the member for Cessnock, whose electorate is close by. This project has been effectively kickstarted by the \$15 million commitment made by the Premier prior to the last election. I share the students' frustration but I am very happy to inform them that the Premier has shown great leadership. That \$15 million commitment will deliver great results for the Hunter. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [10.37 a.m.]: I have great pleasure in supporting the motion moved by the member for Wallsend that congratulates Argenton Public School and acknowledges the contribution of Isabella Allen, in particular. It also notes the students' disappointment at the lack of action on the Glendale Interchange project. I begin with the contribution by public schools to the *Newcastle Herald*—it is now called the *Herald* but those who grew up with the *Newcastle Herald* still call it that—which is fantastic. It is a great

opportunity for students across the Hunter to disseminate through the mainstream media a young person's voice and view of what is happening in their local area. I am sure that members of Parliament who represent electorates throughout the Hunter have been asked for interviews, photographs or meetings with students seeking to complete an article.

Students from the Cessnock electorate who have entered the *Newcastle Herald* school newspaper competition have taken enormous pride in their work. I can see by the way they walk and hold their heads high and by their mannerisms that they are swelling with pride. They speak extremely warmly and proudly about their work. I congratulate the *Newcastle Herald* and students across the Hunter on their work. Indicative of the contributions is that by Isabella Allen, who tackled a difficult and complicated subject—the Glendale Interchange. The member for Wallsend and the member for Charlestown have given a good synopsis on the project's history and potential future.

There is no doubt that it is a key project for the Hunter. Unfortunately, the Hunter is seen primarily—in some instances solely—as a producer of coal. That is dangerous and a real concern for communities across the Hunter. We have to coal-proof the Hunter, and the Glendale Interchange is one way to do that. The project will drive a range of businesses, industries and opportunities outside and away from coal. Of course, it will be partly about supporting coal but we must have other options. The Glendale Interchange project will help to alleviate some concerns about the fact that our port strategy has been deserted. We will not have a shipping container port at Newcastle because this Government's priority for the Hunter is coal, coal, coal. The Hunter must have strategies other than coal; the Glendale Interchange is one such strategy.

The member for Charlestown has managed to get \$15 million allocated for stage one of this project—and he is rightly proud of that achievement. But more needs to be done. About 12 months ago I attended a luncheon at which Paul Broad, the Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure NSW, was asked about the Newcastle rail line. He said, "In the Hunter I can name off the top of my head 10 far more important projects than the Newcastle rail line." He then nominated the Glendale Interchange as the number one project. This fits in with the Hunter councils, which have also identified it as the number one priority. With so much leverage and awareness of the problem, it is disappointing that the Infrastructure NSW report contained no mention of the Glendale Interchange. It is a 20-year strategy so it is unlikely that the Glendale Interchange will be on the radar in the next 20 years should the O'Farrell Government remain in office. I again congratulate Isabella Allen from Argenton Public School on her article on the Glendale Interchange submitted to the *Newcastle Herald* school newspaper competition. The more we can do to promote the Glendale Interchange, the better.

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [10.40 a.m.]: I speak to the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. The New South Wales Government congratulates Isabella Allen from Argenton Public School on her support for the Glendale Interchange. Isabella is a remarkable young lady for speaking out on issues that are important to her. I can inform Isabella that the New South Wales Government is committed to the development of a \$350 million Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund for projects in the Hunter region, and that \$15 million of that funding has been allocated for the construction of a road bridge and associated roads at Glendale by Lake Macquarie City Council. The planned road bridge at Pennant Street and related upgrades are proposed to improve access to the shopping centre and surrounding growth areas.

Glendale is fast becoming a major regional centre in the lower Hunter. This is clearly demonstrated by the \$15 million commitment and ongoing work on this project. Those opposite are shameless in their misleading of the public. The Government has made a commitment, and it stands by it. Lake Macquarie City Council was to contribute \$10 million to the project and to seek a further \$25 million from the Commonwealth Government. In June this year, through the Regional Development Australia Fund, Lake Macquarie City Council secured \$7 million in funding. I understand that the council is working to amend the scope of the project so that it can be delivered within the available budget—albeit \$25 million less in Federal funding than was sought originally. But this has not stopped the O'Farrell Government from committing \$15 million, as well as technical assistance from Roads and Maritime Services, to deliver the project.

Lake Macquarie City Council has called for tenders—which will close on 4 December 2012—on a detailed design of the project. Beyond this grant, the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund will continue to help the council deliver an improved road network in this important emerging regional centre. This project is vital to areas such as Cessnock, Wallsend, Newcastle, Maitland, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie and my electorate of Swansea. The Government is committed to supporting the growth of regional centres and will work closely with local government to provide important and necessary infrastructure. I again congratulate Isabella Allen from Argenton Public School on her article on the Glendale Interchange that she entered in the *Newcastle*

Herald school newspaper competition. In conclusion, had it not been for the 16 years of economic vandalism by those opposite—partly in concert with their Federal colleagues, who have engaged in the same vandalism and shown sheer contempt for the people of New South Wales over the past five years—this project would have been further advanced. I thank the House for its indulgence.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [10.44 a.m.], in reply: Once again, I thank my local colleagues. It was great that members representing the electorates of Charlestown, Cessnock and Swansea contributed to the debate. It is important that members from both sides of the House who have an interest in and knowledge of the Hunter make contributions to debates such as this. Indeed, it was evident from the debate that the members have that interest, knowledge and passion, and they are deserving of praise. I am pleased that the Government is committed to developing a \$350 million Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund for projects in the Hunter region. Some \$15 million from the fund has been committed to this project—or about one-twenty-third according to my quick maths. The member for Charlestown has lobbied hard for that funding. But the \$350 million will need to be spread a long way in the Hunter.

I suggest that the Glendale Interchange will require about \$200 million of that funding. If the O'Farrell Government is as committed as the Hunter councils to prioritising the project then perhaps it will cough up a little more than \$15 million—in saying that, I take nothing away from the achievements of the member for Charlestown. I also thank the Lake Macquarie City Council and Mr Greg Piper, the member for Lake Macquarie and former mayor of Lake Macquarie, and the Federal Government. The Hon. Greg Combet, the member for Charlton, is very committed to this project. Lake Macquarie City Council has gone out on a limb to ensure the project goes ahead. It has lobbied me and the Hon. Greg Combet, and is to be praised for its efforts in this regard.

The member for Charlestown spoke about the RailCorp land. As the member said, that land will need to be unlocked and I agree that there will need to be a proper disposal strategy. Interestingly, that land was mooted as one of the sites for the Glendale police station, which is no longer going ahead much to the disappointment and consternation of those who live in the area and have no police station nearby. I assure the member for Charlestown that I will never allow the project to die. Indeed, he knows I am too active a local politician to even consider it. The member for Cessnock praised the *Newcastle Herald* for giving students the opportunity to enhance their journalistic skills. The *Newcastle Herald* has been doing this for a long time and should be praised.

In fact, if it were not for Isabella Allen's achievements we would not be debating this motion. It is great that such a young girl has tackled such a complex subject. Isabella will no doubt grow up to be a very clever woman and we will monitor her progress with interest. Isabella is a student at Argenton Public School; a wonderful little public school in the Hunter. I agree with the member for Cessnock that the Hunter is viewed solely as a coal producer and that we need more options. There is nothing wrong with being seen that way but we need more options. The member for Swansea congratulated Isabella on her achievement. He also mentioned the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund and said, "The Government has made a commitment and it stands by it." So let us get on with the work.

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

Motion agreed to.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR BRIAN ROBSON

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [10.50 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates Councillor Brian Robson on his appointment as Mayor of Canterbury;
- (2) notes that Councillor Brian Robson was elected to the council in September 1999 as a representative of the West Ward;
- (3) acknowledges that Councillor Brian Robson has held the positions of Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Traffic Committee and Chair of the City Services Committee; and
- (4) acknowledges Robert Furolo, who has served on Canterbury City Council for 12 years and as Mayor for the last seven years, for his commitment and dedication to the residents of Canterbury.

Today I recognise and congratulate Councillor Brian Robson on his appointment as mayor of Canterbury. In so doing, I note that Councillor Robson was elected to the council in September 1999 as a representative of the

West ward, which he still represents. I acknowledge that Councillor Robson has held the positions of deputy mayor, chair of the Traffic Committee and chair of the City Services Committee over that term. I acknowledge also the member for Lakemba, who served on Canterbury City Council for 12 years and as mayor for the past seven years, for his commitment and dedication to the residents of Canterbury. Many members in this Chamber have served in local government. There are arguments that Australia is overgoverned, with three tiers of government. In many ways it is a shame that local government does not get more attention in the broader media because it is local government that builds communities, sets the tone of communities and provides vital services that many of us probably take for granted.

Local government is much more than collecting rubbish, fixing holes in footpaths and dealing with disputes about trees in people's gardens. It is about ensuring that the residents of the local area and their various interests and backgrounds are recognised, and that there is a sense of community. It is about ensuring that essential services, such as child care and aged care, and infrastructure, including capital works, are provided to the local community. With that description, it is obvious that leadership in local government is crucial. That is why I commend both Brian Robson and the past mayor of Canterbury, Robert Furolo, who has been a member of this House for some time now.

Canterbury council services more than 140,000 residents. It is a large and successful council, ably led by the general manager, Jim Montague, who has been there for a long time. I cannot imagine Canterbury council without Jim Montague as general manager. Canterbury council's by-line is "City of Diversity". This is truly a great description of Canterbury council, and I am sure the member for Lakemba will speak more about that. Brian Robson's long involvement in Canterbury council and his progression, including his recent appointment to the position of mayor, has come about through hard work. He is a man of enormous credibility.

Brian was born in Melbourne—I will not say what year—and, interestingly, grew up in the working-class suburbs of Carlton and Footscray. That is important. Those who know Melbourne will be aware that those suburbs have high levels of migrant families. It is no surprise that Brian has brought his experience of living in such diverse communities strongly into the cultural mix of Canterbury. Brian did some university training but decided that education and teaching were not for him, and he got involved, and is still involved, in the information technology industry. Brian and his wife, Sue, are a strong partnership. Throughout the last election campaign Sue worked hard with Brian for the Canterbury Labor team. Sue attends most functions with Brian. I take my hat off to her for doing so because Brian, as mayor and councillor and previously as deputy mayor, performs a remarkable service for the community in attending the many, many functions to which local government representatives are invited.

Brian's involvement in local politics, local endeavours and local communities has not been a flash in the pan. His commitment to community has been a lifelong endeavour, which gives him great depth of credibility, and he deserves to hold the position of mayor of Canterbury. Brian and Sue are committed fans of the Sydney Swans. They brought that from their Melbourne heritage. Of course, South Melbourne—known as the Bloods—was the original Sydney Swans team. Their commitment to the Swans is absolutely unswerving; indeed, it is almost maniacal—in a good way. In conclusion, I recognise the member for Lakemba, who served the city of Canterbury with outstanding credibility and commitment. Recently he stepped down as mayor to commit himself full time to his position as member for Lakemba. We in Canterbury are incredibly indebted to him, as we are to the current mayor, Brian Robson. Once again, local government is what builds communities. It provides the glue for communities, and these two men of Canterbury have done and will continue to do that with credibility and distinction.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [10.57 a.m.]: I thank the member for Canterbury for moving this motion because, as we talked about yesterday, local government is extremely important. Many members of this House, including the member for Camden, who is in the Chamber, were councillors and mayors previously. I acknowledge the good work that mayors do in our communities. I pick up the comment by the member for Canterbury about how hard mayors work in their communities when attending functions. When I was the mayor of Hawkesbury I always ensured that I acknowledged Labor members who attended functions. Mr Aquilina and Mr Shearan are always acknowledged at functions, as are Federal members. However, Labor members seem to have developed a funny habit. When Coalition members attend council functions where there is a Labor mayor or councillors they somehow do not see us in the gallery or the audience. Conveniently, when we bump into them later they say, "Oh, gee, you weren't there." I do not know whether a memo was sent out some years ago stating that when Labor councillors are in charge they conveniently brush over whoever else is present. It is just the way they are.

Ms Linda Burney: You can't help yourself.

Mr BART BASSETT: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Canterbury. Members opposite do not like it when we point out the facts, and that is exactly what they do. It happened to me only last week when I attended a function at Hawkesbury hospital with Labor members. I just expect it; I expect rudeness and disrespect.

Mr John Sidoti: It's in their DNA.

Mr BART BASSETT: The member for Drummoyne rightly says that it is in their DNA. I refer specifically to the integrity of councillors and others who are proud of what they do in our community. Paragraph (4) of the motion relates to the member for Lakemba, who served on Canterbury council for 12 years and was mayor for seven years. Interestingly, the member for Canterbury glossed over paragraph (4). If I were her I would be embarrassed and run away. Obviously the member for Lakemba is a man of integrity. Unfortunately, he did not feel that the integrity of the Opposition frontbench allowed him to stay there. Now he sits on the backbench, serving his community well, and I acknowledge him for that—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. This is a debate where you do not have to get nasty or play the sort of horrible games that the member is playing.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr BART BASSETT: The member for Canterbury should be the last person to start talking about rudeness and interjections in this place, considering the way she wanders up to the dispatch box and starts pouring water into a glass at such a height that it makes a noise while people on the this side are speaking. She laughs now because she knows exactly what she does: wanders up and down to try to disrupt members who are contributing to the debate. She is a pure performer. Getting back to what is important, local government and councils do a fantastic job. I again acknowledge the great integrity of the member for Lakemba, who could no longer serve on the Opposition frontbench. Yesterday's performance by the Opposition Leader for his union mates was an absolute disgrace.

The member for Lakemba was quoted as saying that he could not stand the spin from the Leader of the Opposition anymore, which the Leader of the Opposition displayed in the worst way yesterday when he was chucked out of this House during question time. It is absolutely fantastic that the people of western Sydney support the State Liberal team, and they supported the Liberal teams at local government level in the recent local government elections right across western Sydney. Labor lost control. Guess what? It lost control in Blacktown, the hometown of the Leader of the Opposition. I will repeat that: Blacktown, the hometown of the Leader of the Opposition was lost to the Liberal Party. What does that say about the Leader of the Opposition? It says that he is on the nose in his local community. A member of the Liberal Party is now the Mayor of Penrith and Hawkesbury has a Liberal mayor. I could go on in relation to western Sydney.

Mr Chris Patterson: Camden has a Liberal mayor.

Mr BART BASSETT: Camden has a Liberal mayor. And what will be happening tonight in western Sydney? How exciting it is that the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils [WSROC] is having its annual general meeting. I was a member of the organisation for 8½ years. In my first term with the organisation, when the Labor Party dominated, I had a great working relationship with many of the good Labor councillors who were dedicated to their communities. The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils has always taken the approach of working together for the good of our community, and I acknowledge the good work of those councillors. But tonight, in an historic moment for western Sydney, it is highly likely that the organisation will have a president who is a member of the Liberal Party. That is absolutely fantastic news for western Sydney. It shows that the Liberal Party is supported extremely well in western Sydney and our friends in The Nationals are supported well in rural New South Wales.

I thank the member for Canterbury for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. We have heard a lot of rhetoric over the past few days about local government. Those opposite have said how wonderful it is and how it should be supported because it operates at the grassroots. But which government brought democracy back to local government in New South Wales? It was the Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government. As soon as we won government we gave the people of Shellharbour and Wollongong their democratic right to elect a council, voted in by the people. They had been denied that right after that deplorable debacle in Wollongong involving the table of knowledge and its chair, the member for Wollongong. That debacle resulted in the council being dismissed by the former Labor Government. We brought democracy back to Wollongong and to the rest of New South Wales. The Liberal-Nationals Government is a good thing for local government.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [11.04 a.m.]: I am very pleased to join with the member for Canterbury and acknowledge the success and hard work of Councillor Brian Robson, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for the best part of 20 years. I met Brian when I was working as an electorate officer for a former member for Hurstville, a former member for Lakemba and a former Premier of New South Wales, Morris Iemma. During that time, and through that relationship, I got to know Brian very well. He was also the chair of the parents and citizens association for Beverly Hills North Public School. In that role he worked with Morris Iemma and Canterbury City Council to advocate for and was successful in delivering a pedestrian footbridge across the six-lane King Georges Road—a major safety improvement for students at that school as well as for parents and other local residents of the area. That project was a mark of Brian's commitment to the community and to the parents and citizens association.

Shortly after, in order to advance his commitment to the community, Brian decided to join the Australian Labor Party. When we were looking for candidates to stand for council, Brian, with his demonstrated commitment and his experience serving the community, was a natural choice. Brian and I contested the 1999 Canterbury local government elections and I was very pleased that, through our hard work during that campaign, we were able to secure an increase in the primary vote for the West Ward Labor team of 20 per cent. That is an example of Brian's hard work and commitment at a very early stage. Brian has dedicated himself to the council since 1999 and his contribution in various capacities—including as chair of the traffic committee, chair of the community safety committee and chair of the city services committee at various times—as well as his work as the deputy mayor of Canterbury has put him in great stead.

Both Brian and I served under the former mayoralty of Kayee Griffin, who served in the other place for a term and retired at the last election. We made a great team on Canterbury council and made a significant contribution to the community. Brian's commitment, loyalty, dedication and hard work were recognised, and after I stepped down as mayor the council elected him to fill that role. At the 2012 local government elections the community endorsed Brian and re-elected him for the coming four years. I know that he is committed to the community. He has been an outstanding servant of the residents of Canterbury. He understands the importance of local government and his service to the people of the city of Canterbury will go on for many years in his current term as mayor. Brian has made a significant contribution as chair of the community safety committee.

Earlier this year he hosted a community safety forum, which gave members of our city an opportunity to come together to identify issues of concern to them and ways in which they can work together to make the city of Canterbury an even safer place for people to live. Brian, his wife, Sue, and their family have demonstrated a strong commitment to the people of Canterbury, and his most recent election is another example of the community's support. I congratulate Brian and the other councillors from all sides of politics who were elected at the most recent elections, and I wish them continued success representing the people of the city of Canterbury.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.08 a.m.]: What an absolute pleasure it is to speak to this motion. It is my great pleasure to acknowledge the local government representatives across New South Wales who were recently elected, particularly those in the western suburbs area. I also acknowledge my own newly elected councillors, the newly elected body that is now taking care of accountability and transparency on behalf of The Hills shire. I speak of councillors Yvonne Keane, Mark Taylor, Peter Gangemi and Jeff Lowe, the deputy mayor Andrew Jefferies, and mayor Michelle Byrne, and all the councillors representing that wonderful council area which I had the pleasure of serving between 2004 and 2008.

This motion is specifically about one serving councillor on Canterbury City Council, Brian Robson, and a former serving councillor, the member for Lakemba. I thought it was a little unfortunate that another member of the Opposition did not speak on behalf of the member for Lakemba and that he had to speak to the motion himself. So be it. I cast no aspersions. I acknowledge the work that both of these men have done. In particular I acknowledge the work of Councillor Brian Robson, who has served Canterbury well for many years. I note his advocacy on behalf of that area. He was involved in setting up Neighbourhood Watch—he has a strong focus on law and order issues. He served on the local traffic committee—he has an aptitude for roads and traffic. I note his commitment to youth services and to the economic development committee on which he served—he has a financial background. He also served on the environment and sustainability committee—he also focuses on his surrounding environment.

It appears to me that in Councillor Brian Robson Canterbury has a person of some ability. He obviously has an aptitude for a wide range of portfolio areas. I congratulate him on becoming mayor and I commend him

for his work on behalf of his community. I think all Government members would be as one in stating that Councillor Brian Robson would make an impeccable future candidate for the State electorate of Canterbury. I think he has admirable qualities, which he has demonstrated in his career in local government. If there is anything we can do to endorse Councillor Brian Robson for the electorate of Canterbury in the future we should consider it because he would make a remarkable candidate.

I do not know what the factional make-up is in Canterbury or how the numbers are going, but as someone who has had something to do with the numbers in politics, all I can do is encourage Councillor Brian Robson to continue to work hard on behalf of his community and in his party branches. Given his qualities, he is the sort of person who could come to this place and add value to the Opposition. I say to the member for Lakemba that it is disappointing that he had to speak in support of a motion that refers to him. It is also disappointing that he was cast aside by his team and from the Opposition frontbench because he had to go on his honeymoon.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [11.12 a.m.]: I commend Councillor Brian Robson for his appointment as mayor of Canterbury and acknowledge Mr Robert Furolo for what he has done in local government and in his time in this Chamber. He is a very good member. I love local government. I think the member for Canterbury said it, but it is without doubt the level of government that is most connected to the people. It deals with bread-and-butter and mum-and-dad issues. They are the types of issues that may sometimes be seen to be small but are extremely important to the individuals involved. Local government is a very valuable and much-needed level of government. Quite often it gives the community the opportunity to feel that they have been heard, and that is important. The point has been made that the majority of local government councillors and mayors do an exceptional job. I believe they are very hard working. They give of their time and their family's time and quite often with little or no thanks.

However, obviously there are people who do not always adhere to standards of behaviour. I commend the Government for introducing this week the Local Government Amendment (Conduct) Bill 2012, which provides fairer guidelines for councillors who may have been involved in a vexatious dispute. It also provides firmer guidelines for councillors, elected officials, administrators and council staff to ensure that they do the job that is expected of an elected representative and local government staff. I note that the member for Lakemba was a councillor for 12 years and a mayor for seven years. I am very proud to say I was a councillor for 12 years and a mayor for five years. The member for Hawkesbury referred to integrity. I put on record that the member for Lakemba is a person of integrity, as are the majority of mayors. The fact that he has distanced himself from the Leader of the Opposition says—

Mr Ray Williams: He is embarrassed.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I do not know that he is embarrassed and I am not going to go down that path, but it certainly says a lot about his being uncomfortable with doing the job of the Opposition. I used to feel sorry for the member for Lakemba because my former Independent Labor mayor, who was deposed only a month or so ago, used to bring the member for Lakemba to my area, stand on the side of roads to grandstand and make scurrilous accusations about closing Roads and Traffic Authority offices. I know the member for Lakemba was extremely uncomfortable in doing that, so I am glad for him and for the people of Camden that they no longer have the former Independent Labor mayor.

While we are acknowledging wonderful councillors, I point out that Camden council has its first Liberal council and Liberal mayor, all of whom are extremely hardworking people. I refer to Lara Symkowiak, our first Liberal mayor, Penny Fischer, Debby Dewbery, Theresa Fedeli and Peter Sidgreaves, our deputy mayor. They have all hit the ground running. They have the community's interests at heart and have done a fantastic job thus far. Having had experience in local government I can say that it will be wonderful to work with a council that, unlike the former mayor, is looking to work with the Government and not just whinge and whine.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [11.16 a.m.]: I contribute to debate on the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which congratulates Brian Robson on his appointment as the mayor of Canterbury and also acknowledges the work, dedication and commitment of the member for Lakemba. Speakers on the Government side have waffled on about all sorts of matters. Not least among them was the member for Londonderry. There are relatively new members in this place who are still attempting to learn the ropes, but the lies and deceit of this Government are second to none. The member for Londonderry made reference to my being involved with the table of knowledge. That is another lie that I have corrected on the record of this House time and again. I have never been at the table of knowledge, yet they keep on saying it.

[*Interruption*]

I thank the member for Hawkesbury for his obviously decent contribution. The new members are now carrying on the lies and deceptions and placing them on the record of this House. Members opposite can keep on lying but it does not mean people will believe them. It is disappointing that the member for Londonderry, rather than acknowledging the dedication, hard work and great service to the community that the member for Lakemba has given over many years, descended to a nasty, untrue and dishonest contribution. I suggest he change his attitude.

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order: I ask you to draw the member for Wollongong back to the leave of the motion and that she stop talking about herself and others. She should talk about the subject matter of the motion, which is important: congratulating a mayor.

Ms NOREEN HAY: It is a shame that the member for Dubbo did not get on his feet when the member for Londonderry was naming me. Where is his integrity?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Members on both sides have made wide-ranging comments during this debate. However, I ask the member for Wollongong to return to the leave of the motion. She has been defending comments made against her for the best part of her speech. I am sure she will make comments about the four points raised in the motion.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Point of order: The member for Dubbo said that I have been speaking about myself and not speaking to the motion. I point out that the introduction of my name into this debate came from the member for Londonderry when the member for Dubbo was not at the table.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Londonderry and the member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Wollongong is correct in saying that the member for Dubbo was not at the table at the time her name was mentioned. I was surprised that the member did not take a point of order at the time. I note that the member's time has expired.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [11.20 a.m.], in reply: This debate has been instructive. The motivation behind this motion was to recognise the work of two people at the local community level. I am extremely disappointed by the way the Coalition has participated in this debate. Brian Robson is not nasty. Brian Robson does not conduct himself in a juvenile way when representing all the people of his electorate. Brian Robson shows incredible intelligence and diligence in his work. Brian Robson has grace. Brian Robson is able to demonstrate humility when it is required and he is not immature. Brian Robson knows about representing the people who put their trust in him. Neither the member for Londonderry nor the member for Hawkesbury has demonstrated any of those qualities. It would be instructive for them to think about the way in which they conduct themselves at different times in this House, because there are ways in which one conducts oneself in particular debates.

It would be useful for these two members to take a leaf out of the books of people like Councillor Brian Robson and others who do not act stupidly or immaturely, as they have acted today. This motion was about recognising the work of the recently elected Mayor of Canterbury. It was also about recognising the work of the immediate past Mayor of Canterbury. It was not about party politics and it was not a mud-slinging exercise. Unfortunately, the member for Londonderry and the member for Hawkesbury have taken it upon themselves to turn this debate into that sort of exercise. Sometimes people can be a bit too smart by half. We saw that particularly from the member for Hawkesbury. We have all been around for a long time, and what goes around comes around. I can overhear the comments by the members opposite and I come back to my message, which is that leadership embodies two great attributes: grace and humility. We have not seen that from the Government speakers. I thank the member for Wollongong and the member for Lakemba for their contributions to this debate to recognise the importance of local government and the work done by people in that area.

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

Motion agreed to.

FRIENDS OF CABARITA PARK AND WHARF

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [11.25 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) acknowledges the contribution made by Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf in achieving a total ban on fishing on Cabarita Wharf; and
- (2) thanks the Minister for Roads and Ports for the decisive action to resolve the problem.

When I raised this issue last year, the state of the Cabarita Ferry Wharf was nothing short of disgraceful. Passengers had nowhere to sit because of the discarded bait and debris left by many fishermen who had access to the wharf on a permanent basis. The Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf drew my attention to the problem, which had turned the wharf from a ferry stop into an unacceptable stop. Glenda Rogers and Diane Brown were determined to sort out this problem after years of no action. I was told of the horror stories as a result of discarded fishhooks left on seats, along with fish guts and fishing lines creating trip hazards, and the remnants of fishermen's drunken nights out, which included fires being lit on the wharf. The wharf was fast developing a dual personality with the night-time personality taking over from the real purpose of the wharf. People felt intimidated just being there.

When the Minister for Roads and Ports inspected the wharf he was appalled and took immediate steps to install a gate at the wharf. The gate was unlocked just before the first ferry in the morning and locked after the last ferry at night. It is no wonder the Cabarita community named the Hon. Duncan Gay "Action Man". Why? Because he took immediate to resolve the problem and he was effective in doing so. He also introduced a total fishing ban on Cabarita Ferry Wharf. This Government is clearly committed to delivering on the promises it made during the 2011 election campaign. One of the key priorities at that time was to fix up Sydney Ferries. As a result, the electorate of Drummoyne has an extra 25 ferry services per week at Cabarita Ferry Wharf, which is a popular boarding point for many of the local residents.

New RiverCat services are now operating from Circular Quay to Meadowbank via Cabarita. The Premier and the Minister for Transport made these exciting announcements at Cabarita Ferry Wharf late last year. Cabarita is an important stopping point for commuters and the wharf must be kept in pristine condition to encourage more passengers to use the service. It is one of the fastest-growing wharves on the network. I am a great supporter of ferries as a means of public transport. They are reliable, take traffic off the road and ease congestion on our already overcrowded buses. Adjoining the Cabarita wharf is Cabarita Park, which is a beautiful area that is popular particularly in the summer months. Prior to the intervention by the Minister For Roads and Ports, people were staying away from the park because of the refuse left by fishermen and the antisocial behaviour of people in the area, particularly late at night.

People were not feeling safe in their own neighbourhood. Since the 24-hour fishing ban was imposed in October last year people have returned to enjoy the peace and serenity of the park without tripping over fishing lines and standing in fish scales. Prior to the ban the place was a mess, and had been for a long time. Residents complained to me as soon as I was elected that despite their numerous complaints to the former Labor member nothing was done. They also made representations to the mayor of Canada Bay, but no effort was made to resolve the problem and there was no genuine consensus. One resident wrote saying that he was disappointed that the issue had dragged on without resolution for so long and asked me as the member for Drummoyne to take steps to protect the living standards of my constituents. I am proud to say that the Coalition Government immediately took action to resolve this problem.

I take this opportunity to thank the many residents and groups such as Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf who have worked closely with me on this issue. They also met with the Minister for Roads and Ports when he visited the site and were able to provide first-hand accounts of the dire situation that was developing. This is a great example of democracy at work and of government listening to the concerns of electors. I thank the Government for its swift action in dealing with this problem and place on record the gratitude of the people who use the park and the wharf. When the Minister for Roads and Ports inspected the site he acted immediately to impose a total fishing ban. Prior to that, rubbish, fish scales, bait, fishing lines, old hooks and beer bottles were left strewn across the wharf. I thank the Minister and everyone responsible for this resolution, and particularly those who live in the area.

This is a great example of how we can resolve local issues by implementing a planned strategy involving advertising and enforcement, which was a key priority. There is no point in erecting signs about fishing bans when no-one enforces the requirements and there is no point in having council staff patrolling the area during the day when the bans are breached at night. This resolution is the result of a coordinated effort by the State Government, Fisheries NSW and the NSW Police Force in cooperation with the City of Canada Bay Council to deliver a win-win-win for the people of Drummoyne.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [11.32 a.m.]: The Opposition supports the motion. The member for Drummoyne should be complimented on recognising that many people form "friends of" groups to

protect or improve local parks, reserves and historic buildings. I do not think that anything the member said could be regarded as political or offensive in any way. The site concerned is one of the busiest wharves in our water transport system. A *Daily Telegraph* article stated:

ANGLERS will be locked out of a popular Harbour wharf because they have intimidated commuters and ferry staff, lit fires and left it littered with fish guts and discarded hooks.

Gates and fences will be built around the Cabarita Wharf, in Sydney's inner west, within two weeks to enforce the total fishing ban.

Ports Minister Duncan Gay will today warn anglers they risk similar lockouts on any of the other 75 Harbour public ferry and charter boat wharves that allow fishing if they don't clean up their act.

The Minister, the member for Drummoyne and the Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf will be enlisting the support of NSW Maritime, the Department of Primary Industries, council rangers and the NSW Police Force. The action taken by the Minister, the local member and the local action group sends a clear message to fishermen in that area that the defacing and rubbishing of public assets will not be tolerated. I congratulate the Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf on its constant campaign to have the problem resolved. More importantly, those actions will ensure that other people fishing on wharves in our ferry system know that they must take their rubbish with them. The Opposition has no problem with this motion. The second paragraph thanks the Minister for Roads and Ports for taking decisive action to resolve the problem, and the evidence suggests that that is appropriate. The Opposition supports the motion.

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI (Strathfield) [11.36 a.m.]: I support the motion and acknowledge the kind sentiments expressed by the member for Mount Druitt. I cannot disagree with anything that he said—and that is probably a first. Well done. I wish I had a wharf in my electorate because that would mean we had a waterway that offered recreational opportunities. I knew nothing about what was happening at Cabarita wharf. I have nothing against fishermen, especially those who respect community facilities and the environment in which they fish. Unfortunately, the situation at Cabarita deteriorated to the point where it posed health, hygiene and occupational health and safety risks for those who used and maintained it. I commend the actions of the Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf and the member for Drummoyne, particularly given that the situation on the wharf has been a longstanding problem. The member for Drummoyne drove the efforts to find a resolution to that problem.

I also commend the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, for taking swift and decisive action. After all, the wharf is a public transport facility; it is not simply a fishing spot. As such, we must protect the health and wellbeing of those who use and maintain it. That is in keeping with the Government's general principle that everyone using public transport facilities and services should have a positive experience. The aesthetics and cleanliness of a wharf create the first impression for commuters. I am glad that the Hon. Duncan Gay and the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian have taken on board the Government's determination to improve the customer experience not only on wharves but also in other public transport facilities such as railway stations and the like. I acknowledge the wonderful work done by the Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf, the member for Drummoyne and the Minister for Roads and Ports. I support the motion.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [11.40 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Drummoyne because of the importance of our waterways generally and their use for public transport. Cabarita wharf was being used inappropriately by people fishing from it. They were also destroying it and displaying antisocial behaviour. Hence, action was taken by this Government to rectify the problem. I acknowledge that the member for Mount Druitt also supported this motion. The RiverCat service was started by the last Coalition Government in New South Wales when I was living in the North Parramatta area. That fantastic facility was provided to western Sydney from Parramatta, through Rydalmere, Ermington and Drummoyne as another form of public transport into the city.

A couple of weekends ago I drove to Parramatta, parked my car, and caught the ferry. I noticed around the Ryde-Rydalmere area some environmental issues that had existed for many years but about which nothing had been done. I contacted the Minister for Transport the next day about a small section of mangroves that were being disturbed near a wharf. I thank the Minister for acting on my representations immediately. This demonstrates that members of the Government are very environmentally aware and contrasts with the claim that only Australian Labor Party and The Greens members are. The Government is very concerned about issues relating to the environment on a practical level.

I also refer to the Hawkesbury River. Previous members have tried to get action in relation to ongoing erosion along the riverbanks. For many years their representations to previous governments fell on deaf ears.

The problem is most evident in the upper reaches of the Hawkesbury between Wisemans Ferry—roughly where the Colo River joins the Hawkesbury River—and Windsor. The river is quite narrow in that section. Whilst ski boats sit on top of the water at speed, wakeboard boats are weighed down with water so they sit lower and move relatively slowly. They create a rather large wave so that people following on wakeboards can do their tricks. Whilst that is a fantastic recreation, and good luck to them, they should do that in other places where a large wake will not cause environmental damage.

This morning I wrote to the Minister for Roads and Ports asking for investigation of the ongoing comments by the community about very serious erosion of the riverbanks between the Colo River intersection and Windsor being caused by wakeboard boats. Ski boats or other recreational boat users do not cause this sort of damage. The wake from the wakeboard boats washes up onto the bank, causes soil erosion, and washes the soil from around the roots of large gum trees. The trees then fall into the river, which causes environmental problems and the costly removal of those very large trees from the waterway so they are not a danger to recreational boat users. I look forward to scientific evidence coming in to back up the anecdotal evidence about wakeboard boats.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [11.44 a.m.]: In relation to the motion moved by the member for Drummoyne, this morning I read the history of the decision made by the Minister for Roads and Ports in respect of Cabarita Park and wharf and the representations made by the residents of that area. I am sure that the member for Drummoyne has also read a mayoral minute adopted by the City of Canada Bay Council on behalf of local residents. Maritime Services was about to engage in a clean-up exercise that would have effectively expanded the amount of fishing taking place at that wharf. The minute was initiated by Mayor Angelo Tsirekas and a response was given by the very efficient member for Drummoyne. The Minister was responsive to genuine concerns by local residents. I acknowledge their involvement and particularly thank Councillor Tsirekas for being so responsive to the longstanding concerns of the Friends of Cabarita Park.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [11.45 a.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Mount Druitt, Strathfield, Londonderry and Heffron for their contributions on this very important issue. Some members who have not heard about this issue may think it is a fishing issue but it is no indictment of fishermen; we should encourage such a leisure activity. I do not feel comfortable calling the people involved in this matter fishermen because fishermen are responsible, hold a licence, pay their dues and obey the laws; the people causing the problems are anything but responsible.

The member for Mount Druitt referred to a number of important points and articles published in the newspapers. He said that the Minister was taking a tough stance on the behaviour of the people involved by locking others out. He referred to the very important campaign by the Friends of Cabarita Park and Wharf to send a clear message that public assets have to be protected and that zero tolerance should be directed towards antisocial behaviour. The member for Strathfield referred to the importance of fishermen: he is not against them but he is against antisocial behaviour by this group of, often, young men. He also spoke about the health and hygiene problems associated with this behaviour and said that primarily the wharf was a transport facility. He referred to delivering customer service at this transport hub, which is the vision for public transport in this State.

The member for Londonderry said that the Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to the environment and spoke about a number of problems, including soil erosion predominantly along the Hawkesbury River in his electorate. The member for Heffron referred to a minute by the Mayor of Canada Bay, Councillor Angelo Tsirekas. This problem existed for about two years prior to the last State election and the mayor had many opportunities to act on it. However, with a Labor mayor and a Labor State member there was a power struggle with no resolution to the problem. As a result the community was caught up in the politics of the issue. The people in that area are very switched on and they gauged that the problem was becoming a political football between a Labor mayor and a Labor member. The result was that nothing was done about the issue bar putting up signs—a token gesture—but the area was never patrolled. The member for Drummoyne and the Government have resolved the problem and the people are very thankful.

Mr Ron Hoenig: And the mayor.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I look forward to working with the mayor in any capacity I can for the betterment of the area, but it must be remembered that it is all about cooperation to achieve an outcome for the people.

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

Motion agreed to.

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [11.50 a.m.], by leave: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that 14 November 2012 is World Diabetes Day and that the theme from 2009 to 2013 is "Diabetes Education and Prevention";
- (2) notes that this day marks the birthday of Frederick Banting who was one of the key researchers that discovered insulin;
- (3) notes that diabetes is now the fastest-growing chronic disease in Australia; and
- (4) congratulates the Australian Diabetes Council on its tireless work in advocating for and providing support to diabetes sufferers and its education and awareness programs for those at risk of becoming diabetic.

As the motion states, diabetes is now the fastest-growing chronic disease in Australia. Diabetes Australia estimates that, should the prevalence of type 2 diabetes continue to increase at its present rate, by 2025 some three million Australians 25 and older will be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Those damning and daunting statistics highlight the need for the continuation of diabetes awareness campaigns. In particular, those living in regional and rural areas and in large parts of western Sydney should be reminded of the need to undertake regular testing. Statistics show that approximately 280 Australians develop diabetes daily and that half of all cases of type 2 diabetes go undiagnosed.

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Australia, but up to 60 per cent of all cases of type 2 diabetes can be prevented. Globally, some 346 million people are currently suffering from diabetes. Diabetes is but one of several downsides of growing prosperity in the Western world; but it is not limited to the West. As members well know, type 1 diabetes is prevalent throughout the globe but in recent years there has been exponential growth of type 2 diabetes—already common in the West—in countries such as China and India. The Australian Diabetes Council refers to this increasing rate of diabetes as the "Silent Pandemic". I encourage all members to visit the head office of the Australian Diabetes Council at Glebe or to read the information on its wonderful website. I visited its head office. I was interested in all the research being undertaken and the products available to the public. I take this opportunity to commend Dr Lilian Jackson, who is the Principal Health Strategy Executive of the Australian Diabetes Council and head of advocacy and policy. Dr Jackson has held a number of seminars and forums at Parliament House and is well-known to many members.

The Australian Diabetes Council offers a large range of services throughout New South Wales—for example, gymnasiums free of charge for its members. I have visited its gymnasiums in Newcastle and Sydney. These state-of-the-art facilities are provided free for those diagnosed with diabetes. Regular exercise classes are conducted and fitness professionals are on site to demonstrate effective exercises for diabetes sufferers. The Australian Diabetes Council is a non-partisan group that works with both sides of politics to further the cause of diabetes sufferers and to improve prevention of diabetes in Australia. The council also works to promote awareness about the prevalence of diabetes in the community and the risk factors associated with developing type 2 diabetes.

The Australian Diabetes Council participates in research work to improve treatment technology and methodology. Research is primarily funded by Diabetes Australia, the national body. Funding grants are provided through the Diabetes Australia Research Trust. In the past six years the Diabetes Australia Research Trust has invested \$17 million in 238 diabetes research programs nationally. I congratulate the Australian Diabetes Council and the Diabetes Australia Research Trust on their efforts in conducting awareness programs and the ongoing support provided to sufferers of this disease. I have met staff from both of these organisations. They are very passionate about this cause. They are keen to be involved with all levels of government and to work in a bipartisan way to reduce the prevalence of diabetes in Australia. As I have said, up to 60 per cent of all cases of type 2 diabetes can be prevented. People can decrease the chance of developing diabetes by engaging in regular light physical activity, cutting out sugar, quitting smoking and reducing their alcohol intake. This problem will only become larger and the burden on our health system will increase. I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [11.56 a.m.]: Diabetes is an insidious disease. I commend the member for Bankstown for her motion and for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. There would not be anyone in this place who has not been touched by this disease. Diabetes is fast becoming a health epidemic in Australia. I commend the Australian Diabetes Council and Diabetes Australia for their work. In my

role as a dentist I have spoken to some of the diabetic groups fostered by those organisations in my electorate. World Diabetes Day this year is to be celebrated on 14 November. The theme from 2009 to 2013 is "Diabetes Education and Prevention".

Diabetes is made up of a group of different conditions which manifest when there is too much glucose or sugar in the blood. The hormone insulin is critical in regulating blood glucose to optimal levels. High blood glucose will lead to a number of health problems. Insulin is manufactured in the pancreas. Diabetes may occur because the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or because the cells do not respond to the insulin that is produced. There are two main types of diabetes—type 1 and type 2. Type 1 diabetes is characterised by the autoimmune destruction of the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. This variety is most commonly found in children and young adults. It is less common and affects 10 per cent to 15 per cent of diabetics. Insulin must be replaced by injection or insulin pump. There is a genetic component in this type of diabetes. At this stage there is no cure for it.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. It is characterised by a reduced production of insulin and an inability of the body's tissues to respond fully to insulin. It is often lifestyle related and strongly associated with high blood pressure, abnormal blood fats and extra body weight around the middle. This type of diabetes can be delayed, and sometimes prevented, if one follows a healthy lifestyle. There is an increased incidence of type 2 diabetes in the industrialised world. World Diabetes Day, which is organised by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organisation, began in 1991—in response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat posed by diabetes.

In Australia approximately one million people have already been diagnosed with diabetes. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes rises with age and is higher in men than in women, although it can occur at any age. We are finding that many more younger children and young adults are developing type 2 diabetes, which is related to the lifestyle issue. Australia is ranked seventh in the world for the prevalence of type 1 diabetes in children and sixth for its incidence. Diabetes is associated with many complications that may affect the feet, eyes, kidneys, cardiovascular health and nerves. Many of these complications are related to the inability of the body to heal. The body is also at greater risk of getting infections.

Nerve damage in lower limbs affects about 13 per cent of Australians with diabetes and often starts with what is called a diabetic ulcer that simply will not heal. Diabetic retinopathy—an eye disease related to diabetes—occurs in 15 per cent of Australians with diabetes, and diabetes is now the leading cause of end-stage kidney disease. Cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of death among people with diabetes, at about 65 per cent. Furthermore, 41 per cent of people with diabetes also report poor psychological wellbeing, with anxiety, stress, depression and so on. Diabetes has a debilitating effect on the dentition. People with diabetes are at greater risk of developing gum disease and tooth loss due to the loss of bone. They also get dry mouth and a greater incidence of thrush, which is a fungal infection.

The main preventative measures for type 2 diabetes is the panacea for a lot of ill health: exercise, healthy eating, weight loss when people are overweight and, above all, stopping smoking and reducing alcohol intake. Smoking is a big factor in the disease. Indigenous Australians are three times more likely to have type 2 diabetes compared with non-Indigenous Australians. This number is even higher for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas. Indigenous Australians are also at greater risk of complications, with a tenfold higher risk of kidney failure and an eightfold higher risk of high blood pressure.

Early intervention with intensive lifestyle changes in people with pre-diabetes can reduce the risk of developing diabetes by nearly 60 per cent over a three-year period. That is estimated to produce lifetime healthcare cost savings of about \$1,087 per person, which is a massive amount. Basically, people simply need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Those who already have diabetes must carefully monitor their glucose levels. Many people with diabetes regularly check their insulin levels and are proactive in looking after themselves, but many people are not, especially those with pre-diabetes. They simply do not know that they have pre-diabetes. Therefore, it is important to provide greater awareness of all these factors, especially as type 2 diabetes is preventable.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [12.03 p.m.]: I support the motion relating to World Diabetes Day. The member for Bankstown has raised an important issue. World Diabetes Day raises global awareness of diabetes. As we heard from previous speakers, the prevalence of diabetes is escalating around the world. It is estimated that more than 346 million people worldwide have diabetes, and without any intervention this number is likely to double by 2030. Sadly, almost 80 per cent of diabetic deaths occur in low- and middle-income

countries. As we know, diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it does produce. This leads to an increased concentration of glucose in the blood.

It is worth highlighting some key facts. Some 347 million people worldwide have diabetes. In 2004 an estimated 3.4 million people died from the consequences of high blood sugar. A healthy diet, regular physical exercise and activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. It is interesting that diabetes can be prevented, yet 347 million people worldwide have this hideous disease. As the member for Bankstown said, World Diabetes Day will be held on 14 November 2012. It is organised by the International Diabetes Federation, which is an umbrella organisation with more than 200 national diabetes associations in more than 160 countries.

Most people think there are only two types of diabetes but there are three types. Type 1 diabetes is known as insulin-dependent or juvenile-onset diabetes. This is caused by an auto-immune reaction when the body's defence system attacks the insulin-producing cells. Type 2 diabetes, which accounts for at least 90 per cent of all diabetic cases, is known as non-insulin dependent diabetes. Then we have gestational diabetes, which occurs in women during pregnancy. It develops in one in 25 pregnancies worldwide. The problem with gestational diabetes is that the offspring of the women and the women themselves have a higher risk of developing diabetes later in life.

Diabetes in Australia is reaching epidemic proportions. It is the fastest-growing chronic disease in Australia and is the sixth leading cause of death in Australia. Approximately 280 Australians develop the disease every day. Nearly one million Australians are currently diagnosed with diabetes. Up to 60 per cent of type 2 diabetes cases can be prevented. We know that good blood glucose control and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can reduce the effects of diabetes. I encourage members to have regular checks and ensure that they maintain a healthy lifestyle. I commend the member for Bankstown for bringing this important issue to the House, and I congratulate the other members on participating in this debate.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [12.07 p.m.]: I too thank the member for Bankstown for bringing this motion to the House, and I thank the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Shellharbour for their contributions. I will share a story of one man whose work helped to shape the future of diabetes treatment. Frederick Grant Banting was a Canadian medical scientist, doctor, Nobel laureate and noted as one of the main discoverers of insulin. In 1916, on the completion of his Bachelor of Medicine degree, Banting joined the Canadian Army Medical Corps and served in France during the First World War. On his return Banting started his work, which led to the discovery of insulin and the ability to treat diabetes.

Diabetes is a disease that restricts the body's ability to produce or use insulin. Insulin is produced in the pancreas of healthy individuals and is critical to the regulation of blood sugar, specifically glucose, levels. In Banting's day no-one had heard of insulin, knew where it came from or what it did. Banting's hypothesis was that a specific part of the pancreas produced a substance that could treat diabetes. The substance was later labelled as insulin. While other researchers had identified the role of insulin in our bodies, attempts to supply the missing insulin to diabetic patients had failed.

Banting and his assistant, Dr Charles Best, set out to discover how to extract insulin from the pancreas before an enzyme within the pancreas could destroy it. Based on the idea of using ligatures to restrict the pancreatic duct, Banting discovered that insulin was then able to be extracted and used to treat diabetes. For his discovery, he was awarded the 1923 Nobel Prize in Physiology-Medicine. Fiercely patriotic, he returned to service when the Second World War broke out, this time as a liaison officer between the British and North American medical services. At age 49 he was sadly killed in an air disaster in Newfoundland and was said to have spent his final moments tending to the wounds of the injured pilot.

The work of Banting and his discovery of insulin paved the way for the modern treatments that are available to diabetics today. It is now a manageable disease and the right treatment allows individuals to live full and active lives. Each year on 14 November, Banting's birthday, we mark World Diabetes Day. The current theme is diabetes education and prevention. This day and theme is important because, if diabetes continues to rise at the current rates, up to three million Australians aged over 25 years will have diabetes by the year 2025. As diabetes already costs the Australian economy at least \$6 billion annually, investment in prevention for type 2 and research to find a cure for type 1 diabetes is of great importance. Rising rates of obesity, the ageing population, dietary changes and sedentary lifestyles are all thought to be contributing to the growing number of people with type 2 diabetes.

But something can be done. Estimates show that eliminating obesity from the population can potentially reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes by more than 40 per cent. I know that this is an important focus of the new Office of Preventative Health at Liverpool Hospital, having seen the work that is being done there. The rising incidence of type 1 diabetes is also contributing to the growth of diabetes in Australia and its prevalence is predicted to increase by 10 per cent between 2008 and 2013. We appreciate and acknowledge the sustained efforts of the Australian Diabetes Council in raising awareness of the increasing prevalence of this disease and its serious social and economic impacts for both the individual and the health system as a whole. The Australian Diabetes Council continues to make a positive difference to the everyday lives of those living with and at risk of diabetes, and their carers. I know all members thank the council for its efforts.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [12.11 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Menai for their contributions to this debate. I note that it was an all-female performance today, but it does take females to highlight important causes sometimes. I will take a little time to discuss some of the issues that those members raised. With her background in dentistry, the member for Blue Mountains would have seen many of the pre-diabetic symptoms that people often have and in her role as a dentist would have worked with many of the diabetic groups in the Blue Mountains, highlighting the need for people to undergo testing to ensure that they lead far better and healthier lifestyles to prevent the onset of diabetes.

One of the issues raised by the member for Shellharbour was gestational diabetes. I was interested to hear about that because we often overlook it when we think about diabetes. One in 25 pregnant women worldwide develops gestational diabetes and, even if the symptoms disappear after pregnancy, those women are far more likely to end up with type 2 diabetes. What is interesting is that their offspring are also likely to be at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. That poses some questions for the health industry. Women who have or have had gestational diabetes need to be aware that they must take better care of themselves post-pregnancy and also think about the diet and lifestyle lessons they teach their children to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes later in life.

I thank the member for Menai particularly for focusing on Fredrick Banting. It is very important that this House recognise the work of Fredrick Banting in discovering insulin and in making sure that we have a better understanding and prevention of diabetes. The date, 14 November, marks his birthday and we remember the contribution he made to the world. In closing, I add that the Diabetes Federation organises World Diabetes Day. It is an umbrella organisation, with more than 200 national diabetes associations in over 160 countries representing the interests of the growing number of people with diabetes and those at risk since 1950. I thank all members for their contributions to the debate and the House for its indulgence. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.15 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Government and the Minister for Health for their attempts to cover up a report that shows 851 patients have been forced to wait more than three hours on ambulance stretchers before being admitted to New South Wales hospitals, with 155 of these incidents occurring in Wollongong;
- (2) notes that the Minister for Health refused to make the data public and only released it under a Government Information Public Access request; and
- (3) continues to applaud the magnificent efforts of all health service personnel at Wollongong Hospital under difficult circumstances beyond their control.

I am thankful to bring to the attention of the House the disgraceful state of hospitals throughout New South Wales, particularly in Wollongong. They are in this state because of the "say everything and do nothing" O'Farrell Coalition Government. In November last year 851 patients were forced to wait for more than three hours on ambulance stretchers before being admitted to hospitals, and 155 of those patients were in Wollongong Hospital—the highest number in the State; so much for the Coalition's promises and commitments in the run-up to the election. To add insult to injury, the Minister for Health tried to cover up the report.

Mr John Williams: How many were there under Labor?

Ms NOREEN HAY: The member for Murray-Darling can have his two bits worth, but in the run-up to the election those opposite said they were going to fix everything. Jillian Skinner came to Wollongong and said that if her party was elected to government it would all be fixed. But those opposite have fixed nothing—zero. The Minister for Health refused to release the information, as the former Labor Government did in the name of transparency and good governance, which meant that this atrocity was made public only following a government information public access request. By not letting the community know about these delays in off-stretcher times, the Minister for Health is able to skate through, free from pressure and not answerable to anyone—least of all the people of New South Wales. I also place on record that when questions are asked about performance in hospitals, particularly Wollongong Hospital, the Minister sends a bureaucrat to answer them. She does not come herself. I would like to have seen us get away with that sort of behaviour in government. Those opposite would not have stood for it, and we will not stand for it now.

It was not just Wollongong Hospital patients who had to suffer; the list is long and distinguished. There were 144 patients at Liverpool, 82 at Westmead, 66 at Gosford, 54 at Prince of Wales, 33 at Wyong and 25 at Royal North Shore. At the same time that the Minister was refusing to release the report on the outrageous patient waiting times the *Illawarra Mercury* was reporting that Wollongong Hospital was the worst-ranked hospital in the State for ambulance congestion. I am waiting to hear an explanation from members opposite about the situation the paramedics find themselves in. Figures obtained from the New South Wales daily emergency access status report show that the number of ambulance arrivals who waited more than one hour to be taken off their stretcher is steadily on the rise, with the number increasing from 384 in June to 438 in August.

In August 2012 the *Illawarra Mercury* was still reporting on how the shortages of beds and excess trolleys were pushing paramedics to the brink, with veteran ambulance officers stating that the emergency department was in dire straits. Five ambulance officers had stayed for up to six hours with patients on trolleys in the corridor. Trolley block continues to be the scourge of many hospitals across the State, and clearly Wollongong is a prime example. Ambulance officers taken away from their vital duties on the road are forced to stay with patients on trolleys lining the corridors, frustrating paramedics, patients and staff alike. When is the Minister going to fix the problem? Our emergency departments are stretched to capacity. Doctors and nurses are working themselves into the ground to try to find beds for people who are sick and in need of treatment.

As we heard yesterday, now doctors and front-line health staff are to be subjected to the \$3 billion cuts that this Government is proposing in health. The recent announcement by the O'Farrell Government that it is going to decimate vital health services in New South Wales to the tune of nearly \$3 billion shows that this is a Government that does not care about the people of Wollongong, the Illawarra or the State. It is yet another slap in the face. These unprecedented funding and staffing cuts to hospitals and clinics across the State will only end in disaster, with an elderly, struggling health system being pushed to the brink. The O'Farrell Government has confirmed it is cutting \$2.98 billion in New South Wales health funding, including more than \$2 billion in cuts to services and hospital budgets, and \$775 million in staffing cuts.

Mr John Williams: Savings.

Ms NOREEN HAY: As part of these cuts, some 3,600 health workers are set to lose their jobs. I note from the interjection of the member for Murray-Darling that "savings" is code for "cuts". Either way, the results are the same. How is this Government committed to fixing the issue of waiting times and trolley block? Slashing \$3 billion from New South Wales hospitals will mean fewer beds, longer waiting times and compromised patient care, not to mention the closure of Bulli emergency department adding to the pressure. Prior to the election the now Minister for Health was visiting Wollongong Hospital almost daily promising to fix waiting times, bed shortages and trolley block, to name a few. Eighteen months later, waiting times are worse, bed availability is less, trolley block is at crisis point and now there is a \$3 billion cut to health. Where will this dishonesty stop?

No-one could have anticipated such a cut to health funding by Barry O'Farrell based on what he told the voters before the election. We need a Minister who is prepared to put the needs of patients and medical staff first and not quash reports into what really needs to be funded in the New South Wales health system. I take this opportunity to commend the doctors and nurses who work so tirelessly in what are clearly trying conditions, day in and day out, particularly in Wollongong. They are a credit to their profession and to our community. I call on the O'Farrell Government and the Minister for Health to pull the finger out and get on with the job of fixing our hospitals.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [12.22 p.m.]: Another Thursday and another speech from the member for Wollongong. Let us look at the motion. Notice was given on 11 November 2011, eight months after we assumed these benches. What I did not hear from the member for Wollongong was an apology for the 16 years that her Government was in office and the mess that they left this Government to clean up. What we have done since we were elected is to make sure that clinicians not politicians make decisions about the functioning of the health system—people who are at the coalface. We heard a stunning admission from the member for Wollongong a moment ago that it was the ministry that was making these decisions, just like Junior Masterchef upstairs cooking up the budget. The member for Wollongong said it in this place; she said it was the Minister making the decisions.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: I am being misrepresented. I said that they were making the public—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Wollongong will have an opportunity in reply to refute anything that is said. The member for Kiama is being relevant. I ask the member for Wollongong and the member for Keira to remain silent while the member for Kiama is speaking.

Mr GARETH WARD: In that reply the member for Wollongong will have to undo everything she just said. I thank my friend the Minister for Ageing; sometimes I feel I am ageing in this place. I age very quickly when I think about the hours I lose listening to the speeches of the member for Wollongong, day in and day out. She is an apologist for her side's time in government. Those opposite had 16 years to fix the health system. We are proud of people like Denis King, an experienced clinician who is making decisions about how best to run the health system, not Labor union hacks and former Ministers on the Opposition front bench. The issues in the motion strike at the heart of resourcing hospitals and the health system. This Government is proposing to invest around \$100 million, which includes improving elective surgery and oncology at Wollongong Hospital. Did members opposite do that when they occupied these benches? No, they did not. They had 16 years to deliver a better health system. Did they provide better car parking? Did they make improvements to the parking issues at Wollongong Hospital?

Members opposite only shout louder when they know they are in trouble. We did not hear any substance in their contributions. They try to mask their 16 years of failure in this regard. We are the ones who are getting on with delivering a better health system in the Illawarra, particularly things like the Cancer Care Centre, improvements to oncology, and the upgrade to Wollongong Hospital, which were not delivered by that disreputable lot that sit in ignominy on the Opposition benches. There are times when the transfer of care of patients attending Wollongong Hospital emergency department is not ideal. The staff of Wollongong Hospital's emergency department work extremely hard with their ambulance colleagues to ensure that patients are transferred to the care of the emergency department in reasonable time frames. I am glad that members opposite agree.

In the majority of cases the transfer of cases is acceptable and patients receive their care in the desired time frame. However, there are instances at Wollongong Hospital where we can do better. Initiatives are in place to improve performance. All members of this House, no matter who is in government, want to see resources used to the best of their capacity. We try to do the greatest good for the greatest number. Wollongong's emergency department is one of the busiest in New South Wales, with more than 50,000 presentations each year. As the Illawarra and South Coast's only tertiary referral hospital, Wollongong Hospital also sees the most serious and complex presentations.

Winter is the busiest time of year and hospitals in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District experienced a surge in ambulatory and walk-in presentations as well as an increase in the admission of more acutely ill patients. The hospital also experienced continued increased demand during the winter months as the elderly and those with chronic health conditions became more vulnerable. For example, over June and July there was an increase in acutely unwell patients in triage categories 1 and 2—an 8.5 per cent increase in triage 1 and a 35 per cent increase in triage category 2 patients presenting to the Wollongong Hospital emergency department compared with the same time last year. Patients presenting in triage categories 3 and 4 are often older and sicker and therefore may require more frequent hospitalisation and increased length of stay. There has also been a 9.2 per cent increase in emergency department presentations over the same period last year.

A common misconception is that patients who arrive by ambulance are often seen ahead of those patients who walk in. This is not true. All patients who present to the emergency department are triaged and the most seriously ill patients are treated first, regardless of their mode of arrival. Like all hospitals, Wollongong

experiences peaks and lulls and the flow-on demand can continue to impact beyond the season. During busy periods emergency department staff activate an escalation plan to minimise waiting times for both patients and ambulances. Hospital staff work actively with the ambulance service to ensure that patients are seen and treated as soon as possible. An increase in patients presented by ambulance was also experienced at Wollongong Hospital during the recent winter. On average, an additional nine ambulances per day attended the hospital. Wollongong Hospital has a dedicated winter bed strategy and a peak period escalation plan is in place to minimise waiting times for both patients and ambulances.

An ongoing review of the models of care provided in the Wollongong Hospital emergency department is being undertaken to ensure that the best possible care is provided to patients presenting to the hospital's emergency department. Patient flow teams are in place around the clock to facilitate timely access to the emergency department. These teams coordinate bed availability throughout the hospital and allocate beds for patients admitted via the emergency department and other admissions. Frequent liaison between the hospital and senior ambulance service representatives occurs throughout the period of increased service demand, which ensures that ambulance crews are released as soon as beds become available within the emergency department.

Ambulance release teams are often utilised in peak periods to allow ambulances to return to road duty. I congratulate Wollongong Hospital staff on their efforts during what has been a very busy winter. I also take this opportunity to congratulate our hardworking ambulance personnel in the Illawarra region who continue to provide first-rate services in a climate of ever increasing demand for health services. It does not matter who is in government; we will always have the same level of resources. We need to utilise those to the best of our ability. I had hoped to hear suggestions from the Opposition on how to make the system work better to create a health system that the people of this State so rightly and richly deserve.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.29 p.m.]: I acknowledge one of my Illawarra colleagues the member for Wollongong for advocating on behalf of the broader Illawarra community, but particularly the Wollongong electorate. Wollongong Hospital is unique—it is one of the largest regional hospitals across New South Wales and, therefore, Australia. It is an extremely busy hospital. It services not just the Illawarra region but also the southern region. When things go wrong, Wollongong Hospital is often the first port of call. The hospital is under pressure, but not because of the hardworking doctors and nurses. The member for Wollongong has rightly acknowledged their work and their efforts. The member for Kiama incorrectly said that it was his side of politics that allocated funding for the surgical upgrade of the hospital. That funding resulted from years of lobbying by members on this side, in particular the member for Wollongong. That is the first error we need to clear up about Wollongong Hospital.

When in opposition, the Minister for Health was a frequent visitor to the region. She would visit Wollongong Hospital; she would visit Shellharbour Hospital, in the electorate of my colleague the member for Shellharbour; and she would visit Bulli Hospital, in the electorate of Heathcote that borders the electorate of Keira. She is no longer a frequent visitor. We have not seen her in the Illawarra for some time, as the member for Wollongong would agree. We have not seen her in Wollongong for some time. We have seen the result of what they call devolution, or rolling it out to the local area. What does this mean? It is simple: When it gets tough, who do we roll out? We roll out the chair of the local health district. We roll out a public servant. We roll out a well-respected clinician. I put on the record the respect that we have in the region for Denis King. We never see the Minister for Health when it gets tough. She is now invisible.

The Minister for Health is the butt of the local media joke, which is very simple: Do not bother ringing the office of the Minister for Health, because the call will be patched down to Denis King. That is devolution. Do not kid yourself about devolution. It is about protecting the Minister, it is about covering for the Minister, it is about making sure that the chair of the health board delivers all the bad news and takes responsibility for all of the bad decisions, regardless of whether it is about Wollongong, Bulli or Shellharbour. But when there is any credit or a pat on the back to be had, we do not see the chair of the local health board. What we do see on rare occasions is the Minister being rolled out for everyone to give her a round of applause. The people of Illawarra expect better than that. I congratulate the member for Wollongong on raising this important issue.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [12.33 p.m.]: I agree with paragraph 3 of the motion, which continues to applaud the magnificent efforts of all health service personnel at Wollongong Hospital who work under difficult circumstances that are beyond their control. That is the one paragraph we should be paying attention to in debate on this motion. I also defend Professor Denis King. His work in this area is unquestionable. As my colleague said, these decisions need to be made by clinicians, not politicians. The people who know best are the clinicians, not a bunch of bozos sitting in a parliamentary chamber in Macquarie Street.

Mr Guy Zangari: Stop talking about yourself like that.

Mr LEE EVANS: I agree. I cannot make decisions on medical needs because I am not a doctor. There is one member on the other side who is a doctor. He may have a slight idea, but on what I have seen recently, that is questionable.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Members will not engage in conversation across the Chamber.

Mr LEE EVANS: I thank the member for Keira for confirming that whenever the Labor Party gets back into power, which I am sure will be many decades from now, it will roll back local district health boards. Today the member for Keira, a shadow Minister, confirmed the Labor Party is fully committed to rolling back local health district boards. I will give members some information that will add to the debate. Each and every year our health system plans for changes in demand in winter. This year the public health experts say that we will experience a nasty flu strain that will particularly compromise the young and elderly and those with chronic diseases. The latest Bureau of Health Information [BHI] report highlighted the unseasonal increase in the number of patients attending emergency departments across New South Wales.

Geographically, Wollongong Hospital is in the centre of Wollongong and it is compacted onto the site. The Government has announced that more parking will be created, which will assist those who are attending the hospital. Figures show that more than 546,000 patients attended New South Wales emergency departments for treatment during the quarter. This is 6,000 more patients than attended in the previous quarter in 2011. This represents a 7 per cent increase in attendances compared to the same period in 2011. I agree with the member for Wollongong that nothing is solid regarding health. Those opposite have confirmed today that they will not continue with local district health boards; they will shut them down as soon as they come to power—2050 will be the next time the Labor Party is in Government. I thank the member for Wollongong for drawing our attention to the past 16 years of neglect and its impact on Wollongong Hospital, but we are moving forward to make New South Wales number one again.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.37 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the disgraceful state of hospitals in New South Wales because of this Government's 19 months of incompetence and a severe lack of funding. Hospital waiting times in emergency departments in New South Wales hospitals are an absolute disgrace. How does the Coalition Government propose to rectify the debilitating issues facing our hospitals by slashing funding and cutting staff? That is correct: This Government has imposed \$3 billion worth of funding cuts on hospitals across the State. This is yet another masterpiece spawned by the O'Farrell Government.

Our hardworking nurses are under the pump because our hospitals are not receiving enough funding or support from the Coalition Government. It is not only the community that is outraged by the cuts; the nurses are also outraged. The member for Wollongong knows that only too well given the work that she is doing in her electorate. I have spoken to many doctors, nurses and patients who have raised legitimate concerns about these cuts. In November last year, 851 patients were forced to wait for more than three hours on ambulance stretchers before being admitted to hospital. Why? It is because members opposite cannot tell the difference between a hospital bed and a chair, and they believe that cutting—

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. This motion is about Wollongong Hospital, not any other hospital.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I remind the member for Fairfield of Standing Order 76, which requires him to be relevant. I ask him to address the leave of the motion. However, we do allow a little latitude in these debates. I will continue to listen very carefully to the member for Fairfield.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I commend you, Mr Acting-Speaker, for the wonderful job you are doing. You may one day assume that position permanently. My contribution is relevant. All of the information that I am providing relates specifically to Wollongong Hospital, which is one of many in the great network of hospitals in New South Wales that is suffering. The point of order taken by the member for Oatley demonstrates that, like other Government members, he does not care. I point out that the first paragraph of the motion contains the words "being admitted to NSW hospitals". I am being relevant.

We all know that waiting times in emergency departments in New South Wales hospitals are absolutely atrocious. The people of New South Wales deserve better, but this Government refuses to deliver the

appropriate resources. That is why the member for Wollongong moved this motion. It is as simple as that. Members opposite probably do not know about the trolley block that occurs regularly in our hospitals. Ambulance officers are being forced to wait with patients who are lined up in hospital corridors, which means they are not available to respond to emergency calls.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order again relates to relevance under Standing Order 76. The member's contribution has nothing to do with Wollongong Hospital.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Fairfield will return to the leave of the motion.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I will. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services) [12.40 p.m.]: I make this contribution as the member for Bega rather than as the Minister for Ageing because people on the far South Coast often access Wollongong Hospital. The member for Keira—who is a senior member of the Opposition—clearly spelt out that the Labor Party's health policy is to dismantle district health boards. The Minister for Health has worked hard to implement the district health board structure so that decision-making is devolved to the community level.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. My motion does not refer to health boards.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! As I said to the member for Fairfield, a little latitude is allowed given that this is a debate about health. I believe the Minister is being relevant.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The member for Wollongong and the member for Keira said that they want to dismantle the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local District Health Board. That is very concerning for the local community. District health boards allow for the devolution of decision-making and they ensure that the right decisions are made about resource allocation. They remove the politics from the health system with regard to on-the-ground service delivery. Members have spoken about winter planning for hospitals. The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District has been allocated \$710 million for 2012-13 out of a total Health budget of \$18.3 billion. That funding package includes \$2.3 million to employ 36 additional nurses, \$574,000 to employ nine additional operating theatre nurses, \$338,000 to employ three additional clinical nurse midwife educators and clinical nurse midwife specialists, \$272,000 to expand radiotherapy services at the Illawarra Cancer Care Centre and to prepare for the new regional cancer centre at Nowra.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District continues to benefit from the Government's commitment to ensure that state-of-the-art health facilities are available for the Illawarra community. That includes an allocation of \$2.9 million to continue the development of the Wollongong Hospital elective surgery unit at an estimated total cost of \$86.1 million, \$10.9 million to complete the redevelopment of the joint State-Commonwealth funded Illawarra Cancer Care Centre at Wollongong Hospital at an estimated total cost of \$14.1 million, and \$27 million to continue the redevelopment of the joint State-Commonwealth funded Shoalhaven Regional Cancer Care Centre at Nowra. For the member for Wollongong to suggest that the Coalition Government is doing nothing about Wollongong Hospital is misleading and absolutely disgraceful.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This Government inherited a health system that was in complete disarray, and that is why it appointed the local district health boards. It wanted to ensure that locals were back in charge of their local health district and that they were accountable for their decisions. Members of the Opposition have confirmed this morning on the public record that they will dismantle the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. [*Time expired.*]

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The Minister's time has expired. Does the member for Wollongong wish to proceed with the point of order?

Ms Noreen Hay: No.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.44 p.m.], in reply: I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Kiama, the member for Keira, the member for Heathcote, the member for Fairfield and the member for Bega. Mr Acting-Speaker, you pointed out that I gave notice of this motion in November 2011. Since then the situation in the Illawarra has deteriorated under this Government's administration. Of course, that makes this issue even more important. I must correct the statement that I said that the decisions were being made by public servants. I said that when a response had to be given, the Minister reeled out a bureaucrat to do that. When we were in Government there was no way that the Opposition would have copped that, and we are not prepared to accept that either. The Minister should take responsibility for what she is doing. She did plenty of talking in opposition and in the lead-up to the election about what she was going to do, but she has reneged on all of the promises. She should take responsibility and answer for herself. A couple of members mentioned the Cancer Care Centre at Wollongong Hospital. I remind them that it was the Greiner Coalition Government that left a huge gaping hole on the site of the Cancer Care Centre.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: The member for Wollongong is now introducing new elements to this debate well beyond the leave of the motion. I draw your attention to Standing Order 76.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Wollongong is addressing the history of this issue, which was raised in the context of the debate. I thank the Minister for the point of order and I ask the member for Wollongong to return to the leave of the motion.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Thank you for your fairness in this debate, Mr Acting-Speaker. The Cancer Care Centre at Wollongong Hospital is thanks to the staff involved and the former Labor Government, 100 per cent. Reference was also made in the debate to the \$83 million investment in Wollongong Hospital. It is a shame that members of the Government did not acknowledge that that commitment was made under the former Labor Government. The member for Keira quite eloquently talked about devolution, and said that when times are hard the Minister and the rest of the Government pass the buck onto poor bureaucrats to take the blame, but when a proposal is announced they will take credit for it.

I also add my congratulations and recognise Denis King. My motion is about the failure of this Government to fund appropriately, to fix problems and to take responsibility. I am not quite sure what the member for Heathcote waffled on about, but he talked about local district health boards and completely misrepresented the contribution of the member for Keira when he said that the Labor Party would get rid of local health boards. The Minister for Ageing, speaking as the member for Bega, could not wait to jump on the bandwagon in relation to that matter. It was a misrepresentation: he knows it, I know it and everybody else knows it. The Minister for Ageing has the right to try to use up time by taking irrelevant points of order. I commend my motion to the House.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 21

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

Noes, 64

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Report: Establishment of Special Economic Zones

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [1.03 p.m.]: Following a request from the Treasurer to examine the potential for special economic zones to promote economic growth, employment and investment in regional New South Wales, the Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development resolved in November 2011 to conduct an inquiry into the benefits of special economic zones. Special economic zones have a long history in both developed and developing countries as a government tool for developing the economy of a particular location. The object of special economic zones in regional and rural New South Wales would be to provide State tax and financial incentives in order to promote economic development.

On receiving this request from the Treasurer, I, like the rest of the committee, was open-minded about special economic zones. On first inspection there seemed to be some merit to special economic zones as a means of stimulating economic activity in regional and rural New South Wales. However, as a result of the inquiry most committee members have conceded that their opinion on special economic zones has changed. The committee received submissions and heard evidence from a broad range of stakeholders. Areas with declining economies argued that establishing special economic zones was a way to kickstart economic activity in their communities, while areas with more robust economies saw economic zones as a way to build on existing strengths. Because of the particular issues facing the State's border economies, committee members travelled to Tweed Heads and Albury to hear the views of local stakeholders. The committee heard that differences in State taxes and regulations, including those affecting licences, trade qualifications, planning and transport, and local government directly impact the border regions of New South Wales.

On the balance of the evidence provided, the committee was not convinced of the need to establish special economic zones in New South Wales. The committee doubted the effectiveness of special economic zones to encourage economic activity in regional New South Wales, especially the border regions I have mentioned. The committee resolved that the New South Wales Government work towards a long-term goal of setting State tax rates that are equal to or more competitive than those in other States; that the New South Wales

Government consider the impact of the planning system on border economies; and that the following issues relating to border regions be further investigated by the Cross Border Commissioner: State taxes, planning regulations, licences and trade qualifications, transport regulations including heavy vehicle regulations, taxi hire regulations and public transport ticketing for services that cross State borders. The committee encourages the Government to continue to work with local industry and other stakeholders to foster economic development in regional New South Wales.

I thank Deputy Chair Stuart Ayres, the member for Penrith, for his insightful understanding of post global financial crisis economics. The diverse backgrounds of the other committee members: Ms Noreen Hay, the member for Wollongong, Mr Jamie Parker, the member for Balmain, and Mr Chris Gulaptis, the member for Clarence, were also of great benefit during our deliberations. It would have been very easy for the member for Wollongong and the member for Clarence in particular to bring a specific agenda to the committee's considerations—namely, special economic zones for their electorates. I understand that the member for Wollongong has taken some flak because the committee did not determine that Wollongong should be a special economic zone. All committee members took a macro view of the recommendations, which highlight the fact that if the State were committed to a special economic zone in one specific area then we would be at risk of moving the State borders. On behalf of the committee, I thank the stakeholders who participated in and contributed to the inquiry. I also thank the committee staff for their support and guidance. I commend the report to the House.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [1.08 p.m.]: As a member of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development I undertook this inquiry with the view that economic zones were the way to go. I agreed with the submission of Regional Development Australia Illawarra that the Illawarra in particular would benefit from being identified as an economic zone. But the evidence adduced during the inquiry did not support the argument that economic zones across the State would be beneficial. Indeed, evidence given by a number of people supported the fact that economic zones could result in new borders and cause problems for people who are currently not affected. That is why I did not take a position of dissent. I agree that the inquiry was an educational and worthwhile undertaking. I congratulate the chair and the other members of the committee on their behaviour, integrity and bipartisanship. The committee heard some interesting contributions.

As the report's conclusion states, "the committee encourages the New South Wales Government to work with industry and other stakeholders to encourage economic development in regional areas". Centres of excellence, government investment in regional areas and encouraging more investment in regional areas such as the Illawarra are beneficial initiatives. As submitted by Regional Development Australia Illawarra, we can achieve the desired outcomes through centres of excellence and government investment in projects. I certainly add my voice to that and encourage the New South Wales Government to look at specific investment proposals for the Illawarra region and to work with Regional Development Australia Illawarra.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [1.11 p.m.]: I make a contribution to the Committee on Economic Development's report into the establishment of special economic zones. First, I thank my colleagues on the committee for acting professionally throughout the hearings. The committee comprised a broad group of members, with representatives from The Greens, the Australian Labor Party, The Nationals and the Liberal Party. The fact that there was strong consensus among the committee members supports the view stated in the report. There was no political motive throughout the committee's deliberations. The ability of committee members to work so closely together underpins the philosophical approach to the preparation of the report.

I reiterate the words of the member for Wollongong: the committee grappled with the fundamental premise of moving borders. Although we were dealing with existing border economies that struggled with regulatory issues on either side of a line on a map, a recommendation to move the line on the map would simply create the same issues somewhere else in New South Wales. The committee recommended that the State Government continue to work with stakeholders, local government and industry to support enterprise and economic development across New South Wales, particularly in regional areas. The contribution of regional stakeholders should not be underestimated in the report.

As the committee acknowledged in the report, it is important to recognise that there is an opportunity to underpin a planning regime with enterprise zones, and what the State Government can do to activate and mobilise those enterprise zones is particularly important. Whether it is the Illawarra, western Sydney or regional New South Wales, a planning framework that allows those enterprise zones to evolve and become centres of excellence, with opportunities for people to work closer to home, is fundamentally the cornerstone of any planning system to be adopted in the State. That also provides an opportunity for the State Government to play a

greater role in investing in those areas. In the Illawarra a good example is the University of Wollongong's work on creating its Innovation Campus. In the Penrith region the University of Western Sydney is looking to evolve its campus and is investing in facilities and buildings to create a business park, with an outcome similar to that of the Innovation Campus in Wollongong.

The report states that we do not need to redraw lines on a map to create economic activity. We must have targeted and well thought out policy settings to ensure that we secure the outcomes we want, that is, more jobs, jobs closer to home, and a greater sharing of the economic capacity of the State. Most importantly, it is about drawing out the competitive advantage that exists in the regions. Whether it is the Illawarra, western Sydney or regional New South Wales, the State Government must look at the advantages in those areas, draw them out and invest in them. The Government can support that by placing a greater focus on decentralisation, moving jobs out of the Sydney central business district and into those locations. I support that position. I again commend my committee colleagues and the committee clerks for their work in drafting the report.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [1.15 p.m.]: I am delighted to take this opportunity to make a brief contribution to the take-note debate on the Committee on Economic Development's first report on the establishment of special economic zones. I too thank my committee colleagues. This worthwhile and professional committee focused on the evidence. Members often hear me talk about analysing the evidence so that, through a rational process, we are able to determine the most effective outcome. I am glad to say that there was committee consensus on the final resolution in the report and the approach to be taken. However, I shall make a few brief points.

First, it is clear that the State Government and the Federal Government, through the Council of Australian Governments and other organisations, when dealing with the national seamless economy plan and so on, must focus on some key areas. I travelled to Albury with the committee but I was unable to make it to the Tweed hearings. It is clear from the report that cross-border issues significantly affect and impact on local businesses and local communities and the efficiency of processes in those areas. They also impact on the capacity of local business to deliver for their staff, for the environment, for their communities and for New South Wales. Cross-border collaboration is an important issue that needs to be addressed. The State Government has taken some steps in that regard. The committee was advised through the Department of Premier and Cabinet that there is a significant number of cross-border memorandums of understanding.

I encourage the Government to continue to address that issue because the Council of Australian Governments process is difficult and challenging. When a politician says it is difficult and challenging it often means that things will not happen for some time. During the consultation process one issue raised by stakeholders was State taxes and regulation. Obviously, national harmonisation to develop a seamless economy is important, as is the level and impact of taxes and regulations in New South Wales. I note that the Government has taken some steps in relation to payroll tax rebates and increasing the payroll tax threshold. I draw the attention of the Treasurer to the ineffectiveness of payroll tax rebates. I note that business organisations have also called on the Government to reassess the payroll tax. The Government should seriously consider assessing the effectiveness and targeted nature of payroll tax rebates to stimulate jobs. In conclusion, I echo the comments of several committee members.

No-one should take the outcomes of this report to mean that we are against clustering and enterprise zones. Those types of approaches are important. For example, in my community, local government, the local chamber of commerce and I as the local member have been encouraging clustering in some areas on Parramatta Road, especially the clustering of wedding shops and businesses. The retail environment around Annandale and on Parramatta Road has seen an explosion in wedding shops and wedding-related venues. Clustering can be effective and help generate a great deal of support, as we have seen in western Sydney where there are business parks and larger centres. I thank the committee members and indicate that I enjoyed working with all of them. I congratulate the chair of the committee on releasing his first report. I look forward to working with members on both sides to further the objectives of the committee.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [1.19 p.m.]: As a member of the Committee on Economic Development I will make a modest contribution to the committee's report on the establishment of economic zones. I too congratulate each one of the committee members. We worked cooperatively on this committee; it was a committee of love and harmony. We all came with our own ideas about moving borders, particularly in relation to cross-border issues at Albury and Tweed Heads, as well as the establishment of centres of excellence. But once we got to the heart of the discussion and heard the views of people across the State, it

became apparent that moving borders was not the answer because we would end up with no borders across Australia. The findings and recommendations within the report accurately depict the committee's conclusion. Recommendation 1 states:

That the NSW Government work towards a long term goal of setting state tax rates that are equal to or more competitive than other states.

That is the nub of the issue. Recommendation 2 states:

That the NSW Government consider the impact of the planning system on border economies, as part of the current review of the NSW planning system.

Obviously, that recommendation is topical to the review of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Recommendation 3 states:

That the following issues relating to border regions be further investigated by the Cross Border Commissioner:

- State taxes;
- Planning regulations;
- Licences and trade qualifications; and
- Transport regulations

I commend the Government for appointing a Cross-Border Commissioner, who undertakes an important role dealing with cross-border issues such as differences in economic zones. I commend all members of the committee, particularly the chair, for working cooperatively and coming up with a report that is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales.

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

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 27/55

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

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.23 p.m.]: As chair of the Legislation Review Committee, the hardest working committee of the Parliament, I comment on the recent Legislation Review Digest report tabled on 23 October 2012. This is the twenty-seventh digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. It is a substantial document, not a pamphlet, comprising more than 100 pages. It is not about the number of bills that the committee reviews but the quality of the legislation, and it is not about the size of the report but the quality of the report. The quality of the report has a lot to do with the committee members and staff. I am sure members of this House will give credit where credit is due. This is a hardworking committee with hardworking staff who produce a wonderful report for the assistance of members and the community.

The Legislation Review Digest No. 27/55 represents a substantial amount of work done by the committee. The committee reviewed the 16 bills that were tabled last week and also reported on two regulations. The 16 bills covered a vast array of subject matters, from boarding houses and swimming pools to primary industries and tattoo parlours. There were also three bills implementing national law relating to electronic conveyancing, rail safety and marine safety. As required by sections 8A and 9 of the Legislation Review Act, the Legislation Review Committee identified issues in the bills and regulations. The committee raised substantive comments in relation to a number of bills. I will briefly outline a number of the bills that gave rise to such comment.

The Boarding Houses Bill raised issues in relation to powers of entry, privacy and self-incrimination. In the report on the Director of Public Prosecutions Amendment (Disclosures) Bill, the committee raised issues in relation to the administration of criminal justice and retrospectivity. The Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Bill report noted impacts on the right to silence. The Ports Assets (Authorised Transactions) Bill

raised issues including the powers of officials, compensation and functions that were provided for in the regulations that could have been more appropriately included in the legislation. The Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill led the committee to comment on aspects of the bill that impact on self-incrimination and matters outlined in the regulations that the committee thought could be included in the legislation.

The Rail Safety (Adoption of National Law) Bill gave rise to comment on personal physical integrity, search and seizure without a warrant, and the reversal of the onus of proof. In addition to these issues, the committee also commented on the impact of the bill on access to justice and a Henry VIII clause that enables regulations to amend the principal Act. The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) led the committee to comment on retrospective elements of the bill as well as penalty increases that the committee considered could be excessive and privacy concerns. The Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill may impact on the rights and liberties of individuals in relation to their privacy and the implementation of official powers. The bill also raises concerns in relation to self-incrimination and retrospectivity.

A number of the bills are due to commence by proclamation, including the Boarding Houses Bill, the Director of Public Prosecutions Amendment (Disclosures) Bill, the Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Bill, the Local Government Amendment (Conduct) Bill, the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill, the Miscellaneous Acts Amendment (Directors' Liability) Bill, and the Passenger Transport Amendment (Ticketing and Passenger Conduct) Bill. The committee raised concerns in relation to the three bills that implement national law, being the Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Bill, the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill and the Rail Safety (Adoption of National Law) Bill.

The committee noted that implementing national law can impact on the sovereignty of the New South Wales Parliament, and the committee always reviews the implementation of national law closely. The two regulations that the committee reported on were the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Transitional Part 3A Projects) Regulation and the Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Amendment (Release of Information to Toll Operators) Regulation. As I said, the committee always reviews the implementation of national law closely. In these three national law bills, the legislation to amend the adoption of national law bill remained with the State, so it was not a case of transferring all of the State's rights. I thank the staff and the members of the Committee for their assistance in the preparation of this vast digest.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I note the time. However, with the concurrence of the House, we will conclude the take-note debate on committee reports.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.29 p.m.]: I speak on the Legislation Review Committee Digest No. 19 of 2012 and No. 27 of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. I acknowledge my fellow committee members in this place, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Parramatta, the member for Rockdale, the member for Swansea, and our colleagues in the other place, Mr Shoebridge, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I acknowledge also the hardworking committee staff, who had the unenviable task of preparing a second digest in two weeks due to back-to-back sitting weeks. The task was made more difficult given the large number of bills requiring review, but of course the committee staff did their usual excellent work.

This week's meeting will go down in history as a marathon meeting as all committee members were exhausted by its staggering length: a total of eight minutes. I note that Dr Phelps was not present. Interestingly, one Coalition member always seems to be absent from these alternate lunchtime meetings. It is almost as though they have a roster just to prove their point that taking a few minutes from their lunch break is an enormous inconvenience. That said, I enjoyed being able to attend this meeting and participate in the discussion about the legislation being reviewed. A particular highlight was the debate on the Firearms Amendment (Gun Safety) Bill 2012—a private member's bill introduced by Mr Shoebridge in the other place. The committee's draft report made the following statement about this bill:

Trespasses on personal rights and liberties: s 8A(1)(b)(i) of the LRA Recreational rights

Schedule 2 of the Bill has the effect of removing the exemption that allows unlicensed persons to possess and use firearms on approved shooting ranges.

Mr Shoebridge sought and gained the Opposition's support to move to delete the adverse finding, as was his right, and insert that the committee made no comment. To everyone's surprise, the Coalition members

representing the electorates of Parramatta, Swansea and Rockdale jumped on board and voted for the amendment, much to the shock of the chair and member for Myall Lakes, who opposed the amendment. I was particularly surprised at the strong stand the member for Swansea took against recreational shooting in his electorate. I did not realise the Legislation Review Committee had a Greens-Coalition Alliance. I remind members that they should read committee papers prior to attending meetings, or perhaps it is time the Coalition reviewed its committee membership. The digest reviews 16 bills in total, which I believe is a record for this Parliament. The Boarding Houses Bill 2012 was the subject of substantive debate in the House, in which I participated along with the member for Auburn.

The Opposition offered its conditional support for the bill based on several outstanding issues and moved an amendment, which the Government opposed. The digest raises several issues regarding this legislation. The committee noted that the bill may raise privacy issues in so far as there is no requirement to give notice to boarding-house residents when an inspection is due to take place. However, given that such inspections are designed to benefit those residents by aiming to ensure their living conditions are suitable, the committee made no further comment. The committee noted also that self-incrimination issues may arise in so far as the bill states that self-incrimination is not a reason for failing to provide documents or information or answer questions. The committee referred to the Parliament determination of whether this was a trespass on personal rights and liberties. As I stated earlier, the committee reviewed a number of bills. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [1.33 p.m.]: I make a brief comment on Legislation Review Digest No. 27 of the Fifty-fifth Parliament dated 23 October and respond to the contributions of the chair and the member for Bankstown. The chair was at pains to imply that the Legislation Review Committee had undergone an extremely busy parliamentary schedule. The member for Bankstown said that the number of bills reviewed was a record for this Parliament, which of course means since the last election. The digest lists 16 bills, which, on the face of it, is quite impressive, particularly as the chair exaggerated how difficult it was to lift the report to the lectern. However, when we examine those 16 bills we note that the Firearms Amendment (Gun Safety) Bill listed fifth in the contents is a private member's bill from The Greens.

The sixth-listed bill, the Graffiti Control Amendment Bill, is an Opposition private member's bill. Therefore, the 16 becomes 14. The chair indicated to the House that three bills only ratify national agreements and regulations. That reduces the number of bills to 11. Two of the remaining bills are not great reforms by the Government: the Miscellaneous Acts Amendment (Directors' Liability) Bill and the Rail Safety (Adoption of National Law) Bill are omnibus bills. Rather than being substantial reformist legislation, most of the bills are legislative machinery. I reiterate that the Legislation Review Committee report demonstrates that the committee and the Parliament worked hard to process this legislation, but the Government's contribution to major legislative reform is again found wanting.

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

Report noted.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (REGISTER OF DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS) BILL 2012

PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT (ROYALTIES AND PENALTIES) BILL 2012

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.36 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DAY FOR DANIEL

The SPEAKER: I remind members that tomorrow, Friday 26 October 2012, we acknowledge Day for Daniel. Established by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Day for Daniel promotes the foundation's aim of making the world a safer place for children. Celebrating the eighth year of Day for Daniel we remember the tragic abduction of Daniel, the son of Denise and Bruce Morcombe, and encourage the promotion of the foundation's principles. I thank members who have acknowledged Day for Daniel today with a red tie or scarf or pin and remind them that pins and merchandise are available for purchase in the Speaker's office with funds going directly to the Daniel Morcombe Foundation and its child protection campaigns.

EGGTOBER FOUNDATION

The SPEAKER: I advise members that the Eggtobor Foundation raises awareness of gynaecological cancers and raises funds for research and support. In New South Wales the five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer is 42 per cent, for uterine cancer it is 70 per cent, and for cervical cancer it is 73 per cent. Known as silent killers, most gynaecological cancers are not detected until they are at an advanced stage when the prognosis is poor. With increased awareness and support it is hoped that survival rates for these cancers can be improved. Badges and information relating to the Eggtobor Foundation are available from the member for Menai. I thank her for her efforts.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I inform the House that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services, will answer questions addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business, who will be absent today from question time.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.21 p.m.]

PORT BOTANY PRIVATISATION

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question without notice is directed to the Treasurer.

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has no power to set rents or charges at Port Botany under either the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act or the Government's port privatisation bill. Will the Treasurer commit to giving the tribunal this legislative power to protect consumers from increasing petrol prices and grocery bills as a result of the Government's privatisation?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am fascinated by what is happening on the other side of the Chamber. Who among those opposite is the shadow Minister for ports? The member for Heffron might have an interest in this matter, but he has not asked a question about it in this House. That is because the Leader of the Opposition does not want everyone to see the member for Heffron. And who has jumped in now to ask a question about the port? The member for Maroubra has. The two members—the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroubra—are finally united, as the Premier has said, to keep out the member for Heffron. While we are on it, everyone needs—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: While you are on it, why don't you try answering the question?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: While we are on it, we all want to bring back Barbara, the member for Auburn, do we not? Everyone in this House wants to protect Barbara, except for the backroom operators on the other side; they want to take Barbara out. Everyone on this side of the Chamber is supporting Barbara. I return to the question from the member for Maroubra. The way those opposite have turned this around is fantastic. As soon as the unions indicated they wanted to ask something, the member for Maroubra thought he had better get up and ask a question, and that is what he is doing: He is making the union's speech. There is a unique concept here. If there is to be infrastructure and a benefit is to flow to the operators within the port, all this Government is saying is that the operators should pay a fair share to derive that benefit. That is all. Pricing control will be overseen by the State Government.

It is simple. If a benefit is coming, this Government is asking for a contribution for that benefit. There is nothing wrong with that. That is exactly what is required and that is exactly what this transaction does. What the members opposite have forgotten to tell the people of New South Wales is that they are not interested in funding infrastructure in this State. When they are jumping up and down and making comments on radio,

members of the Opposition need to tell the people out in western Sydney that they do not want WestConnex, because that is exactly what they are saying. The Opposition does not want WestConnex. Is there anyone in this Chamber who is interested in the WestConnex project?

Government Members: Yes.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Oh, there are, and they represent a great part of Sydney, which the Opposition is ignoring. At the same time, members opposite are not interested in completing the duplication of the Pacific Highway. Is there anyone in this Chamber interested in duplicating the Pacific Highway?

Government Members: Yes.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is what the O'Farrell Government is doing as part of the transaction. It is disappointing that the shadow Minister for Roads—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer has been speaking for four minutes. Will he give them the power to protect consumers or not? Just answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The most disappointing thing is that by opposing this transaction—which is what has happened—the shadow Minister for roads has indicated that he is not interested in funding for the Princes Highway. How could the member for Keira, the shadow Minister for roads, say, "You know what, O'Farrell Government, we are not interested in upgrading the Pacific Highway"? The good news for the people of New South Wales is that the members opposite are not in government, the O'Farrell Government is. That means that the WestConnex project will be undertaken, it means that the Pacific Highway will be upgraded, and it means that this Government will do work on the Princes Highway.

BARANGAROO DEVELOPMENT

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is directed to the Premier. What is the situation in relation to Crown's proposal for a major hotel development in Sydney?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Hornsby for his question and for his interest in supporting the economic growth of the State, particularly by encouraging greater tourism. I can inform the House that the proposal by Crown Limited for a six-star integrated hotel resort with VIP-only gaming facilities at Sydney's Barangaroo has moved to the second stage of government consideration under the unsolicited proposals policy. This follows an initial assessment of an unsolicited proposal that Crown lodged with the New South Wales Government on 6 September that was considered under the unsolicited proposals policy, which was put in place to deal with any idea from any part of the community for a project or initiative that is currently not on the Government's agenda. That policy came into force in January and can be found on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website.

Crown's submission in support of its proposal is that the development will invest \$1 billion in a world-class six-star integrated resort hotel on the waterfront at Barangaroo that will support 1,250 jobs and add \$300 million to the State's economy on an annual basis. According to Crown, it is estimated the development will add \$60 million to the State's economy and support 1,300 jobs during the construction phase. As Sydney's first six-star hotel, it would be a world-class tourist facility that would help this city to compete with other global destinations, particularly in the lucrative Asian gaming tourism trade. That trade is estimated to be worth \$300 billion annually within our region, and Australia currently captures about 3 per cent of it.

The initial assessment, which was undertaken in accordance with the policy proposal put in place in January and which was signed off by the heads of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Treasury, was accepted and concluded that the proposal should be subjected to a rigorous financial appraisal to establish whether it is in the State's interests and whether the claims made stack up. That second stage assessment will be carried out by a project team that will be oversighted and chaired by an independent person with appropriate credentials, and that person will be appointed shortly. The team is expected to report to the Government in the new year. Put up your hand if you support the Leader of the Opposition. Just as I thought; not one hand opposite has been raised.

[Interruption]

Put up your hand if you support the member for Heffron being the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Richard Amery: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. Members will recall that three members were removed from the Chamber yesterday. I may go for a record today if members do not come to order so that I can hear the member for Mount Druitt's point of order.

Mr Richard Amery: Seeking interjections has been ruled by former Speakers as disorderly. Madam Speaker, I ask you to direct the Premier not to seek interjections.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member has made his point.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Madam Speaker, I absolutely accept your ruling. However, is a raised hand an interjection? Whichever way members look at it and whatever interjections the Leader of the Opposition continues to make, this assessment is being done rigorously according to a policy that will ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the State of New South Wales. As I said, the report on the second stage of the assessment process is expected to be delivered to the Government in the new year. It will be up to the project team to advise the Government on whether the proposal represents value for money, whether it will provide an appropriate return and whether it is in the best interests of the State. The project team will comprehensively assess the net benefits of granting a gaming licence at Barangaroo and the conditions that should apply to ensure that the maximum benefit flows to New South Wales. [*Extension of time granted.*]

For the benefit of the House and those in the gallery, including the guests of the Attorney General, the grumpy old men—

[Interruption]

I did not say "grumpy old women"; I said "grumpy old men".

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution the Premier against making such remarks to the member for Wollongong, because they might also refer to me.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: You are only grumpy sometimes, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! You mean most of the time.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: A VIP-only facility is an invitation-only facility. Individuals will not be able to walk in off the street to use the facilities. It will operate in the way that similar high-roller, high-worth-individual rooms operate not only in Sydney but also throughout the country. The second stage of the process will be separate from negotiations between the proponent Lend Lease and the Barangaroo Development Authority about the hotel's construction. That matter will be determined within the planning constraints that apply to the Barangaroo development.

I want to make a couple of important points. The Government made it clear that poker machines will not be part of the development as it proceeds through future phases. The move to stage two does not give the proposal the green light; it simply means that it will be further assessed in detail to establish whether it should be pursued. As I said, the proposed development will not proceed unless it is in the best interests of the State. Any amendment to the Casino Control Act would need to be passed by the Parliament. In other words, if there is to be a second casino in Sydney, both Houses of Parliament must pass the appropriate legislation. The New South Wales Government will honour the existing exclusivity agreement entered into by the Labor Government with Star casino. This is a proper process that will determine whether such a project will deliver new energy to Barangaroo.

PORT BOTANY PRIVATISATION

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Is the Treasurer unaware that under his Ports Assets Privatisation Bill neither he nor the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has the power to stop the private port operator inflating fees and charges, or is the Treasurer deliberately misleading the House?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The appropriate protections are in place for this transaction.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra had his opportunity to ask a question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government has ensured that those protections are in place. When governments are faced with revenue challenges and the need to address an infrastructure backlog—

[*Interruption*]

The member for Maroubra does not believe that the Government is facing revenue challenges?

Mr Michael Daley: What about the \$225 million a year—

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I will bookmark the fact that the member for Maroubra said that there are no revenue challenges.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not have this tit for tat between members.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I counsel the member against taking points of order that are argumentative.

Mr Michael Daley: If the Treasurer is going to verbal me, he should do it correctly.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer has not verballed the member. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What must a government do when it is faced with infrastructure challenges and falling revenue? It must determine what assets it has on its balance sheet and whether they can be converted into infrastructure, and that is exactly what this Government is doing.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have a quote from a well-known individual. It states:

The reality is, in the 21st century, our budget is being dragged down by these big commercial assets that need massive investment in order to grow and keep servicing their commercial customers, and the more that we service those assets, the harder it is to service assets such as hospitals and schools and the things that actually make a difference to the lives of everybody every day.

That sounds sensible and it would have been said by someone doing the right thing for the people of that person's State. I do not believe that anyone will be surprised to hear that that statement was made by none other than Anna Bligh, the former Premier of Queensland. She made that statement before the Queensland Labor Government sold the Port of Brisbane. Sensible governments understand that if they want to build infrastructure, they must consider their balance sheet. That is exactly what this Government is doing and it makes no apologies for doing so. The Government is making decisions so that it can build the infrastructure that members of the Opposition talked about day in and day out. The difference is that the O'Farrell Government is delivering that infrastructure.

Does the member for Maroubra have any interest in the tenants around Port Botany? If he does, he should declare it to the House. Is he acting on behalf of those tenants or on behalf of his community? The port transaction is part of an overall strategy that will ensure that this State gets the infrastructure it desperately needs. The Government is very proud to be duplicating the Pacific Highway and extending the Princes Highway. It is also delivering for the members who have waited for more than a decade for bridges in the bush to be built. Those bridges will be built as a result of this transaction. They will not simply be thoughts, words or drawings; they will be real bridges and they will be built by the O'Farrell Government. How would the member for Maroubra fund the provision of infrastructure in this State? If he opposes this transaction, he has nowhere to go. That is why the O'Farrell Government is very proud of the transactions it is entering into to build the infrastructure that this State so desperately needs.

STATE FINANCES

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. What is the impact of the fall in revenue on the State's credit rating? How have rating agencies responded to the Government's measures to get the State's finances back on track?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Cronulla for his fantastic work down in the shire. The good news for the people of New South Wales today is that Standard and Poor's has reaffirmed the triple-A credit rating of this State. When we came to government New South Wales Treasury said the triple-A rating would have been lost if no action were taken. It said that if expenses continued to grow at the rate they did under Labor the triple-A rating would have been lost. This Government has had to make tough decisions with the long-term interest of the State at heart. We have made those decisions: the wages policy, a 2.5 per cent increase to try to maintain real wages and front-line services while we deal with the challenges we are facing. In relation to the labour expense cap, we understand the position of the Opposition, but we have made savings across government to live within our means.

We have taken action to live within our means. We have reduced the size of head offices while we are putting more onto the front line—more nurses, teachers and more police. Those decisions have not been easy or popular but they are the right things to do for the people of New South Wales. The Government's tough decisions have been recognised today by Standard and Poor's. It is worth noting that every single decision that this Government has made has been opposed by the Opposition. I congratulate every member of this Cabinet who has had the courage to take action to look after the long-term interests of this State. It has not been easy. Standard and Poor's has acknowledged the improvement in expense control under the O'Farrell Government. It said:

We consider that NSW's financial management as having improved over the past 18 months, including tighter revenue and expenditure management and closer monitoring of government business performance.

It would be a very different story if those on the other side were in government. They have opposed every single measure this Government has taken. If they were in government we would have lost the triple-A credit rating that we have today. At the same time, Standard and Poor's has recognised that there is a massive infrastructure backlog in the State. I do not know whom to blame for that but I am looking at Opposition members. They left the infrastructure backlog to us and Standard and Poor's has recognised and said that the way to address it, when revenue is falling, is to look at our assets and achieve the transactions. The Opposition has opposed every single transaction the Government has put forward. This means that if those opposite were in government the triple-A credit rating would be lost today.

Importantly, Standard and Poor's—and I go back to the bookmark: the member for Maroubra said there are no revenue impacts—has confirmed the fall in revenue is real. That is part of the reason that it has changed the outlook to negative. It has confirmed that this State is fronting challenges, but the triple-A rating has been confirmed. The member for Maroubra needs to understand that every single day of the week that members of the Opposition said that the revenue was there the revenue was not there. They need to tell the people of New South Wales the truth. Every day over the past 18 months we have told the people of New South Wales we are facing challenges and we are doing everything possible to live within our means. Indeed, we have lost \$2.5 billion a year over the next four years since we were elected. Tough and responsible decisions are needed and the O'Farrell Government has made them. We have taken responsible decisions and the right decisions while those opposite continue to be reckless. Today the O'Farrell Government is proud to acknowledge confirmation of the triple-A credit rating for New South Wales. We acknowledge the economic challenges we face and we will take every measure necessary to ensure the State retains its triple-A credit rating.

CRONULLA FISHERIES RESEARCH CENTRE

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. In light of this week's scathing parliamentary committee report which described the closure of the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre as "how not to undertake decentralisation" and recommended the decision be reversed, will the Premier reopen the Fisheries Research Centre?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I welcome this question from the Leader of the Opposition about what he alleges is failed policy initiatives by governments.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting and arguing.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: As I said earlier this week, because of the pressure of work and other things that have been happening I have not yet read the upper House inquiry's report. I leave on the weekend on a trade mission to India. I will read the report whilst I am in India and I will inform myself about the matters that are raised in that report.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I think a week or so ago I used language about the Leader of the Opposition that even the grumpy old men would laugh at in the Chamber but I will not use that today other than to say that that interjection demonstrates the laziness of the Leader of the Opposition: leave to others the responsibility and accountability that belongs to him.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Whether it is the mess made by the member for Canterbury of the Community Services portfolio—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: It is not surprising that it is Standing Order 73—this is a personal attack—and Standing Order 129. The question was on Cronulla Fisheries.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question. I have not detected a personal attack in his answer, so far.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I have to say after two days that those opposite who are happy to engage in the most vigorous of debates have crystalline jaws. If the member for Macquarie Fields believes that my comment that the member for Canterbury has a lot to answer for because of the way she managed Community Services is a personal attack, it is a matter of public record. Only those opposite could inject \$1.5 billion extra into Community Services and have worse results as a consequence—worse results that included, regrettably, more children who died after having been notified to the Department of Community Services than previously. That's like how? Luck?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Whether it is the failure in the Department of Community Services or the failure presided over by the member for Toongabbie in relation to a commitment to build a western metro of four kilometres from Central to Rozelle, at a cost of allegedly—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: Standing Order 129. The question was on the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre. I ask you to ask the Premier to return to the issues at Cronulla.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has answered the question. If the member for Macquarie Fields wants to raise another spurious point of order, as he does every day, I will not recognise or acknowledge him.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Rozelle metro involved a commitment of \$5 billion. Thankfully, in one sense, only half a billion dollars was spent. But that half a billion dollars was wasted: not even a centimetre of track was built. That is the legacy of the member for Toongabbie. Do not get me started on the member for Marrickville and her appalling record in education. She cut jobs in public schools, not outside public schools but within public schools. That involved 16,000 jobs within the school gates across this State.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I look forward to reading the report on my mission to India. The Government will, as usual, respond to the committee's report in the usual time.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

BIOFUELS

Mr GARETH WARD: I address my question to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Government is supporting regional economic development in employment by enforcing the biofuels mandate?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Kiama for a very good question. He is a fantastic local member of Parliament and a strong advocate for the biofuels industry in New South Wales. As demonstrated by the passage of important amendments to the Biofuels legislation through this place yesterday

evening, this House supports the current 6 per cent ethanol mandate and the 2 per cent biodiesel mandate, and has strengthened the enforcement mechanisms to ensure volume fuel sellers do all they can to comply with the mandate. It is a matter of public record that the Government's biofuels policy has bipartisan support in this Parliament, with the exception of The Greens.

The Greens have not made it clear to the public exactly where they stand on renewable fuels. In 2007 they initially supported the legislation but more recently they have been opposed to clean, green biofuels. Go figure! But confusing and inconsistent messages from The Greens on renewable energy seems to be the norm these days. Only last week The Greens opposed a bill that will lead to the production of more clean, green hydroelectric power in the Snowy Mountains. It seems that The Greens are far more interested in other issues such as social engineering, euthanasia et cetera, than they are in doing something for the environment. It is little wonder that The Greens' vote has collapsed in local government and, more recently, in the Australian Capital Territory elections.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: But I digress. In contrast, the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have sent a strong message to the biofuels industry and big oil companies. We have consistently stated our steadfast support of a biofuels mandate in New South Wales. Our position could not be clearer. Put simply, the Government will enforce the mandate. It is time for industry to recognise this and to take all necessary steps to meet those targets. The Government's position on this has led to some interesting conversations with industry and consumer stakeholders. For example, in a recent speech to the Australian British Chamber of Commerce, Paul Waterman, the President of BP Australasia, reiterated that company's welcome commitment to biofuels, which is demonstrated by its investments in sugarcane ethanol milling and ethanol production in Brazil. He said it is BP's expectation that renewable energy, which includes biofuels, will be the fastest growing fuel in the period up to 2030. However, Mr Waterman also stated that the Government's actions will, in his words:

...confirm a virtual monopoly in the State for one supplier, and the squeezing out of new investment from alternative suppliers.

That remark misses the point. One could argue that the behaviour of the oil companies themselves has impacted on potential new investment in biofuels in New South Wales. Governments, even a free-market government such as ours, will always have a legitimate role as a market maker. The Government also understands that enforcement provisions need to be robust—hence the amendments contained in the bill now in the other place for consideration. This mandate applies to all comers. It does not apply only to the current supplier in the electorate of the member for Kiama; it applies to any would-be investors, particularly those in regional areas. They will be actively encouraged and supported by this Government. As my colleague the Minister for Resources and Energy—who is a very good Minister—noted when he introduced the bill:

Biofuels is part of the Government's commitment to working to achieve a secure, affordable and renewable energy future. Key to this vision is investment in renewable energy, the encouragement of regional development and creating jobs in New South Wales.

Hopefully, the Biofuels (Further Amendment) Bill will be promptly passed in the other place to help strengthen this State's commitment to a strong and sustainable biofuels industry.

HUNTING IN NATIONAL PARKS

Ms CHERIE BURTON: I direct my question to the Minister for the Environment. Given that Robert Borsak said last week that hunting in national parks will proceed on the same model used for forests, and that this has been "accepted by the Government", does that not mean that amateur hunters will be allowed into national parks without the strict supervision promised by the Minister?

Ms ROBYN PARKER: I cannot comment on what Mr Borsak might have said last week. However, I did read with interest what he said in the other place at 10.52 p.m. last night and he did not make any comments in that regard. He reiterated—from a response to a question asked of the National Parks and Wildlife Service about how many feral animals are currently removed under the program operating in our national parks—that the figure was probably 26,000 per annum. This is about enhancing that program. Members have heard the debate time and again but, to reiterate, the amended legislation will start on 27 December 2012. The decision to declare the national parks involved will rest with me as the Minister. In doing so, I will give public notice of the declaration within 30 days. I will have regard—and this is the most important thing to public

safety—to the rights of other users, any plan of management or other policy document relating to the use or management of the land, any recommendation of the authority that has care and control of the land, and any recommendation of the Game Council, and I will make that declaration public.

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

Ms ROBYN PARKER: There is a working party and there are ongoing discussions with officers of the Game Council. There have been visits to a number of parks, as well as visits to talk to people from Victoria as to how they operate their program. Ultimately, I think there will be a memorandum of understanding with the Game Council as to what occurs. However, as the Minister responsible for national parks I will approve where, when and how the program will operate.

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

Ms ROBYN PARKER: The Government has already identified up to 78 parks and reserves. The right controls for the right parks will need to be used. This decision will be informed by risk assessment, which will recommend appropriate controls. I will not approve any program unless I am satisfied that it can be run in a safe way. The program will be informed by existing programs operating in other States. It will be operated by licensed people who will have been provided with information on safety requirements and pest animal distribution. Maps will be provided to those participating in the program and they must be carried by them. All these things have already been agreed on. The maps will identify where the program operates and clear exclusion zones, including wilderness areas, World Heritage areas, high-use visitor areas and facilities, and adjoining residential uses.

The conditions that apply as part of the Firearms Act and regulation requirements for this type of licence will also apply. Firearms will only be used in a safe, confident and competent manner. Dogs will not be allowed. Vehicles will not be allowed off formed roads. Shooting will not be allowed from vehicles. Licensed individuals will wear a blaze orange hat or beanie. Night-time shooting will be approved only in exceptional circumstance. There will be limits on the number of licensed individuals. Program participants will be required to report on numbers of animals shot and the types of animals shot—it is not about native animals—and the program will complement the Government's existing pest programs. Those discussions are underway.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I am sure Hansard is having difficulty hearing the Minister. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Ms ROBYN PARKER: Declaration of these parks will enhance our programs. The conditions required will relate to specific parks. It is about safety. Currently, shooting in national parks is taking place safely. This is part of rolling out the same program and announcing the program.

MEDICAL INTERN POSITIONS

Mr ANDREW FRASER: My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. What is the New South Wales Government doing in relation to funding medical intern positions?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Coffs Harbour, together with many other Government members, was at his local hospital last year to welcome new interns. Members will be doing the same thing next year because in 2013 the Government is funding a record 920 intern places, at a total cost of \$100 million. Compare that with the \$10 million offered by the Commonwealth Minister for the whole of Australia for the 182 full-fee paying international students who have been attending universities across the country. Furthermore, the Minister's offer of \$10 million for 100 places only applied to private hospitals.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: How many private hospitals in New South Wales are accredited to provide internships? None, zip, zero.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: A hospital must be accredited. I am astonished that the member for Macquarie Fields does not know that a hospital must be accredited to provide internships.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields and the Leader of the Opposition are on their last warning to cease interjecting.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Universities and the Commonwealth have increased the number of domestic students over the years. The universities have increased the number of full-fee paying international students. For years the Commonwealth and the universities have been warned that international students may not get places.

[Interruption]

Is the member for Macquarie Fields interested in this?

Dr Andrew McDonald: No.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am not surprised because in 2009 when he was the Parliamentary Secretary he signed a letter to the national president of the Australian Medical Students Association. Do members want to know what he said?

Government members: Yes.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: He said:

The NSW Government's first priority is to guarantee internships to Commonwealth supported medical graduates from NSW—those are the domestic students we are funding—

In relation to interstate and international students, a priority listing has been developed by NSW Health ... should there be a greater supply of applicants than positions.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Keira does not want to hear this. That was followed by a letter from the then Minister for Health, the member for Marrickville, who wrote to the then Federal Minister in 2009 stating:

If continued access to intern positions is required ... the Australian Government needs to consider funding arrangements to enable jurisdictions to employ and supervise these international graduates.

That never happened; it was not done. The State Labor Government had no intention of funding international graduates, and the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Marrickville know that. Recently the member for Macquarie Fields demanded that we employ an additional 50 interns in New South Wales.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Correct.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The hospitals he mentioned in an radio interview were Armidale, Belmont, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga.

Dr Andrew McDonald: They could easily go there.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: For the information of the member for Macquarie Fields, all those hospitals are taking interns—

Dr Andrew McDonald: They could take more.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —and all the positions have been filled.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Do you know the letters that we have sent? All the positions have been filled. Are you aware of that?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: You do not know. Your staff have not been reading the reports and giving you the information.

Ms Cherie Burton: Point of order: The Minister should direct her comments through the Chair. She is inciting interjections.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not believe the Minister is inciting anyone to interject. However, I ask the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair. The point of order is upheld.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I agree; I should ignore the lame interjections by the member for Macquarie Fields. The reality is that the Federal Labor Government is trying to lay responsibility on the States, although back in 2008 it agreed at the Council of Australian Governments to come to the table and fund postgraduate medical places. Indeed, the National Partnership Agreement on Hospital and Health Workforce Reform in 2008 stated:

It is anticipated the Commonwealth will be responsible for providing funding for the general practice and private sector postgraduate clinical training and the States and Territories for postgraduate clinical training in the public sector.

I am astonished that members opposite have raised this matter instead of going to Canberra and insisting that the Federal Government put more effort into funding these places.

The SPEAKER: Order! Some members are being particularly argumentative this afternoon. The member for Macquarie Fields will cease arguing.

Ms Linda Burney: Don't be so cross, Jillian.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am cross on behalf—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease making personal comments across the Chamber.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr RICHARD TORBAY: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given concerns being expressed in my electorate about budget cuts in education, will the Minister explain the impacts of the measures across TAFE colleges and schools in Northern Tablelands?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his question.

Ms Linda Burney: Now blame the Commonwealth. Go on.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Before I answer the question I will advise the House about some information I received at two o'clock this afternoon.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The email account of the Director General of the Department of Education and Communities has been hacked and an email has been sent to all staff in the department under her name, although clearly the email was not sent by her. Members opposite might joke about it, but hacking a person's computer is a crime.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I believe that misrepresenting yourself and someone else is also a crime. Members can be assured that the Department of Education and Communities will take every possible measure to find the person or people who did this. They should not underestimate my determination to find them and have them punished severely, for two reasons. First, hacking is a crime; secondly, the Director General of the

Department of Education and Communities is one of the most highly respected educational leaders in the world, and I am offended that someone chose to misrepresent her. If they chose to misrepresent me that is okay, but it is offensive to misrepresent Dr Michele Bruniges. I am angry about the matter. As I said, if we find the person or people who did this, I assure members that the full force of the law will be brought down on them.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Members opposite might think it is funny. It is their choice if they want to mock and ridicule public servants, particularly senior public servants, who are doing a great job of administering this State. However, I respect those public servants—respect that members opposite clearly do not show. In answer to the member's question—I apologise for the time taken—the Government has taken necessary measures to ensure that every dollar in education is spent as effectively as possible in supporting students. Those measures include reducing the fees we pay for capital works. We are reaping the benefits of that, as is the Northern Tablelands electorate. Walcha Central School will benefit from those measures to the tune of \$170,000 for a major capital works project to upgrade its science laboratories. That is because we have done things better, we have saved money and we are reinvesting it in education.

We have changed education funding. Every Student, Every School was much criticised by the Opposition, but we are increasing funding by \$69 million to support students with disabilities. For the first time, more than 400 regular schools will receive learning and support resources. This year Armidale City Public School received almost \$123,000 in support of students with disabilities. That school has seen an increase of almost \$50,000 to support its students. At Armidale High School it is a similar story this year, with more than \$200,000 to support students with disabilities. That is an \$80,000 increase from 2011. With respect to TAFE, investments have been made in capital works. A two-phase project at Armidale TAFE—the first phase was undertaken by the previous Government, which I am happy to acknowledge—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: I thought we didn't do anything for 16 years.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I am happy to acknowledge that. When you have done the right thing, I will acknowledge it. The second phase of the work will be starting at the end of this year and is due to be completed by February 2013—an investment of about \$8 million in Armidale TAFE. We have had to make tough decisions. We have protected the front line; we have protected teachers. We would not go near the 1,600 jobs that those opposite proposed for administrative staff. No way would we go near the 1,600 that the member for Marrickville proposed when she was Minister for Education. They signed up 400, which we are now forced to implement, but other than that we are protecting the front line. We are making savings in the back office so that we can invest in the front line, including an additional \$383 million in this year's Education budget, some of which has been allocated to Northern Tablelands. I thank the member for his question.

MOUNT PENNY COALMINE

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL: My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. How is the Department of Planning and Infrastructure progressing the assessment of the proposed open-cut coalmine at Mount Penny?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the honourable member for Charlestown for his question. He is a member who understands the importance of integrity and probity in government. The issue the member has raised is indeed extremely challenging given the public announcements by the Independent Commission Against Corruption that, commencing on 1 November 2012 there will be three investigations into the activities of former Labor Ministers Macdonald, Obeid and Kelly. As the House would be aware, the Independent Commission Against Corruption is undertaking a number of public inquiries, these being Operation Jasper, Operation Acacia and Operation Indus. The issue of Mount Penny falls within the areas being considered under Operation Jasper.

From the Independent Commission Against Corruption's public commentary, it appears that Operation Jasper will, amongst other things, examine the circumstances surrounding a decision made in 2008 by former Minister Macdonald to open a mining area in the Bylong Valley for coal exploration, including whether the decision was influenced by former Minister Obeid. It will also explore the circumstances under which the Department of Primary Industries, in around September 2008, called for expressions of interest for the awarding of exploration licences for the coalmining areas known as Mount Penny, Glendon Brook and Yarrawa, and whether confidential information about the expression of interest process was provided to, and used by, former Minister Obeid, members of his family and associates.

At the conclusion of the hearings, it is of course open to the Independent Commission Against Corruption to make findings of corruption against any of the former Ministers and any other parties that may be involved. As planning Minister, I have been concerned since the announcement by the Independent Commission Against Corruption of the public hearings that the community may expect, understandably, that a finding of corruption may impact on the development application currently before the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, specifically in regard to the proposed open-cut coalmine at Mount Penny. I advise the House that Cascade Coal is proposing to establish a new open-cut coalmine and associated infrastructure in the Mount Penny exploration licence area, near the village of Bylong. The exploration licence was granted by the former Labor Government in 2009 to Cascade Coal. The company is seeking approval for the part 3A project under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Members will recall that the O'Farrell Government removed the part 3A provision from the planning laws because of our view that it lent itself to corrupt practices. However, there were 539 part 3A applications on foot when the Government was elected in March 2011 and this is one of the remaining 170 or so applications to be determined. The Cascade Coal proposal involves establishing an open-cut mine to produce up to five million tonnes of coal per year for up to 20 years, and constructing and operating a coal-handling and preparation plant, workshops, bathhouses, administration buildings and related infrastructure. I advise the House and the community that, two weeks after the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry was announced, the company submitted its environmental assessment for the project. This was reviewed by government agencies and council and was deemed inadequate for public exhibition.

The company was asked to revise the assessment on a number of matters, including water resources, transport, Aboriginal heritage, social and economic impacts, and noise. When the revised environmental assessment is submitted it will be placed on public exhibition to give people the opportunity to make a submission on the project. Having in mind that this application is on foot concurrently with the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry, it seems to me that a reasonable individual would ponder why the Government is allowing this application to proceed. Let me make it clear that, as planning Minister, I have explored whether it is legally possible to suspend or terminate the current Cascade Coal application. Accordingly, I requested and received Crown Solicitor's advice. I also obtained counsel's opinion. Whilst it is not appropriate to disclose the full details of those advices, I can tell the House that counsel advised that:

As a matter of planning law, any grant of rights in relation to the project ... is a grant in rem, attaching to the land, but is not a grant of rights in personam, given to a particular person.

That is, a development application attaches to the land and not to the individual applicant. Furthermore, counsel's opinion stated:

How or why a person came to become the owner of land or the proponent for development is not necessarily a relevant consideration within the scheme of the Act.

That is, although the application may have come into existence as a result of corrupt practices, that corruption does not stop or necessarily taint the development application process. Furthermore, if the application proceeds, it must be dealt with as all applications are dealt with, irrespective of the origin of the original entitlement to bring the application. That is, the application must be dealt with on merit. Hence, in my opinion, a decision by me or by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to forcibly defer the assessment of the application or to terminate the assessment would provide potential grounds for the applicant to appeal in the Land and Environment Court. A decision adverse to the Government's application in the Land and Environment Court would also run the risk of a court order for costs being made against the Government. [*Extension of time granted.*]

As I indicated, it would have implications for court costs being awarded against the Government—that is, taxpayers would have to pick up the tab. Accordingly, I have asked the department to consider carefully all the appropriate issues when it assesses the merits of the project and any other issue that arises out of the public consultation process. In accordance with the new open and transparent processes introduced by the O'Farrell Government, I advise that the proposal will be referred to the independent Planning Assessment Commission to be determined at arm's length from government. This unfortunate situation is yet another irksome mess left to us by Labor because of the way it did business and its establishment and use of the part 3A process.

Question time concluded at 3.18 p.m.

MR ALEX BRUCE

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.18 p.m.], by leave: I acknowledge the departure of long-term staffer Mr Alex Bruce, who has been with the Coalition and specifically with the Deputy Premier since 2009. He is about to join the joyful and holy state of matrimony with Bronwyn. On behalf of the Liberal-National parties we wish him well.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER-GENERAL**Report**

Mr Matt Kean, as Chair, tabled report No. 1/55 entitled, "Interim Report on the Eighth General Meeting with the Valuer-General", dated October 2012.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Matt Kean.

PETITIONS

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**.

Coal Seam Gas Mining

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

Aged Care Services

Petition requesting assistance to set up a pilot program of composite homes comprising independent affordable interconnected living units in a micro-community, the establishment of a permanent care unit at central Mangrove, and funding assistance for the production of a disability walker, received from **Mr Chris Holstein**.

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 Minister had lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Chris Hartcher—Bickham Coalmine Project—lodged 19 September 2012 (Mr George Souris)

TATTOO PARLOURS AMENDMENT BILL 2012**Second Reading**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [3.21 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As this bill was introduced in the other place on 17 October 2012 and is in the same form, and the second reading speech appears at pages 70 to 72 in the proof *Hansard* for that day, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [3.21 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012 and state at the outset that the New South Wales Opposition will support the legislation. I remind the House that the Opposition supported the original Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012, which is now an Act. I acknowledge the Minister for Fair Trading, and particularly my colleague the member for Toongabbie, the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services, for his work on this legislation. The bill was introduced in the upper House by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The bill amends the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 to make certain improvements to the operation of the Act. As members will be well aware, the original Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012 was designed to counter the activities of outlaw motorcycle gangs by disrupting their control of tattoo parlours. The bill was a response to reports from the NSW Police Force that criminal organisations were using legitimate businesses, such as tattoo parlours, to cover illegal activities such as money laundering. The bill imposed stringent controls on such businesses in an attempt to remove the influence of illegal organisations on those businesses.

As a result of the amending bill, tattoo parlour operators and tattooists will now have to register with NSW Fair Trading. If a business operates on multiple premises, an operator licence is required by a person for each set of premises. Sole owner-operators will only have to register once as an operator. Many tattooists and tattoo parlour owners run legitimate businesses whose only agenda is to provide a service to customers and receive payment in return. Having a system of registration is in the long-term interests of legitimate businesses as it will help to remove the criminal element from their industry. In his second reading speech in the other place the Minister for Police and Emergency Services said that this bill was an attempt to address certain issues that had arisen during the implementation of the original Act. The Opposition strongly supports the NSW Police Force. We support providing our police with the resources and authority they need to prevent and investigate crime.

The legislation before the House clarifies several issues contained in the original legislation. Division 2 clarifies that authorised officers have the authority to enter tattoo parlour premises. New section 30A of the bill allows police to enter premises licensed under the Act or premises suspected to be performing illegal tattooing, that is tattooing without registration, at any reasonable time without a warrant. New section 30A (2) contains an exemption for residential premises, which will still require a warrant or permission from the owner. However new section 30B of the bill also extends the powers of the police to seek warrants to search the abovementioned premises in cases where they believe the requirements of the Act are being contravened, as in unlicensed tattoo parlours operating on that premises.

Schedule 1 [1] to the bill expands the definition of "close associate" of an applicant for a licence to include contractors and employees. This is a worthwhile amendment. In my speech to the principal legislation earlier this year I encouraged the Government to increase the scope of the definition of "close associate". The Opposition was concerned there might be scope in the original bill for certain individuals to avoid registering their involvement in a tattoo parlour business. The Government has endeavoured to address this issue. Schedule 1 [8] to the bill provides for the additional information that must be supplied when applying for a licence. Under this legislation applicants will now be required to provide copies of three forms of personal identification for all close associates listed upon their registration. The bill will also allow the commissioner to require a licensee or close associate to provide information in connection with investigations for security determinations about licensees. Such information can include anything that the commissioner believes is relevant to the investigation specified in the notice.

There is still an outstanding issue relating to the operation of tattoo parlours. During the debate on the original legislation the Opposition raised the issue of mandatory medical training for tattooists to help prevent the spread of infectious disease. The Government committed to look into the viability of implementing this policy. I have since asked questions on notice of the Minister for Police regarding this issue and am waiting for a final response. It is unfortunate that the Government is yet to finalise its position on this issue as this bill would have been a perfect opportunity to make such an important and worthwhile change.

Another issue still to be addressed is the impact that the original legislation and these new changes will have on the workload of the NSW Police Force and also NSW Fair Trading. I ask that the Minister in his speech in reply address whether additional resources have been provided to either the police or Fair Trading to assist in the registration process and whether any information is available about how police and Fair Trading are coping with the new workload. After all, NSW Fair Trading is already struggling to cope with the \$13 million that this Government has slashed from its budget. Our police officers have been similarly betrayed by this Government's attack on their rights and the cruel cutting of police death and disability protections. The New South Wales

Opposition supports our police force and respects the great work they do each day to keep the community safe. The Opposition also supports this legislation as a mechanism for removing the criminal element from an otherwise legitimate industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [3.28 p.m.]: The Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012 serves to support the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 and ensure that it is effective in ridding the tattoo industry of outlaw motorcycle gangs. This amendment bill demonstrates how serious the New South Wales Government is about getting tough on organised crime. The bill will ensure that the licensing regime established by the Tattoo Parlours Act is robust and effective. Under the legislation NSW Fair Trading will be the regulator of the tattoo industry. However, the NSW Police Force will play an important role in the licensing and compliance processes. When the licensing regime commences, all tattoo parlour operators and artists will be required to apply for an appropriate licence. The Commissioner of Police will determine whether the applicant is a fit and proper person, or whether it would be contrary to the public interest for the licence to be granted. While Fair Trading will ultimately be responsible for the granting of licences, it will be bound by the decisions made by the Commissioner of Police.

The effectiveness of the licensing regime hinges on two key aspects: thorough probity checking of applicants and their close associates, and the compliance and enforcement activities of the regulator. The amendment bill seeks to make provisions that will enhance both of these key aspects. I turn to the provisions within the amendment bill that are designed to support Fair Trading and the police in ensuring compliance with the legislation. First, the bill provides that an authorised officer may enter licensed premises at any reasonable time to determine whether the Act is being complied with. In addition, it provides that where an authorised officer reasonably suspects that premises are being used to perform body art tattoo procedures for a fee or reward they may enter the premises to check compliance with the legislation. It is important to remember that while Fair Trading will regulate the tattoo industry, it will be supported in this role by the NSW Police Force. Accordingly, within the legislation an authorised officer refers to an investigator within the meaning of the Fair Trading Act or any member of the NSW Police Force.

The bill balances the powers of entry with appropriate protections. Authorised officers may only enter premises at a reasonable time. Further, the power to enter does not apply to residential premises without the permission of the occupier or a search warrant. The bill also includes provisions that specify what an authorised officer may do upon entry to the premises. Specifically, it provides that an authorised officer may examine any documents on the premises, make copies of those documents or require any person to do so, take any documents for the purpose of making copies, or seize any documents on the premises. The amendments also provide that an authorised officer may take any recordings they consider necessary, including photographs, films, audio or video recordings. Appropriately, the bill also includes a provision that an authorised officer may apply for a search warrant where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the legislation is being or has been contravened on the premises.

The provisions specify that the warrant relates only to the reasonable belief that the tattoo legislation has been breached. This ensures that the provision cannot be used as a method to gain entry to premises where it is suspected that other alleged criminal activity has occurred. A similar power can be found in other industry legislation administered by Fair Trading, for example, the Fair Trading Act and the Motor Dealers Act. This provision is an essential tool in ensuring that authorised officers are able to detect and investigate unlicensed activity. The bill also includes amendments that relate specifically to the performance of body art tattoo procedures on licensed premises. Essentially, these amendments provide that an individual must not perform a tattoo procedure on licensed premises unless that individual holds a tattooist licence.

The bill also provides that it will now be a condition of an operator licence that the operator must not allow an individual to perform a tattoo on the premises unless that individual holds a tattooist licence. These amendments serve a dual purpose. First, they provide an additional assurance to consumers that by using licensed premises they will be dealing only with licensed tattooists. Secondly, and just as importantly, they ensure that the licensing regime cannot be circumvented by people claiming to have performed procedures for free. This amendment bill will ensure that the licensing regime created under the Tattoo Parlours Act will be robust and effective, which can only be a benefit to the tattoo industry and the consumers of New South Wales.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [3.33 p.m.]: The object of the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012 is to amend the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 by introducing tough legislation to break the stranglehold that organised crime has on the tattoo industry in New South Wales and subsequently on gun crime that is plaguing western and south-western Sydney. Gun crime is on the rise throughout western and south-western Sydney with

there being more than 115 shootings over the past 12 months alone. The Government attributes these gun crimes to bikie gangs, the same bikie gangs that the Government asserts are operating tattoo parlours, which are the subject of reprisal attacks and are also involved in other types of organised crime such as drug distribution and money laundering.

This bill will require all tattoo parlours to be licensed and will expand the definition of a close associate of an applicant for a licence to include the contractors and employees. Further amendments made in this bill will give authorised officers the authority to enter any licensed tattoo parlour premises. This will allow officers to conduct spot checks at a reasonable time at any licensed premises to check for drugs, explosives or firearms. With the surge in popularity of tattooing over recent years, the introduction of this legislation will create miles of red tape thus causing headaches across Sydney for not only the gang-run tattoo parlour operators but also for any legitimate tattoo business operators.

It concerns me that these changes in legislation will require the NSW Police Force to conduct background and security checks, although there has been no additional resources provided to the NSW Police Force to cope with the forecast increased workload. At a time when the NSW Police Force is under-resourced with approximately 300 police officer positions being stripped away from local area commands to fill the void in transit officer positions, one has to wonder how members opposite can justify their actions. The primary purpose of this bill is not to encumber the New South Wales tattoo industry with miles of red tape, but to put an end to the violence on the streets of western and south-western Sydney. We will continue to see gun crime in our streets until our local area commands are back to full strength, until bikie gangs that are involved in organised crime are banned and until consorting laws are used by this Government.

The people of western and south-western Sydney are tired of being frightened. They want action from this Government. With each passing week we are seeing more audacious attacks and shootings, which have escalated beyond drive-by shootings to kneecappings in broad daylight and murder on our streets. As the member of an electorate greatly affected by the escalating gun crime, I commend any legislation that attempts to put an end to violence on the streets and in the neighbourhoods of western and south-western Sydney. Although this legislation is supported by the New South Wales Opposition, the Coalition Government should be under no illusion that the bill represents a considerable fix on the issue of gun crime.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [3.36 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012. Earlier this year this Government took action to clean up the tattoo parlour industry following numerous incidents highlighting the close involvement of criminal elements in tattoo parlours. The Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012 was assented to in May. The licensing scheme outlined in the legislation included requirements for probity checking of licensed applicants and their close associates as well as powers to ensure that effective audit of tattoo parlour businesses can be conducted by authorised officers. A number of minor issues have been identified, which, if not rectified prior to commencement, would leave significant loopholes unaddressed and would compromise the Government's aim of cleaning up the tattoo parlour industry. The first of these amendments was the need to ensure that all criminal intelligence or other criminal information held in relation to employees or prospective employees could be considered in adjudicating applications to operate tattoo parlours.

Whilst it is true that no licence is or will be required for people to work in a tattoo parlour in a non-tattooing role, it is still important to the success of this licensing scheme that the Government is able to conduct probity checks on employees or prospective employees. Otherwise, anyone who wishes to bypass the licensing regime could do so merely by having themselves included in the business as a business manager or perhaps as an administrative assistant, even though they may be in fact asserting a significant degree of control over the day-to-day running of the business. This bill addresses this issue by including in the current definition of "close associate" any individual who will be engaged as a contractor or employed in the business of the applicant or licensee that is or will be carried on under the authority of the licence.

The bill also makes other important amendments in support of this change. Section 19A of the bill provides that the Commissioner of Police may request, via written notice, further information to support a probity assessment of a licensee or licence applicant or their close associates. This may occur at the time the licence application is lodged or during the term of the licence, should close associates change. This ensures that all relevant information can be used by the Commissioner of Police in making a security determination. The bill also ensures that any information relied upon by the Commissioner of Police in making a security determination is protected should the relevant licensing decision be subjected to review by the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

This means that while the tribunal has the opportunity to view and consider this material, it should be noted that police intelligence holdings will be protected from disclosure, which is appropriate. It is fair to say that the regulatory regime being introduced for the tattoo parlour industry is an enormous change. However, the large-scale involvement of serious and organised criminals in this industry has made these amendments necessary. The Government is determined to drive criminal gangs from the tattoo parlour industry and to deny them this base for their criminal enterprises. A great deal of work has been done to deliver the right regulatory model and this bill completes the job. The bill is a credit to the Minister and I commend it to the House.

Mr NATHAN REES (Toongabbie) [3.40 p.m.]: I support the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012. In doing so, I point out that it is another example of legislative slop delivered by this Government. Once again we are mopping up a sloppy piece of legislation that was passed earlier this year. Earlier this week, and via an article by Imre Salusinszky in the *Australian*, the Attorney General foreshadowed the introduction of legislation designed to amend the anti-bikie gang legislation after he was forced to admit that it had not achieved what it was intended to achieve. A bikie gang member who has been involved in one of the 115 bikie gang shootings that has occurred over the past 12 months would know that this Government is not fair dinkum. Those shootings have occurred across New South Wales, although there has been a high incidence in greater western Sydney. A couple occurred less than one mile from my home; I can almost hear the shots ringing out night after night.

This Government's sloppy legislative response to this issue is giving heart to bikies engaged in the dangerous practice of firing bullets into people's knees, feet or heart. Those 115 shootings have occurred while this Government has transferred 300 police officers from local area commands to trains, cancelled the next Goulburn Police Academy recruit intake, changed the definition of "operational strength", and botched various pieces of legislation. The Government is sending a clear signal to bikie gangs and those associated with organised crime that it is not serious about tackling this problem. It is not dealing with it because the shootings are not happening in leafy Ku-ring-gai, beautiful Pittwater or lovely Lane Cove. If they were happening in the Premier's electorate, the legislation would have been fixed months ago. I could list all the local area commands that are operating understrength as this Government sticks its head in the sand, and ignores drive-by shootings and the heightened risk—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Toongabbie will be heard in silence. Members should not engage in debate across the Chamber.

Mr NATHAN REES: The Opposition supports this legislation, but the Minister for Fair Trading and his colleagues who champion small business should keep in mind that legitimate tattoo parlours not operated by organised crime gangs or organised crime families will also be affected by its onerous provisions. It is poorly thought out and it will not do the job it is intended to do. Like the Government's other initiatives, it has not stopped the shootings.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [3.45 p.m.]: The Greens debated the original Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012 at some length in this place and in the other place. We wonder whether it is appropriate for highly qualified police officers to be checking the records of tattoo parlour operators rather than arresting criminals and fighting crime. The Leader of the House is aware of the concerns about the haste with which we have dealt with this bill. Concerns have also been raised about the extent of the search powers granted to police officers, how records will be checked and the use of highly qualified police officers to undertake that task. This legislation takes an obtuse approach to controlling gun crime and bikie-related crime. The Tattoo Parlours Bill 2012 was passed only five months ago, but the Government has had to introduce a raft of amendments because it has proved ineffective in addressing the problem. This amending bill is an admission that the legislation is not working.

In his second reading speech the Minister stated that "this amending legislation is evidence of the care being taken by the Government to get this new licensing regime right by providing the best legislative framework". That is not true. This legislation demonstrates the problems that can occur when legislation is introduced with undue haste. The Parliamentary Counsel's Office is put under the pump to draft the best possible legislation. If we had had more time to examine the details and to check the details we might have had a better result. Minor parties do not have the resources that are available to the major parties. It is therefore important that we have sufficient time to examine legislation. I encourage the Government to take time to consider its legislation because introducing amendments to a bill passed only five months ago is unreasonable. The Government should examine how it can use police resources appropriately and maximise their effectiveness. Police officers should not be doing administrative work in tattoo parlours to achieve mediocre results.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [3.47 p.m.], in reply: As members have heard, the key objective of the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012 is to strengthen and support the current Act in its aim to remove outlaw motorcycle gangs from the tattoo industry. The amendments will ensure that the licensing regime is robust and effective, and will allow NSW Fair Trading and the NSW Police Force to regulate the tattoo industry effectively and efficiently. The member for Bankstown raised concerns about health training. The new licensing regime focuses on ensuring that tattoo parlours are legitimate businesses and not fronts for criminal activities. For this reason, the licensing scheme includes a stringent fit and proper person test to ensure that owners, operators and employees of parlours are not involved in or associated with organised crime. The health aspects of the tattoo industry are appropriately dealt with by the Public Health Act and the regulations.

Licensed operators and artists must ensure that they comply with all necessary health regulations. They will also still be subject to the necessary local government and health inspections. The current health requirements appear to be operating effectively, and it is not considered appropriate to require operators and artists to comply with additional health requirements under the proposed licensing regime. Adding new health requirements would simply impose another level of red tape on industry. In respect of the resources available for NSW Fair Trading and the NSW Police Force, it is important to note that NSW Fair Trading will be responsible for regulating the tattoo industry. This agency will be responsible for the granting of licences, handling of inquiries, investigation of complaints and ultimately ensuring compliance with the legislation. It is expected that authorised officers from NSW Fair Trading will conduct routine compliance inspections of tattoo parlours, as they do with all other industries the agency regulates.

I am assured that NSW Fair Trading has made appropriate arrangements to ensure that it is able to undertake its duties as regulator and that the NSW Police Force is also making appropriate arrangements. It should be noted that some of the costs incurred by the agencies will be recovered through licence fees. I reiterate that this is not about how much it costs; it is about getting the criminals out of this industry. This bill serves to support essential legislation for the regulation of the tattoo industry in this State. I again thank the members for Bankstown, The Entrance, Fairfield, Campbelltown, Balmain and Toongabbie for their contributions to the debate. I take this opportunity to thank the policy staff from both NSW Fair Trading and the Ministry of Police who have contributed to the development of this bill. I also thank my staff and the staff of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. 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 Anthony Roberts agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [3.50 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill was introduced in the Legislative Council on 17 October 2012, and as it is in the same form—the second reading speech appears at pages 9 to 12 in the proof *Hansard* for that day—I commend the bill to the House.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.51 p.m.]: I seek leave of the House for private members' statements to be taken up to 4.15 p.m. and at the conclusion of discussion on the two petitions for private members' statements to continue until their conclusion.

Leave granted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LIVERPOOL WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [3.51 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to a particularly valuable service within the electorate that I represent that does extraordinarily important work. I refer in particular to the Liverpool Women's Resource Centre located in Ashcroft. I concede at the outset that while located within the Liverpool electorate, it additionally services and assists residents of nearby electorates including Menai, Macquarie Fields, Camden and Mulgoa. I have known of and supported its work for many years and, indeed, have referred to it previously in debates in this Chamber. I visited the centre in 2010 and have always had a high regard for its work. It is a small centre and deals with cases that tend to otherwise slip through the cracks and involve people who do not access mainstream services.

The centre has one full-time and one part-time permanent employee and provides casual employment to tutors and childcare workers. The centre provides support, despite its very small staff, to an average of 150 women per week. Most often the women it assists suffer from multiple levels of disadvantage, which is almost a definition of people who do not access mainstream services. This critical service survives on the comparatively modest amount of \$178,000 per annum from the Department of Family and Community Services. Without that funding the service would close. The target group for the centre is women within the Liverpool local government area, most especially disadvantaged women. There is a focus on women in the 2168 postcode area, but this is certainly not an exclusive focus. To quote from a resource centre document:

We provide a service accessible to marginalised and disadvantaged women, women from emerging communities, CALD women and women living in poverty, young mothers, isolated women, women living in violence and abuse—essentially—many of the women who drop through the gaps of mainstream services.

The service involves centre programs, a helpline providing information for referral and support, outreach services, including Leppington, and for other particular projects that are often funded by specific grants from specific funding. Of course, those specific and targeted focus grants currently sought are not possible unless primary funding from the Department of Family and Community Services is available. The work of the centre, I have to say, is very successful, which I know from my own experience with people I have dealt with. I will quote one example. Kath from Sisters For Sisters, an Aboriginal Group wrote:

My name is Kath and I live in the Liverpool area. I currently attend an Aboriginal Women's Group called "Sistas for Sistas". Our group has women of all ages attending every week. I enjoy catching up with the women. We do arts, crafts, excursions and camps, but the main aim of the group is to support each other.

I have been coming to the group now for two and a half years and I can never get enough. I especially enjoy cooking lunch and I don't mind getting dirty in our vegetable patch.

Before coming to the group I didn't think I had a life to live. Every day would be a struggle between thoughts of suicide and wanting to hurt myself.

I've come a long way because of the support from the women in our group, who have all been through hard times themselves, or are still having hard times.

I'm glad I've got the chance to meet these lovely women as I might not be here today. Thanks to "Sistas for Sistas" I can see a future to look forward to. I just have to take one step at a time.

A couple of other specific examples that have been given to me are:

Morgan is fifteen. She sees the sign on her way to school—

That is the sign to the centre—

She pops in with a couple of her friends to ask what we do. They tell me about "friend" who is being sexually abused by her father. I give them information and numbers, talk to them a bit about sexual assault—that it's always the perpetrator's fault, that it's a criminal act, that there are services there to support young women in this circumstance. Later, Morgan comes back alone. We ring a local sexual assault service, organise for her to meet with a counsellor and organise to report the matter. Some months later Morgan rings to tell me she is safely living with her grandmother and still seeing a counsellor.

Another example is:

Nina has been coming to one of our groups for several years. I know her just to say hello. One day she approaches me to tell me she has read some of the information we keep here in the bathroom and group room. She has two children under five; her husband has been beating her for all of their marriage. He has threatened to kill her and the kids if she leaves. She has been reading about the effect on children of living with violence. She can see that her children are suffering. She wants to leave. We organise for her to get to a refuge, contact the Police for an AVO, and connect her to a local domestic violence service. She and her children are safe.

I am very happy to express my support for this service, for the work that it does and for the funding that it receives. There is considerable uncertainty at the moment about the future of its funding. This organisation has effectively been serving the community of Liverpool for some 28 years. It was funded under the Community Services Grants Program through the then Department of Community Services. A review process has been going on for several years. The centre has been given short-term funding, which is set to last until December 2012. During the period of the review it was at no stage told its funding was going to be pulled.

The centre was given the impression that there was a real likelihood that its funding would be increased. In April 2012 the centre was told for the first time that one of the possibilities of the review was that its funding might be terminated. I would regard that as an extraordinarily outrageous result. If I can take the politics out of it, the work done by this centre is extraordinary and incredibly important. This service uses a very small amount of money doing incredibly important things. I ask that those who make decisions about these matters read very carefully what I have said.

OXLEY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services) [3.56 p.m.]: As Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services and also the local member for Oxley I am pleased to see progress by the Government in relation to delivering on improved infrastructure and services in my electorate on the magnificent mid North Coast. The big job is to complete the duplication of what continues to be one of Australia's most dangerous roads, the Pacific Highway, and within my electorate the scene of Australia's worst-ever road accident at Clybucca on a section of road that is still in a bad state. The Government, through Roads and Maritime Services, and the Kempsey Bypass Alliance and with funding from the Federal Government, has made substantial progress on the Kempsey bypass, which features Australia's longest road bridge of some 3.5 kilometres in length across the Macleay River flood plain, which is likely to open ahead of schedule in May 2013.

However, there are some substantial projects that require significant funding and attention, including the Oxley Highway to Kempsey, Frederickton to Eungai, Warrell Creek to Nambucca Heads, and Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrades. It is of concern that the Federal Government has shifted the goalposts when it comes to funding from a previously agreed formula of 80 per cent Federal, 20 per cent State and now expects the State to produce 50 per cent of the required funds. This leaves a very significant black hole in the State Government's finances. However, it is pleasing to note that the Federal Opposition has agreed with a proposal from the New South Wales Government to move committed funds for the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link to the Pacific Highway so that we can finish the job and prevent the road carnage that continues on the Pacific Highway.

Hospitals in my electorate are being upgraded as we speak, with Kempsey District Hospital to receive an \$80 million redevelopment, a very significant commitment and one which is welcomed by the people of Kempsey and the Macleay Valley. The Wauchope District Memorial Hospital is also receiving attention with a significant upgrade of a new palliative care unit, which will make it a vital part of the cluster of hospitals on the mid North Coast. Bellingen Hospital has received an upgrade to its operating theatre and other parts of the hospital, again a significant commitment from this Government. Recently Dorrig Multi Purpose Service received an upgrade.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, was present for the opening of a very welcomed ceremony to celebrate those enhanced facilities in the beautiful village of

Dorrigo. I am aware that the local health district is also pursuing a proposal for a new community health centre at Nambucca Heads and I very much welcome this initiative. I hope that this proposal is successful in the coming months and years. As a local member I will continue to push for dialysis at Macksville and District Hospital. Those in Nambucca who require dialysis currently have to travel to either Coffs Harbour Base Hospital or Kempsey District Hospital.

Local schools have also received significant upgrades. I recently opened the new facilities at Wauchope High School and I look forward to participating in a similar ceremony at Kempsey High School. These projects were funded by the New South Wales Government; they are not Building the Education Revolution projects. I spoke to some of the students at Wauchope High School at that opening. They told me that they are absolutely delighted with their new facilities. Some \$15 million in funding from the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program has been committed towards a new \$37 million dam for the Nambucca shire. I am told that during the 2003 drought the Nambucca shire was within months of completely running out of water and residents from towns such as Macksville, Bowraville and Nambucca Heads were threatened with evacuation to other parts of the State. The new dam will guarantee secure water supplies for the Nambucca shire. I am particularly pleased to see the delivery of more teachers, nurses and police for the good people of the Oxley electorate—more frontline jobs for those services that matter.

CAREVAN

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [4.01 p.m.]: Members will be hearing more about the name Carevan. Albury's Carevan Foundation is on a mission to feed the homeless and disadvantaged of rural Australia. News is spreading far and wide—one could say that Carevan is on a roll. Carevan is a mobile service that provides hot meals, and more, to those who are in need. The vans drive into their communities rather than the homeless needing to make their way to a remote agency office. Carevan's founder, Dr John Brabant, is an orthodontist. He has worked in rural Australia for almost 30 years. He decided to take action after reading an article on homelessness in Albury's *Border Mail* entitled "It is easier to turn away than to care". Carevan was established in 2009. It began serving meals to the homeless of Albury-Wodonga in May 2010.

Jodie Tiernan, the Chief Executive Officer of Carevan, told me that over the last two years Carevan, with the assistance of a volunteer army that has clocked up more than 6,000 hours of unpaid service, has provided 17,664 meals in Albury-Wodonga. And it did not take long for the program to expand. In 2011 a second van was launched in Wangaratta and in May this year a third at Blacktown. A fourth van now operates on the Central Coast, based at Wyong, and a fifth van is set to commence operation in Griffith this November. Each community establishes its own council of volunteers to staff the van and manage the administration, and each local enterprise follows the guidelines and principles of the Albury foundation.

Carevan is now in five cities and up to 700 volunteers are hard at work. This is how a typical run operates. It is night time. The van pulls up in a community car park. Hot meals are handed out to those who have waited for the van. This could be soup and casseroles with fruit, followed by tea, coffee and Milo. Donations of fruit come from border markets each week. But sustenance is about more than just the food. Conversation takes place between volunteers and recipients. This is one of the more personal and intimate elements of the run. It is an opportunity to provide something deeper than traditional charity. The van provides books and magazines. Volunteers hand out personal hygiene packs from the back of the van. Each pack contains a toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, a hairbrush, face washer, tissues and wipes. The run is repeated from Monday to Thursday in Albury-Wodonga. It commences at 6.30 p.m. and ends two hours later.

Carevan is the gateway to a number of distinct programs. Dental advice is given by a Carevan dental officer. The foundation is planning a dental care program for disadvantaged schools and community centres. There will be breakfast "brush-ins" and dental puppet shows. Twice yearly there will be fluoride varnish application sessions. In this way Carevan will be working to decrease the rising problem of dental decay in children from lower socioeconomic families. Through a program of grants it will be possible to provide orthodontic treatment for young people in need. This is part of an approach that orthodontic work can help raise self-confidence so that young people can win jobs and escape the cycle of poverty.

There is also a Kids Cooking and Caring Program. School students volunteer to cook for two months and assist in distributing meals with Carevan helpers. Midnight Basketball, which aims to help keep disadvantaged youth off the streets late at night, gets assistance as well from Carevan volunteers and meals. The Carevan Foundation aims to create a sense of identity, a sense of belonging and a sense of achievement for those less advantaged in our society. The foundation argues that it is focused on changing "us" and "them" to become

"we". Interestingly, it has been found that Carevan attracts other socially minded individuals and organisations, providing a focus for their own involvement. People donate money. Westpac's Albury Branch organised a Milo drive and collected tins of Milo donated at the bank. Six Thurgoona children spent time in their school holidays washing cars as a fundraising activity. The Scots School Albury held a fundraising dinner with special guest singer Reece Mastin. Year 9 students at Victory Lutheran College took part in Carevan's Soup-er Day, delivering cups of soup with a bread roll to businesses in the Albury central business district. They made more than \$1,500 in soup sales and donations.

In its short life Carevan has already made an impression. Earlier this year John Brabant became the face of the Albury-Wodonga telephone book, and Evolve Orthodontics—his dental practice—was recognised in the 2102 Telstra New South Wales Business of the Year Awards. Evolve Orthodontics received the HTC Start-Up Award. The master plan is to take Carevan to rural and remote areas of Australia that have tended to miss out on the kinds of meal programs found in densely populated inner city areas. Volunteers will continue to reach out to families and those in poverty. Other plans include an expansion of the Kids Cooking and Caring Program. I acknowledge the important work undertaken by Albury's Carevan. I express my appreciation, and that of our community, to John, Jodie and the expanding team of volunteers for their work on programs of social inclusion for those who have found themselves living on the margins in rural and regional Australia.

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [4.06 p.m.]: Recently in this House I congratulated some of the individuals and community groups recognised in the St George Community Awards 2012, held on 4 October 2012 at Club Central. These awards are a way of saying thank you to the many volunteers and community organisations that work with little recognition to make our area an even better place in which to live. There were more than 80 nominations. Some 67 people and organisations—the ceremony was attended by more than 420 family and friends—received awards for outstanding contributions to the St George area. I again congratulate seven people who received Young Person of the Year awards. Mr Jordan Henry has played an integral part in the sound and technical crew at the Peakhurst Campus of Georges River College over the past four years. Jordan is yet to miss setting up the audiovisual for morning assemblies. He is also a member of the stage band and concert band. He has represented his school in cross-country and long distance swimming events. He also tutors literacy and numeracy.

Mr Jesse Hanna is a humble volunteer whose passion inspires many of his peers to volunteer. He is a member of the Youth Council at Rockdale City Council. He has also been involved in activities such as Clean Up Australia Day projects and Youth Week activities. He is a swimming instructor for people with disabilities and he has spent time mentoring other young people in the local area. Ms Emily Woods also received an award. Narwee Baptist Church continues to reach out to the community because of people such as Emily. She is passionate about youth ministry, which she has been tirelessly involved in for the past eight years. She is a great mentor to many at Narwee Baptist Church. She is also part of the senior leadership in the church's youth program. Ms Cala Oscuro is an integral member of the Oatley Leo Club—the youth branch of Oatley Lions Club. Cala is currently the president of that club. Her organisation and administrative skills are such that the club is able to spend its valuable time serving the community and raising funds for much-needed community groups.

Ms Giselle Oscuro—Cala's sister—is also an active member of Oatley Leo Club. She too has organised a great number of club activities and barbeques. Her enthusiasm for fundraising and volunteering work is infectious. Her wonderful example has inspired younger members to become dedicated to working harder within the club for the benefit of the St George community. Tatyana Babic is a peer tutor and a support leader at Georges River College at Penshurst. Christina Zoupantis is a peer support tutor, who has also helped at Georges River College and has helped to run the 40-hour famine at the school. In addition, Christina also volunteers with charities and her church and has organised fundraising for a school in Kenya. I was delighted that on the night the Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione—who himself volunteers and is a terrific ambassador for the local area—was a special guest and presented the awards.

The Government is focused on encouraging community involvement and aims to increase the number of people involved in community organisations and people who volunteer on a regular basis. I believe it is very important to recognise the services our volunteers provide. They are truly the glue that holds our community together, and I am proud to represent an area that is so community-minded. I look forward to presenting these awards next year, which will be an even bigger and better event. I congratulate everyone on their efforts and on making the St George region a great place to live.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW "JOEY" JOHNS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [4.10 p.m.]: This afternoon I once again gloat about the achievements of people from the Cessnock electorate and congratulate Andrew "Joey" Johns on his induction into the Rugby League Immortals and into the Sports Australia Hall of Fame. It is entirely appropriate that I stand here today wearing a blue suit, a blue and white striped shirt and a red tie—colours of the mighty, mighty Knights. Andrew Johns played 249 times for the Newcastle Knights, 23 times for New South Wales and 24 times for Australia. He won the Dally M Medal three times, the Clive Churchill Medal once and the Provan-Summons Medal five times. When he retired in 2007 he was at the time the greatest point-scorer in first grade history, and a year later he was selected as half-back in the Australian Rugby League team of the century.

Anyone who remembers game two of the 2005 State of Origin series will remember Andrew Johns' ability to drag fans from their seats. Coming back after a broken jaw and brought into the side as a late replacement, Johns put on a command performance to carve the Queenslanders apart. He repeated the dose a month later and New South Wales won the series 2:1. That was Johns' last Origin game, and it is worth pointing out that our great State has not tasted Origin victory since. The solution after seven straight series defeats seems simple: start picking some players from the coalfields again. The wonderful thing about sport is that a person's ability to achieve depends far more on their skill and capacity for work than on their postcode. Throughout all the undulations in Andrew Johns' story, I believe that is the most important message.

The fact that Andrew Johns, who grew up in a working-class family in a small country town, was able to reach the absolute peak of his field of endeavour shows that anyone in this country can do anything. It is not just Andrew Johns and it is not just sport. Currently we have dozens of young people in the Cessnock electorate who themselves could one day take a place on the global stage. We need to teach our young people to have ambition. When we stifle ambition in our youth we stifle our society. Far from being a sign of detachment from reality, ambition is what drives people to be great. Every young person in New South Wales should believe that, whatever field they choose—be it sport, medicine, science, the arts or politics—they can be the very best.

Andrew Johns' story is one of the many that proves it, and I am sure the House joins me in congratulating him. As an aside, I will relate a small story about Andrew. I first became aware of Andrew when I was playing in the under-11s Aberdare Warriors and Andrew was playing for the under-7s St Patrick's team. He was untouchable on the footy field at that young age—kids just could not get their hands on him and he carved them up. The Saturday Rugby League fixture for a local country town is obviously the highlight of the week and thousands of people would flock to watch the Cessnock Goannas play against whoever the foes were. Obviously all of the foes were dirty, cheating scoundrels and Cessnock was the honest, hard-toiling, worthy team.

But during those games the kids would leave the ground. We would go across the road and down a little bit to where the local town hall was. Behind the town hall was a perfectly beautifully manicured green lawn and it was always a little bit damp and soft, so it was ideal. Who cared about the Goannas when we were playing State of Origin or Test Match football down the road behind the town hall? I was 11—most of the guys who were down there were 10 or 11—and this young seven-year-old named Andrew Johns would turn up to show his wares. Everyone wanted to knock his head off but no-one could get anywhere near him. At that young age this kid had talent that was just untouchable. He was more than willing—and full of self-confidence and cheek—to pit himself against boys just a little bit bigger and a little bit older, and he always won. Andrew "Joey" Johns—Rugby League Immortal—we salute you.

Private members' statements concluded.

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL SCANNING FACILITIES

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [4.15 p.m.]: I begin my speech by sincerely thanking Cancer Carers Illawarra for their dedication to collecting signatures for this petition debate today, and I again acknowledge my friends in the gallery today and thank them for being here. So many people have fought very hard to ensure that we could have this discussion in this Parliament, and I commend all those who fought the good fight for this important discussion today. It is thanks to the efforts of this dedicated group of volunteers that an incredible number of signatures were obtained on the petition that has led to this debate today. They not only reached the prerequisite number of signatures required for this debate; they smashed it out of the park—exceeding 30,000 signatures from our community for this petition. Congratulations and well done.

The House should be in no doubt about how strongly our community feels about this matter. Cancer Carers are to be applauded for the assistance they provide to cancer patients and for their considerable fundraising efforts—raising more than \$2 million for health services in the local region. Whilst one should not single anyone out, I thank Keith Wilson—Shellharbour's Citizen of the Year—and Fay Campbell for their constant and unwavering efforts.

I also extend a most sincere thank you to Professor Phil Clingan—a man whose skill and extraordinary expertise have saved countless lives. He is also a man of supreme integrity who has been a strong advocate for health in our region. It was in his surgery in Wollongong where a bipartisan group first met to plan the fight that is so important. At the outset I also pay a special tribute to all of our health services and professionals on the South Coast and in the Southern Highlands and the Illawarra who offer practical, emotional and physical assistance to cancer patients and their families, which assists in easing the often tumultuous journey they are forced to endure.

I would also like to do something that is all too scarce in this place: I thank my friends and colleagues who assisted in bringing this debate here today. Whilst the media may obsess about the arguments we have in this place, members from the South Coast and the Illawarra stand united in our calls for this life-saving equipment. I sincerely thank my friends the Speaker and member for South Coast; the member for Keira; the member for Heathcote; the member for Shellharbour; and the irrepressible member for Wollongong. Whilst we may argue on occasions, I will let the House in on a little secret: We actually all get along extremely well. It is this strong working relationship that allows us to put our region first and our party second.

There is no doubt that access to a positron emission tomography imaging service—or PET/CT scanner—and endoscopic ultrasound would have significant benefits for the people of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven. The Government is committed to improving health services for the people of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, including those battling cancer. Currently cancer services in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven are receiving a significant boost, with work progressing on the expansion of the Illawarra Cancer Care Centre in Wollongong and the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre in Nowra. These local developments will make a real difference in the lives of people battling cancer.

As members of the House will be aware, one of the reasons I stood for Parliament was to see the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre delivered. I will never forget assisting in the care of my mum during her successful battle with breast cancer. I lost my grandfather to cancer and I also lost my uncle to it. As members would be aware, I have fought for and spoken about a number of cancer initiatives in this place, including the extraordinary fundraising efforts of the people of the Shoalhaven to raise \$1 million towards their linear accelerator. In this regard I commend former mayors Greg Watson and Paul Green for their stewardship of the Linear Accelerator Committee and I also commend the considerable efforts of locals such as Paul Dean towards making this facility a reality.

I brought to the House a motion on Relay for Life, and I still read and re-read the contributions made by members in this most touching debate about such a great cause. I recently had the great privilege of recognising Steve Doulton from my electorate with a Premier's Award for his contribution and organisation of this event in Kiama. I thank members for participating in the matter of public importance I brought before the House on the Cancer Council NSW SunSmart program—instilling in children the need to slip, slop and slap. I will repeat my most sincere congratulations to the Minister for Health for introducing tough anti-smoking laws which extend the prohibition on smoking, and I commend the Minister for the Environment for introducing legislation to ban solaria in this State.

While every community around the State has a wish list of services, unfortunately our public funding does not stretch far enough to give all things to all people. Health is one area of government where, no matter who is in government, it will need to do the greatest good for the greatest number. As we are aware, new and ever-advancing medical technologies come at an increasing cost. While we understand that these services are a high priority for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven communities, the Government is tasked with prioritising resources. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Sometimes difficult decisions need to be made. We know that space is available at Wollongong Hospital for the installation of a PET scanner. The nuclear medicine department was constructed with the installation of this equipment in mind. Some additional work to the area will be required to ensure that it meets the requirements for patients awaiting their scan. Today I am delighted to announce some good news. I can announce that, after discussions with the health Minister and the health district board, we have found a way to

ensure that Wollongong gets its PET scanner within the space provided at Wollongong Hospital. While the arrangement will be struck with a private operator, public patients will be covered and supported by the local health district.

An agreement will be put in place for the provision of a service to public inpatients. This means that while the means will be funded by the private operator the benefits will be extended to all public inpatients. As members would be aware, at present people needing this equipment already access a PET scanner through private means or through other health districts. Both these scenarios require people to travel outside our area for this support. The agreement, of which the Minister has advised me, will mean that residents will no longer have to travel elsewhere. The agreement means we can ensure that the equipment is delivered and lives will be saved in our region. Now that the announcement has been made we must keep up the pressure to ensure that the arrangements are struck quickly and delivered expeditiously.

These arrangements are due, in no small part, to the hard work and dedication of our wonderful health district board led by my good friend and professional, Dr Dennis King. As the Government's recent investment in the expansion of services at Wollongong and Shoalhaven hospitals shows, we are committed to improving access to health services locally and we will continue to push for improved health care for residents of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven area. I thank all those involved in the announcement today. It is wonderful to make this announcement, having worked with members on both sides of the House to deliver what our community needs. I have cared for a parent and I have seen the impact of cancer on families. I know how desperately our region needs this equipment. Indeed, this is one of my proudest moments in this place. I thank all those who have contributed. I thank Dr Dennis King, our community and members of Parliament for this victory today.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [4.22 p.m.]: It is not often that I get an opportunity, or indeed have the will, to congratulate the member for Kiama. However, I overwhelmingly welcome his announcement today. Now I need to eliminate the nasties from my contribution that I had intended to use to put pressure on the Government. I am pleased to support the member for Kiama and, indeed, my Illawarra colleagues the member for Heathcote, the member for Keira and the member for Shellharbour. I had intended to call on the O'Farrell Government and the Minister for Health to provide a much-needed positron emission tomography [PET] scanner for Wollongong Hospital, which is located in the heart of my electorate of Wollongong. To hear the member for Kiama announce that the community and cancer carers will have the benefit of this resource is a great result.

Phil Clingan, who is highly respected by all sides of politics, raised this matter some time ago—even before members started to talk about working together on this issue. As the member for Kiama said, it shows what can be achieved if we are bipartisan and united. Cancer touches us all; it has no politics or nationality. We all need to come together to advance the fight. Not unlike the contribution of the member for Kiama, both my mother and her sister died of cancer. So I know we are on the same page in trying to do everything possible for the advancement of cancer research and treatment.

I acknowledge Fay Campbell, who is in the public gallery today. I was not aware at the time what Fay's daughter, Michelle, was going through until I had occasion to visit Wollongong Hospital. It reminded me that at the end of the day there is nothing more important to people than loved ones and family; even cancer sufferers have family and loved ones. No doubt the families of carers have also been touched by cancer. So this outcome is important. As I said at the outset, it has thrown my contribution completely out of kilter because I was looking forward to giving the Government a good bashing today.

I congratulate the community on its overwhelming support for the provision of a scanner at Wollongong Hospital. Thirty thousand signatures on a petition is a great achievement by those who collected the signatures, and tabling the petition in Parliament is a true indication of the people's commitment to and passion for the issue. The PET scanner is a vital piece of health equipment that both doctors and patients need in the Illawarra. As the regional hospital for the area, it is only fitting that Wollongong Hospital is the most appropriate location for the scanner. As has been said, people currently travel to Sydney to access the equipment, which no doubt adds to the enormous stress that patients already experience.

So this is a great outcome today. The outcome acknowledges not only the work of members of Parliament but also the leadership of Phil Clingan and others. When the grassroots community gets behind an issue it can only achieve success. Cancer treatment is one issue that brings our community together, across the region, across the board and across political divides, whether it is treatment for prostate cancer, lung cancer or whatever. No-one differentiates; it is the most important issue to us all in the areas of health and increased

research. The member for Kiama welcomed this bipartisan approach, as did Opposition members. The health of the people of Wollongong and the Illawarra, and indeed the State, will benefit from the delivery of this equipment, which is within the Government's realm. I congratulate the member for Kiama and the Government on seeing fit to provide this resource.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [4.27 p.m.]: As we know, cancer is a great leveller. I congratulate the residents, patients and doctors who collected the record-breaking 30,000 signatures, including the Illawarra Cancer Carers Group, Chairperson Fay Campbell, spokesperson Keith Wilson and the group's members. I congratulate them on making the trip to Sydney today; I hope the trip was worth it. I also congratulate my colleagues. As has been said, the bipartisan way in which we approached this issue is probably an example for other members in this place. We worked hard on the issue and, because we worked as a block, the Minister had to listen to us. That is a good way of dealing with what happens in this place. Finally, I congratulate the Minister on listening to the community and the local members, and on delivering the equipment that we all deserve.

People no longer will have to travel to Sydney to access this vital equipment. The machine will detect life-threatening cancers and heart-brain disease faster and more accurately than any other imaging technology. It will enable repeated investigations into the same subjects and provide increased statistical quality of data. This device will be especially useful in the clinical diagnosis of certain diffuse brain diseases such as those causing various types of dementias—something that is close to my heart because my mother is suffering from dementia. It will be able to identify a disease in its early stages and determine the exact location of a tumour, often before symptoms occur or abnormalities can be detected with other diagnostic tests. Early detection is the key to improving treatment options for these conditions. This machine also will be able to quickly determine a patient's response to specific drugs and the effectiveness of a treatment regimen.

The people of the Illawarra deserve the best available medical diagnostic technology. As I said at the outset, cancer and other diseases are great levellers. It does not matter whether one is the President of the United States, the Premier of the New South Wales or a Minister: When someone is hit by a disease he or she becomes the same as anybody else who is looking to survive. It is hoped that this machine will enable people to detect diseases a lot earlier so that proper diagnoses are made and medical assistance is given as soon as possible. I congratulate everybody in the public gallery on travelling from the Illawarra today. I thank my colleagues on both sides of politics and I thank everybody who has been involved in this process. Well done.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [4.30 p.m.]: What a day this is for the people of Wollongong and the Illawarra region. We will celebrate and be dining out on this good news for some months to come. With my fellow Illawarra parliamentary colleagues I am delighted to support the petition relating to the positron emission tomography [PET] scanning machine that rightly should be delivered to the people of our region. I congratulate the 230 volunteers who care for and support patients at the cancer care centre in Wollongong. I also congratulate Dr Phil Clingan, who celebrates his birthday today. What better present could Dr Clingan receive than the coming to fruition of this long campaign and the delivery of this machine? This is brilliant news for our region. I am sure Dr Clingan knows the news by now—somebody in the gallery would have been madly texting him.

I congratulate my friend and stalwart of the Illawarra Labor movement, Fay Campbell, and I am delighted that she is with us today. She is a hard worker in our community who never stops and she never lets go of an issue. I also congratulate Alice Scott and Helen Wemyss, who are with us today. I congratulate Keith Wilson, Shellharbour Citizen of the Year, who is in the gallery. Keith is a strong advocate for cancer patient care and he has been an important driver of this campaign. I congratulate Keith on his efforts. This success is due to Keith as well as all the people in the gallery and my fellow members from the Illawarra.

It was an outstanding achievement to collect more than 30,000 signatures from the Illawarra community to support and highlight our need for this great PET scanning machine. It just goes to show the level of dedication and support in the Illawarra community. Our community has something very strong within it. When we believe in something we do something. The member for Wollongong mentioned that whenever there is an issue we run with it and campaign for it. The people of our region are strong and resilient. This PET scanning machine will mean a great deal to many people in our community. We are all too well aware of the way in which cancer has touched the lives of so many. We all know someone who has suffered from, lived with and died of this most hideous disease. It is wonderful that those members representing the Illawarra region worked in a bipartisan way to ensure that this most important matter was debated in Parliament.

Today in the gallery are some of those volunteers, doctors, medical staff and families who have been affected by cancer and who have passionately driven this campaign. I admire them for their passion and their

persistence. We have been delivered a positive outcome today and it is fantastic news. We will now be able to save lives in our region through the early detection of cancer. Our community sent a loud and clear message to the Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, and she has delivered. Our community is here together to ensure that people living in the Illawarra have the same opportunities for the early detection of cancer as do other patients living in New South Wales. We now have those opportunities. We have worked in a non-political and bipartisan way to deliver this fantastic news for our region. I congratulate everyone involved.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [4.33 p.m.], by leave: What a great day. I remember when we all gathered in Phil Clingan's office in Wollongong many months ago to commence this process. Since that time, slowly but surely, we worked as a team with the community and cancer carers until arriving at the position in which we are today. Today is a great day for our region. This issue is and always should be above politics. Most importantly, it is an issue that touches everybody. Cancer does not differentiate between whether someone is Liberal, Green, Labor or Independent; it touches the lives of everyone in one way or another.

When we started this journey I was not even sure what a positron emission tomography [PET] scanner was. I could not even pronounce the words. But as I was educated by people such as Phil Clingan and Fay Campbell, and I heard the stories of carers and sufferers, it became obvious to me that we desperately needed this scanner. It is hard to come to terms with a cancer diagnosis and patients should not have to drive significant distances before being diagnosed with the disease. People in my electorate of Keira, which is at the northern end of the Illawarra, drive huge distances and people in the southern part of the Illawarra drive even further to places such as Liverpool and Sydney to get treatment. This will make a huge difference to the quality of life not only of cancer sufferers but also of their families, carers and those who look after them and support them.

In this House we argue vigorously and put forward our issues in a robust way, but the six Illawarra members joined together as one on this issue. We have become a united voice to lobby the Government as hard as we can on behalf of the region that we know and love. There is no better place in New South Wales to grow up, live in and work than the Illawarra. That is why we need the best possible facilities. If we are to attract people to our region and grow, we need medical and health facilities that reflect that. Today is a great day. This petition has the full support of the Opposition. I congratulate members on both sides of the House. I congratulate the members for the electorates of Kiama, Heathcote, Wollongong, Shellharbour and the South Coast and all the cancer carers, clinicians and hardworking volunteers who had the faith, drive and commitment to make today a reality.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): I also pass on my congratulations. It is lovely to see so many happy people in the Chamber and in the gallery.

Discussion concluded.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER SALARIES

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [4.40 p.m.]: Today we are debating a very important petition that brings to the attention of the House the pay disparity between early childhood teachers in community-based preschools and long day care centres, and early childhood teachers working in government or Catholic and independent preschools and schools. This petition is asking for in principle support for pay parity for early childhood teachers and to provide the necessary funding to services so they can implement it. More than 12,000 concerned teachers, parents and community members have signed this petition. There are many early childhood teachers in the public gallery this afternoon. I pay tribute to those early childhood teachers, to the work they do educating children every day and to the hard work they have done in collecting the necessary signatures so that this House can debate this important matter. I thank them. I also congratulate the Independent Education Union, which represents early childhood teachers. It has been tireless in its "Teachers are Teachers" campaign, and its representatives are also in the gallery today.

Research demonstrates the importance of a quality centre-based preschool experience for children. It introduces children to key concepts and ideas important for brain development and helps children transition smoothly to school. A study done in the United States, the HighScope Perry Preschool study—which is often quoted when we are talking about early childhood development—found that three- and four-year-olds from low-income backgrounds who participated in a high-quality preschool program at the age of 40 had higher earnings, were more literate, committed fewer crimes and were more likely to have graduated from high school.

The study documented a return to society of \$16 for every dollar invested in a quality early childhood experience. This shows that the early years do matter and are worth investing in. Parents want to know that when they leave their child at preschool or in long day care, they will be provided with an education program that is stimulating and age appropriate.

Trained teachers working in the early childcare sector are critical to achieving this, and no-one knows that better than the members who are in the gallery tonight. However, the wage being paid to early childhood teachers is a disincentive to teachers going into this area. In New South Wales most early childhood teachers earn wages that are 20 per cent lower than those of teachers in primary schools. This affects some 4,500 early childhood teachers in community-based preschools and long day care centres. Services are reporting that this discrepancy in pay is making it harder and harder to recruit the teachers needed to operate in accordance with the regulations. Even the Productivity Commission has recognised the problem, saying in its Early Childhood Development Workforce report:

In order to attract and retain a sufficient number of early childhood teachers, salary and conditions offered by long day care centres will need to be competitive with those offered to primary teachers in the school sector. Community and privately managed preschools in New South Wales will also need to offer similarly competitive salaries and conditions for their teachers, which is already the case in other jurisdictions.

The Independent Education Union's campaign is called "Teachers are Teachers" because they believe it is time that early childhood teachers earned the same as their counterparts in infant and primary schools. After all, teachers are teachers, regardless of where they teach or the age group. There is no doubt that this is a very worthwhile campaign. Parents are entrusting early childhood teachers to teach their children in the most important early years and many experts will attest to the fact that experiences in those early years affect brain development in a way that is critical for the rest of a child's life. I know this issue will be expensive to resolve, but I hope it will not be added to the too-hard list by the O'Farrell Government. The Government has been dragging its heels when it comes to early childhood reform.

The Government has not released the funding review of early childhood education by Professor Deb Brennan, despite promising that it would be completed by the end of the year. The Government underspent the children's services budget by some \$40 million in 2012-13, delaying the allocation of funding critical to expanding capacity in the early childhood sector. The O'Farrell Government has also not reinstated the Teacher Costs Contribution Scheme, which the Government suspended last year. Early childhood services need certainty so that they can plan for the future, and they are not getting it at the moment from this Government. This is a very important matter that the petitioners have brought to the attention of the House today. I again thank early childhood teachers for the work they do. We will debate this matter again in this House, I am sure.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [4.45 p.m.]: I thank the member for Marrickville for presenting this petition and drawing to the House's attention the important topic of early childhood education and care. I join the member for Marrickville in thanking and welcoming the petitioners and their supporters to Parliament today. I acknowledge in particular two of them who have come from my electorate, and indeed from my old preschool, Kiama Preschool. I welcome them to the House today most sincerely and thank them for making the extraordinary effort to be here today. In fact, I met with them in my office recently and they had a photo of me at preschool. I do not know who I need to send the cheque to in order to get all the copies, but please let me know.

Mr Daryl Maguire: Take him back.

Mr GARETH WARD: The Government Whip says, "Take him back." Perhaps they could teach me a thing or two. I broadly support the comments of the member for Marrickville. However, I need to clear up a couple of facts. The reason the Government has not responded to the Brennan review is that arrangements are still being negotiated with the Federal Government. That is a matter of fact. There are outstanding issues regarding pay, and that is why the Government has not responded. I certainly look forward to that response. The reason it has not been released is that the agreement has not been made.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: You haven't released it.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Marrickville said we have not released it, and that is right. That is because the agreement has not been struck. We know that these matters are dealt with by Fair Work

Australia. Fair Work Australia is a Federal body that makes these agreements, and we must abide by them. I have been passed some documents that are appropriate to read onto the record. This is a quote from Helen, who is a teacher in a rural preschool. She said:

I am thinking of resigning. I have worked for 20 years as a preschool director and love my job. I feel like I am a financial burden on the small rural preschool where I teach—to keep paying my wages, fees will have to rise again and I know some families can't afford an increase.

There is another one from Nicole, an early childhood teacher, who said:

I know from my study that teaching very young children is really important in terms of brain development. I also love this age group. But I just can't afford to teach in a preschool or a long day care centre when I can get much higher wages working in a school.

These are important comments and I would like the House to note them. I was passed another document, which I want to read onto the record also. It says that in Victoria, the salary of an early childhood teacher is \$80,000; in New South Wales it is \$67,000. Quality early childhood education gives children the best possible start in life. An increasing body of national and international research confirms that quality early education and care has immeasurable and lasting benefits for children that extend into their school years and beyond. Moreover, we know that quality early childhood education is highly effective intervention for improving outcomes for disadvantaged children. We also know that there is no more important factor in the quality equation than early childhood teachers, and I thank them for being here today.

It is the educators and carers in our preschools, long day care centres, family day care settings and mobile services who are building the strong foundations for lifelong learning in our children, day after day. This is why it is so important that the qualifications, expertise and commitment of early childhood teachers are appropriately recognised and properly remunerated. In New South Wales, we have one of the best, most professional and committed early childhood workforces in Australia. On the Australian Early Development Index, which measures children's development as they enter school, New South Wales students demonstrate low levels of vulnerability and high levels of school readiness. This result shows the great work being done in our early learning settings due to the expertise of hardworking teachers, some of whom are present in the gallery.

The achievements at our centres are no accident. The research tells us that a strong link between teacher qualifications and good learning outcomes in schools is resonant. The link is equally relevant in early childhood. New South Wales has the best-qualified early childhood workforce in the country. Most of our early childhood education and care services already employ degree-qualified early childhood teachers, with more than 4,000 of them working across preschools and long day care settings. In fact, our State has led the nation by requiring early childhood teachers to be highly qualified in any centre-based service with 30 children or more. For many years, long before national targets were set to fit the qualification levels of workers in this sector across the board, families and children in New South Wales benefited from strong regulatory standards and appropriately qualified early childhood teachers. It is very pleasing that all other States and Territories have followed this State's lead by recognising the importance of university-qualified early childhood teachers for young children.

But while New South Wales is ahead of the game nationally, we want to keep the momentum going. That is why we will continue to support our workers in this sector to obtain and upgrade their formal qualifications. Through our New Skills: Quality Care program, we have been subsidising early childhood educators to continue their learning. The program has met with outstanding success, with more than 1,700 early childhood qualifications founded and completed over the past two years. Another initiative has been TAFE NSW fee waivers for childcare qualifications. This program has allowed students to study eligible childcare courses at TAFE institutes at no cost. There have been more than 10,000 enrolments so far. A scholarship program for early childhood education is being provided to encourage educators to gain full teaching degrees. This measure will be introduced in 2013 and will benefit up to 100 educators who wish to upgrade their early childhood certificates and diplomas to degrees. Each scholarship will be worth up to \$10,000.

However, it is important to note that, while the New South Wales Government regulates standards of early childhood education and care, it does not regulate conditions of employment, including salaries. The reality is that the wages and conditions of teachers and other workers in every education setting nationally—schools, vocational education and training institutes, and universities—are a matter for negotiation between employers and employees, as they are in most walks of life. This does not undervalue the work and importance

of early childhood teachers—not by one iota. There can be few people in our community who play a more important role than those who nurture, guide and care for our children. Nor does it mean that the Government thinks teachers should not be remunerated appropriately. In fact, I think all members of this House would agree with what the petitions seeks—equal work being met with equal pay.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [4.50 p.m.]: I join the member for Marrickville in acknowledging the many early childhood teachers and workers who are present in the public gallery. I endorse the comments of the member for Marrickville that obtaining 10,000 signatures on a petition is no small feat. The petition demonstrates the passion and belief that early childhood educators and workers have in the cause of equal pay for early childhood teachers. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the relevant Minister, the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, has not joined us in the House for this discussion. It is a great shame that he has not done so. It is important for Ministers who have direct responsibility for an issue to be present to hear about the matters that people in the gallery have worked so hard to represent through their petition.

I congratulate the Independent Education Union [IEU] on continuing to take the fight to the Government. I do so with a great deal of honesty. It is important to record in *Hansard* that certainly when I was the Minister for Community Services and had responsibility for this area, the fight was passionate and forthright. I hope the O'Farrell Government will not view the early childhood sector in a manner similar to its approach to the broader school sector, where \$1.7 billion in cuts have been slated for schools in the private, independent and public sectors. It seems to me that actions often speak louder than words, and I fear the fight of people in the gallery will be a long one on this particular issue. Parents and teachers know that children learn more in their first years than at any other time in their lives. That is why people who work in the early childhood sector deserve parity of pay. It is important to recognise that the most important time to invest in children's education is not at the older end but in the part of a child's lifecycle that is referred to as early childhood—the part that people in the gallery work at developing.

We all know inherently and through research that investment in the early part of a child's life can give children benefits such as a love of learning that will carry them forward throughout their lives. For many people, a love of learning brings with it a life of choices and opportunities. We know that children who experience early childhood education fare much better than children who do not when they reach kindergarten and primary school. In conclusion, I reiterate that the Opposition will continue to support early childhood teachers and workers during their campaign. I thank people in the gallery for allowing us to be part of this debate. I also thank them for allowing some of us to visit their preschools.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [4.53 p.m.]: I thank the member for Marrickville for presenting the petition. The care and education of our littlest learners is a special responsibility. The New South Wales Government is committed to delivering quality early childhood education and care services for all children and is working across a number of fronts to make this happen. The member for Marrickville asks for in principle support for this petition. She has mine to the extent of ensuring that the Federal Government understands its responsibilities to support funding for this claim.

The New South Wales Government is working towards the goal of universal access to a preschool program for all children in the year before they start school. Simply attending an early childhood centre is not enough to ensure that children have better developmental outcomes. The quality of the experience is critical to delivering the benefits. Central to that proposition is the importance of trained, experienced early childhood educators and teachers. The current campaign organised by the Independent Education Union is basically about equating salaries across a part of the sector with salaries paid to staff in preschools that are operated by the Department of Education and Communities. As we are all aware, salaries in Department of Education and Communities preschools are driven by the salaries paid to teachers in government schools generally. They reflect the outcome of a negotiating process between the department and its employees.

The point to be made is that the determination of wages and conditions is properly a matter between employers and employees, with Fair Work Australia involved when necessary. The New South Wales Government does not set working conditions for early childhood teachers and educators. The Government regulates for a wide range of standards across different children's services settings, but wages for workers that the Government does not employ are outside its remit. The Government recognises the importance of having quality early childhood teachers engaging with our little ones, and is investing in the quality of those teachers. The Government provides assistance by upskilling these workers as the best way for New South Wales to entrench quality in the sector.

This is also the best way we can contribute to raising the value of the workforce—and the pay and conditions of educators. Recently Minister Piccoli announced a range of initiatives to progress our early childhood education agenda through offers of scholarships for further training and TAFE NSW fee waivers. The workers who benefit from those initiatives will be in a stronger position when it comes to negotiating their wages and conditions. New South Wales also has signed up to a National Early Years Workforce Strategy. But what is needed is a strong Commonwealth commitment to support funding of the strategy. It is disappointing that so far the Commonwealth has been reluctant to commit any funding to implement the National Early Years Workforce Strategy.

The gains we have made have involved close collaboration between governments on targets, strategies and, critically, funding. We need Commonwealth Government support to continue beyond the end of the current partnership agreements in 2013. We want the Commonwealth Government to stay engaged and to work in partnership with us. Our communities expect governments to collaborate in their best interests and to work together on shared goals. The New South Wales Government's goal is to deliver quality early childhood education and care services for all children and it is working on a number of fronts to make this happen.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.56 p.m.], by leave: Something is not quite right here. That is what some of the material produced by the Independent Education Union shouts to us. Teachers are teachers according to the union campaign, but what we have heard from the Government is that while teachers are teachers in principle, in practice they are not. We Greens strongly support the union campaign and I take this opportunity to congratulate and support all those people in the gallery who have made a contribution to bringing this petition to the House. It is incredibly important that the House hears from them, from carers, from parents, from teachers and from support staff that this is a very important issue.

As a former mayor of Leichhardt Municipal Council I worked very closely with long day childcare centres. My mother and my sister are teachers in the primary school sector and I know from personal experience how important teachers are regardless of the age of the students they are teaching and where they teach. That is why this campaign is so important and why I am supporting it very strongly today. It is not just the qualifications, experience and skills of early childhood teachers that need to be reflected in their pay packets every week; it is the respect they deserve. As every member has said, these are the important years in the development of the children of this State and this country.

These are years that the evidence demonstrates without fail are critical for developing the foundations of education for the future of students as they move through primary school and high school and beyond. They are the basis for lifelong learning. We have heard that pay parity is nice in principle but that it is the Federal Government's problem. It is the Federal Government's responsibility to participate just as it is the State Government's responsibility, but there is an opportunity now for the State Government to say very strongly that it is not just a matter of principle and to put some money on the table and make a commitment. The State Government should put some money on the table to bring the State and Federal governments together to try to deliver an outcome.

The mechanism is not as has been claimed some means by which the State Government pays people who are not on its payroll. The mechanism is quite clear from the "Teachers are Teachers" campaign: Fund every community-based long day care service and preschool with an additional \$20,000 for each teacher they are required to employ under the Education and Care Services National Regulations to allow pay parity to be achieved. There is a clear mechanism and it is a wonderful opportunity for both the Commonwealth Government, which often tries to shirk its responsibilities and push them onto State governments, and the State Government to take the initiative. I call on the State Government to take the initiative in its negotiations and go forward with the Federal Government and make sure that the principle is translated into real money that real people delivering real services will benefit from.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [4.59 p.m.], by leave: I thank the member for Marrickville for raising this issue in the House today. I have absolutely no doubt that early childhood education and care is a high priority for all members in this House. As a former teacher I understand why we need to ensure that our young children get the very best education in their early years. Early childhood teachers are the integral part of this education. I assure those teachers in my electorate that they have my in-principle support. The teachers at the forefront of our preschools and long day care centres are just so important. I congratulate them on their petition, which we are now debating.

As other members have said, the children of New South Wales are very well prepared as they begin their school lives, which reflects the high standard of our early childhood teachers and their hard and diligent

work. I have visited a number of preschools and long day care centres in the Port Macquarie electorate, including St Joseph's Preschool and Long Day Care Centre. I have also received numerous letters from parents across the electorate who have raised concerns about the pay disparity that we are discussing. I assure all those parents and the teachers at our preschools and long day care centres they have my support. I look forward to working in partnership to achieving their goal of pay parity as well as other issues of concern.

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [5.02 p.m.], by leave: I congratulate all the people in the gallery for their outstanding petition and the great work they have done to bring it to the table. What they see today is that both sides of the House are in violent agreement about how we need to move this process forward. I know that we have an allocation of \$137 million from the Federal Government under the national partnership program for this financial year. That effectively goes out to the organisations that the people in the gallery work with and for to be distributed as they see fit, whether for development projects or to enhance the capability within their organisations.

That is the only mechanism that we can influence in some way, shape or form in a monetary sense. I can assure the people in the gallery from a personal perspective—I do not speak on behalf of the Minister for Education but I have spoken with him at length about this issue—that we will fight in a bipartisan way in this House to put as much pressure as we possibly can on the Commonwealth Government to ensure that they all receive the appropriate pay parity that they require and deserve for the outstanding work they do. They have my personal guarantee that I will fight very hard to ensure we do that. I congratulate them all for coming here today.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MOREE SESQUICENTENARY

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales) [5.06 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a very important milestone in my electorate, and indeed my home town. This year marks the sesquicentenary of the gazettal of Moree, which in my slightly biased opinion is one of the best country towns in New South Wales. Moree is the home of the Kamilaroi people, whose descendants still reside in the town and the surrounding area. The town is named after a Kamilaroi word meaning "long waterhole". While Moree was officially gazetted a town in 1862, squatters had a presence in the area from at least 1835. However, it was the arrival in 1851 of James and Mary Brand, who built a general store, that proved to be the catalyst for the ongoing settlement of the area.

Notable milestones in the following decades included the building of the first church in 1867, the first bank in 1876, and the opening of a rail line to Sydney in 1897. It was the rich, black soil plains of Moree that ensured the growth and prosperity of the town, with agriculture soon becoming the town's predominant industry. Cotton, wheat, and a thriving sheep and cattle and livestock industry ensured the continued growth of the town throughout the twentieth century, despite repeatedly having to overcome the ravages of drought and flood. In recent times the agricultural sector has diversified, with the town now home to the largest pecan nut farm in the Southern Hemisphere. Today, Moree proudly stands as the most productive agricultural shire in Australia.

Moree also has produced many notable citizens of this great State, including the first female Justice of the High Court, Mary Gaudron, two-times world triathlon champion Emma Moffatt and, more recently, Aboriginal Olympian and champion boxer Cameron Hammond. Moree has a lot to celebrate and it has been doing so throughout the year, particularly at the official sesquicentenary celebrations in April. The milestone was marked by a number of events, including a proclamation horse ride replicating the original proclamation of the town from Willow Tree to Moree, a static display at Banquet Hall, a photo display of Aboriginal history and Indigenous servicemen at Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre, and a centenary time capsule display at the community library. Today we announced a grant allocation to the Dhiyaan Centre and it will become the first Indigenous family connection centre based on its archival records of Aboriginal family history in this State. I hope that will become a template for other Indigenous communities around the State.

The celebrations culminated with a street parade, including representatives of descendants of original settlers to the district, historic sites guided walks and the final leg of the proclamation horse ride re-enactment. I was extremely humbled to be a part of the celebrations. I extend my congratulations to the entire Moree community on celebrating and showcasing its long, proud history and to the committee, which worked for more

than two years to put in place a celebration that would itself be remembered as a key part of the town's history. Moree has been my home for almost 20 years. I have worked there, raised a family there and now it is an honour to be in Parliament as an elected representative of this wonderful community. I congratulate everybody whose ingenuity, foresight and community spirit has made Moree the town it is today. The town has a significant and strong future, and I look forward to celebrating its inevitable achievements in the years to come.

NSW VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.]: On Sunday 8 July I proudly represented the Minister for Police and Emergency Services at the annual event at Colo Heights known as Navshield. After a lovely trip up the Putty Road with my wife, Wendy, we presented awards to many award recipients. I also had the pleasure of meeting Keith Maxwell, who was able to give me a run-down on the annual Navshield event, which has now been running for 20 years. Navshield is run by the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad, who are part of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. They are well known to members who represent rural electorates but not quite so well known in the Sydney metropolitan area. The Volunteer Rescue Association undertakes emergency work on behalf of communities similar to the State Emergency Service but does not receive similar funding.

Navshield events help educate volunteers attached to the Volunteer Rescue Association in the art of orienteering to assist them in their role when rescuing people lost in rural bushland areas. The Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad is the oldest group in the Volunteer Rescue Association, being formed originally in the early 1930s by Paddy Pallin. The cost of running the Navshield event each year is funded through the State Rescue Board's budget for cross-service training. I had the pleasure of meeting Harvey Black, the Deputy Commissioner and Director of Training for the Volunteer Rescue Association. He advised me that on the previous weekend he and 30 other members of emergency services across New South Wales met in the Blue Mountains to investigate better management techniques for vertical rescue, which was a large step forward for this type of rescue in New South Wales.

Although there are some specialist Volunteer Rescue Association squads in the Sydney metropolitan region, most are in rural areas. NSW Volunteer Rescue Association provides extensive rescue capabilities for people in the vast rural areas of our State and they do this in a cost-efficient manner given the different groups such as the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad are all run and operated by volunteers. There are 51 general land rescue squads dealing mainly with road rescue incidents but they also have capabilities to deal with day-to-day rescues. There is a cave rescue unit, two communications groups, two support units, the Ski Patrol Association, the National Association for Loss and Grief and a first aid group. However, funding is always an issue.

The Volunteer Rescue Association owns very little in assets. It owns four vehicles, numerous computers and copiers, et cetera; however, there are no buildings or offices and the executives all work from their own premises. Executive members are also hands-on members who attend to various rescue requirements in their respective areas. The association receives \$1.3 million in funding from the New South Wales State Government each year. However, this is used primarily to fund insurances just to keep the different groups viable and active. Major sponsorship is obtained from the NRMA, which provides uniforms and safety equipment. The Volunteer Rescue Association receives some funding from local councils but raises the majority of its funds through external activities just to remain operational.

Given the benefits gained by our rural communities through the protection and support provided by the different groups within the Volunteer Rescue Association, it is perhaps high time our State Government recognised the work these groups undertake and, during the current review into the funding of emergency services, endeavoured to specify some appropriate funding level to assist these wonderful people in continuing the important role they play. I commend to all members the work undertaken by the different groups under the Volunteer Rescue Association banner. I thank them for their dedication and commitment, which is protecting life and property. On behalf of the people of New South Wales, I commend the Volunteer Rescue Association as a very worthy association.

NORWEST BUSINESS PARK

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [5.14 p.m.]: One of western Sydney's great economic success stories in recent years has been the rapid growth of the Norwest Business Park, which I am proud to have in my electorate of Baulkham Hills. From humble beginnings the Norwest Business Park has become a

thriving and dynamic business district. It is now home to some of Australia's largest companies and institutions, such as Woolworths, Resmed and the Reserve Bank of Australia, as well as hundreds of small- to medium-sized enterprises. I am glad to report that the Norwest Business Park's recent pattern of excellence and growth seems certain to continue into the future, with several very exciting developments in the pipeline. Only recently, at the Australian Hotels Association national awards, Norwest Business Park's Crowne Plaza Hotel was given the award for best four-star hotel accommodation in the nation.

Naturally, the most significant development will be North West Rail Link, and we will see the construction of the Norwest railway station and Bella Vista station in the park. This is a much-needed piece of infrastructure for The Hills and it will do wonders for the appeal of the business park as a centre of commerce. It was with great pleasure that I recently joined the Minister for Transport to witness the first demolition as part of the rail link's construction at the site that will become Norwest railway station. It was very satisfying to see this tangible event, given the amount of anxiety that the Gillard Government's irresponsible decision not to support the North West Rail Link caused in my electorate.

Norwest Business Park will be welcoming the first students of the Norwest Graduate School of Business next February. The Norwest Graduate School of Business will provide members of the business fraternity access to practical and relevant courses in the heart of this active economic hub. The University of Notre Dame Australia should be loudly commended for its vision and commitment to education in supporting this important project. Another great development has been the opening of the Norwest Private Hospital, which has gone from strength to strength since it opened. The private hospital has become a well-regarded part of The Hills shire, in particular due to its commitment to exceptional patient care.

As members can see, it is exciting times in the Norwest Business Park. The park will continue to grow at a rapid pace, which is great news for the local economy, not to mention the rest of our State. Over the next few years the park will slowly grow to accommodate a further 15,000 employees, meaning that a total of 35,000 employees will be working in the park. Such growth will require innovative strategies to ensure that the Norwest Business Park can compete with other business destinations, not just in Australia but also internationally.

To this end it is my belief that we should begin a debate in The Hills about the merits of having a heliport in the Norwest Business Park. Such a move will give Norwest the edge in attracting large multinational firms. A heliport will make the business park more accessible and practical to such large enterprises. Of course, there will have to be regulations about hours of operation to ensure that the local community is not adversely disrupted. A small heliport for the Norwest Business Park might be a great asset for The Hills shire and is something that we should consider as a possibility. Such an innovative approach may well set the north-west apart and ensure that the park's stellar growth continues into the future.

TEMPE HOUSE

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [5.18 p.m.]: It is my pleasure to speak about a remarkable piece of historical architecture in my electorate of Rockdale. Those of us who frequently make the journey through Rockdale along the Princes Highway into the city will notice as they cross Cooks River the magnificent Tempe House. I have no doubt that the member for Canterbury and the member for Marrickville will join me in recognising the iconic nature of Tempe House. As with a number of buildings and sites throughout Rockdale, Tempe House is of immense historic and cultural value to contemporary Australians. Before the house was designed by the renowned architect John Verge and constructed in the early 1830s, prominent local businessmen Alexander Brodie Spark purchased the site in 1826 for £100.

Within 10 years Tempe House went from housing six residents to 31, living and working on the 12-acre site. Tempe House maintains the character and period charm it embodied when it was first built. The northern entrance boasts intact cedar French doors leading to the symmetrical semicircle verandahs, heavy panelled front doors, wide verandahs to the side with columns, and chimneys on the roof that lead to marble fireplaces within Tempe House.

The interior has been restored with high ornate ceilings and magnificent entertaining areas, all retaining the original charm. The view of the manicured lawns stretches down to the Cooks River and the lovely outlook is captured through many of the rooms. The main hallway and the verandah that encircles the front of the house are ideal for viewing the grounds. Tempe House is surrounded by beautiful green landscaped gardens, with Mount Olympus eucalypts featuring prominently on the eastern side of the property. Named after the Vale of

Tempe in Greece, the gardens of Tempe House are a beautiful reminder of our natural surroundings in the Rockdale electorate. Throughout the property, there are magnificent views overlooking the Cooks River. The property also features St Magdalene's Chapel, built half a century after Tempe House.

The red brick and sandstone facade with its high stained-glass windows stands out as a visually impressive reminder of architecture to come out of the nineteenth century. The tall and steep roof is affixed with a cross at the top, making it all the more aesthetically pleasing. As one look across the grounds from the north-eastern boundary, one is reminded of two different worlds that stand in stark contrast to one another, yet both are indicative of human accomplishment and architectural achievement. We have the immaculately maintained Tempe House, characteristic of early Australian colonial architecture juxtaposed with a modern contemporary skyline of the Wolli Creek apartments and growing urban area. It is a suburb of people that, like so many who have occupied Tempe House over the years, has established themselves in a part of Sydney that has so much to offer.

Tempe House has had famous occupants. One such notable occupant was the philanthropist Caroline Chisholm, who resided in Tempe House following the death of Alexander Brodie Spark. In the 1860s, she transformed the House into a place of education for young women before it reverted into a private residence in the 1870s. Entrenched in the history of Tempe House is not only the beautiful natural surroundings and unique architectural design, but also the preservation of an historic building that local residents admire and have grown to love and appreciate in their region. In recent memory, we have seen recognition of the history of Tempe House with the naming of surrounding streets: Brodie Sparks Drive, Magdalene Terrace and Mount Olympus Boulevard. I thank all of those who have allowed Tempe House to remain intact over the years and thus remain an integral part of our local and national history.

TRIBUTE TO MR JAMES CHAN

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.23 p.m.]: I share with members the great contributions of the Chairman of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and my great friend Mr James Chan to the Chinese community of south-west Sydney and the greater Chinese community. James Chan has served as the President of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for the past nine years. He has recently finished his last term and has moved on to the chairmanship, leaving the day-to-day running in the hands of his capable successor Mr Vincent Kong, who I know will carry on the great work of the Australian Buddhist association. The Australian Chinese Buddhist Society administers the Mingyue Lay Temple in Bonnyrigg, which if not the largest is one of the largest Chinese Buddhist temples in metropolitan Sydney and one of the most popular for worshippers of the Buddhist religion.

James' association with the society began some 20 years ago when he used to drive his late mother to the Buddhist meetings of the society. At that time, the society met in a small fibro house: a humble place for a humble community. Dharma functions were attended by many devotees and community members, and the society was able to gradually consolidate its funds to build the sprawling main shrine that is within the temple today. After the sad passing of his mother, James made a promise to join the society and contribute every effort into growing and developing the temple for the community. During James's time as president, many important projects for the temple have been completed. One of the most important has been the installation of a lift for the main shrine. Many of the faithful worshippers of the Buddhist religion in my community are elderly and mobility is an issue. Some worshippers are wheelchair bound and some need assistance walking. The installation of this lift has given everyone access to the main shrine for prayers and chanting services.

Another important project that has come to fruition during James' time has been the construction of a new statue dedicated to Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. This finely cut stone statue stands in the temple grounds overlooking followers and visitors. As I said previously, many of the attendees are senior in age and transport can be a problem, so the society provides a free shuttle service from Cabramatta station to the temple on special religious occasions such as Chinese New Year, the Hungry Ghost Festival and the first and fifteenth day of each month. However, not all achievements need to be tangible. It has been great to see the temple under James Chan's leadership welcome all cultures. The temple regularly welcomes visitors from public and private schools with a predominantly Anglo demographic such as Pymble Ladies College.

It is not the aim of the temple to convert young people, but to teach them what Buddhism aspires to so their eyes can be opened to a new culture and to show them that different religions can co-exist with the help of tolerance and respect. Many schools have made the trip to Bonnyrigg to see the temple. James Chan and countless other community leaders have conducted enormous fundraising events whenever natural disasters

have occurred. This spirit of generosity serves as a great example to us all, and we must never forget to give to those in greatest need. As one of the leaders of the Chinese Association of Greater Western Sydney, James helps to organise the Chinese New Year celebrations in Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta every year with lion dances and prayers conducted for blessings for all in the community.

Five minutes is not enough time to talk about all the contributions that James Chan has made to our community in Cabramatta, and it would be remiss of me if I did not mention the sacrifices he has made. James' wife, Jenny, has been the backbone of the family and James' pillar of strength. She has managed the family business, Chan's Canton Village, while James has helped served the community. She and their children, Anthony and Beverley, deserve mention for the sacrifices they have made. It would not be possible for James to have helped so many without Jenny's steadfast support. As James Chan moves on to the Chairmanship of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, I wish him continued success. I know that the community comes first in his heart, and as his friend I thank him for his ongoing support for our community in Greater Western Sydney.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.28 p.m.]: October has been a busy month for the residents of Wollondilly and the surrounding regions. I will bring to the attention of the House the great community spirit shown by our local community. Over the past few weekends there have been several community fundraising events in the Wollondilly region. In particular, three notable community events have displayed the great community spirit that is alive and well in the Macarthur region. Last weekend the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer was held at the Campbelltown athletics stadium. Later that same evening, the Wollondilly community banded together to raise much-needed funds for breast cancer.

On 7 October the fourth annual Walk for Sarah was held, which is an initiative organised by the Sarah Hilt Foundation to raise money for local resident and friend Sarah Hilt. Sarah is a courageous Wollondilly resident. After contracting meningococcal in 2004 at 19 years of age, Sarah lost both her legs, her left arm, her fingers and thumb from her right hand. She has spent considerable time in hospital and undergone numerous operations, including a kidney transplant, as she fights this disease. The Sarah Hilt Foundation and the Walk for Sarah initiative was set up to help Sarah buy prosthetics, afford ongoing medical treatment and assist her with living a full, independent life. Her short-term goal is to purchase new feet with an ankle position that can be set to accommodate different shoes for better balance and stability.

The walk helps raise much-needed funds and brings awareness of the meningococcal disease to the local community and the wider Australian public. This year, 400 local community members turned up to support Sarah and her foundation. I am proud of the spirit and compassion the local community has shown Sarah and her family through their ongoing support. Through her struggle, she has become a role model in our community. She often donates a lot of her time to speak to young people, to share her experiences and to tell them that they can achieve anything in life. Adversity is one thing, but determination is another. I very much value her spirit. The support displayed at the event reminds us how wonderful the community is.

The second community event was the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer Macarthur, which took place last weekend on 20 and 21 October. It was great to see the member for Camden, the member for Campbelltown and the member for Macquarie Fields taking part, as well as the Premier. This annual walk involves sponsoring people who have cancer or who have been affected by it to walk laps around Campbelltown stadium for 24 hours, and 100 per cent of the money raised goes to support the Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre, Campbelltown Hospital's Paediatric Ambulatory Service and Oncology ward and Camden Hospital's Palliative Care Unit and Palliative Day Hospital. The funds will provide these services with extra equipment to assist in the treatment and care of children and adults dealing with cancer and to provide them with comfort. The event focuses not only on raising funds to support cancer patients and facilities in the Macarthur region, but also acknowledges carers, loved ones, health professionals and everyone else involved in the fight against cancer.

I am proud to say that this year's turnout was the biggest yet with nearly 1,500 participants and 500 spectators showing their support, including nearly 200 cancer survivors and their carers taking part in the opening lap. At this year's event the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer Macarthur raised nearly \$250,000, bringing its total fundraising amount to nearly \$2 million over eight years. I take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers, participants and supporters of both events on their success over the past few weekends and encourage them to continue their support of these worthy causes. As I said earlier, the Premier attended for the second time, and walked laps for the second year while spending time with the community. This is the second year the New South Wales Government has contributed funds to the event, with the Premier this year donating \$5,000 to this worthy cause.

In wrapping up another big month in Wollondilly, the same night I attended a local breast cancer charity night with the Deputy Mayor of Wollondilly, Benn Banasik, along with councillors Michael Banasik and newly elected councillor Lou Amato. This successful night was organised by Leanne Costello and her team. After their friend Cheryl Peters died from breast cancer they wanted to do something not just to help local families but to also help all those who had been touched by breast cancer. It was a fantastic evening at Picton Bowling Club. The room was filled to capacity with people demonstrating that the Wollondilly community spirit is alive and well. I thank each and every one of them for their efforts for the people of Wollondilly.

CAMDEN RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [5.33 p.m.]: Today I speak about the wonderful 2012 Camden Rotary Relay For Life, which was held recently at Onslow Oval in Camden. This annual event is always well supported by our local community to raise much-needed funds for cancer research. Relay For Life is an overnight, community event involving teams walking relay-style on the sports track to raise funds for the Cancer Council. The event brings the whole community together for a night of fun, entertainment, celebration and remembrance. A team member walks around the oval continuously. Rotarians from all around the district, including those from Camden, Narellan and Picton Rotary clubs, assisted in making the event such a success. Most members were on duty throughout the event and many volunteers also assisted to make the day a success. The relay is about the local community spending the weekend together competing in fun ways in teams to raise money. This year's event raised more than a massive \$140,000.

The weekend's entertainment began with Tash Hodges singing the national anthem. The entertainment continued with the Campbelltown Camden marching band, Campbelltown Camden big band, Leah Cassar Voice Production, which provided some wonderful performers, Camden Community big band, Magdalene College master plan, Voiceology Australia and Somerset music performers. I thank the Camden Rotary committee, which worked tirelessly to make sure this event was another success: Chairman Rowan Moore, OAM, Peter Claxton, Greg Eagles, Chris Evans, Bruce Farquharson, Aaron Hodges, Stephen Humphreys, John Lee, Kevyn Moore, Ashleigh Moss, Ross Newport, Carla Nielson, Alan Redman, Rob Elliott, Ralph Rossteuscher, Cindy Cagney, Brian Franzman, Tania Franzman and John Saunderson. Petra Williams, the Cancer Council coordinator, also assisted. I thank every team involved and mention them individually since each individual is the reason for the relay's success.

Participating teams included the NAB Stars, Dart West Wanderers, Camden Rotary Committee Fundraising Team, Camden LAC Police, Jan's Wonderful Walkers, KC and PX3 2, Pandora, Macarthur Chronicle, Out-Fit, Circus of Friends, Team Spider, Mawarra Movers, Austral Pharmacy, Macarthur Soccer Club Challenge, 1st-timers, Travelscene Camden, UWS Camden Residential College, Camden Anglican Girls, Macarthur Anglican School, The Rockets, Camden Survivors of Breast Cancer, Team Den, Odd Bods, KC and PX3, Team Pedro, Emai and Friends, Camden Anglican Men, Footprints, Year 10 Magdalene A, Wonder Walkers, Camden South Public School, Rosemeadow Public School, Summit Fitness, Jans Wonderful Walkers 2, KC and PX 3, Camden Show, For Poppy, Lifestyle and Sports Physiotherapy, Franzman inc, Friends For Life 2, Silver Star Fitness, Laps 4 Love, Team Tony, Camden Cancer Crusaders, Southwest Wellness Centre, The A Team, 1st Camden South Scout Group, Friends For Life!, Inglis Property Macarthur, Circus of Friends 2, Cooper Troopers, Camden Inner Wheel, Year 10 Magdalene B, Camden CWA and Friends, YMCA Mount Annan Leisure Centre, Circus of Friends 3, Narellan Sand and Soil, Oran Park Town, Live Love Dream and Camden Public School.

Other teams were second teams of the same name and included Austral Pharmacy 2, YMCA Mount Annan Leisure Centre 2, Team Matheson, Wonder Walkers 2, Blooms the Chemist, Franzman inc 2, Camden Anglican girls 2, Loved Ones, Kazzas brigade to inspire, Pets at Peace, Envision Health and Fitness, White Lady Funerals, Silver Star Fitness 2, Macarthur Soccer Club Challenge 2, Camden Rotary 2, Laps 4 Love 2, Summit Fitness 2, Team Pedro 2, 1st Camden Scout Group 2, Camden Survivors of Breast Cancer 2, Cooper Troopers 2, Camden South Public School 2, Macarthur Anglican School 2, Brownies, Camden LAC Police 2, UWS Campbelltown Residential College 2, KC and PX3 4, Camden Golf Club, The Avengers/Lizzy Mac, Camden Golf Club 2, Lifestyle and Physiotherapy 2, Petras Team, Teenage Mutant Ninja Runners, Team Moore, Camden Golf Club 3 and On the Day 2. I thank also the event sponsors for their support: National Australia Bank, Rotary International, Travelscene Camden, American Express [AMEX], Michelle Roffe Funeral Services, Nepean Engineering, TRN Group, Camden Council, CPE Tree Services and Dart West Developments. The event was a huge success. I will save the names of every one of the 1,500 who participated for my next private member's statement.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.38 p.m.]: The Government also recognises the contributions of the three remaining organisations, schools and two businesses in the south-west area of western Sydney that the member for Camden has not mentioned.

EGGTOBER FOUNDATION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [5.39 p.m.]: The Eggtober Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation doing amazing things to raise awareness of gynaecological cancers. I was first introduced to the Eggtober Foundation by local constituent Catherine Potter, who is heavily involved in the organisation. I had previously heard of Eggtober, but I did not know much about it. I was keen to offer my support after learning of the foundation's work to raise awareness of gynaecological cancers and to educate women on some common warning signs. Gynaecological cancers have a low public profile compared to other cancer types and, consequently, the real picture goes unnoticed. Earlier this year the member for Macquarie Fields spoke about Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. He commented that corporate and public funding is low for gynaecological cancers, and that community support for sufferers is negligible partly because there are so few survivors and partly because of its low profile compared to other cancers.

In contrast, this month members heard about Breast Cancer Awareness Month, its high profile and the widespread support it receives. We should raise awareness of this silent killer. Eggtober has chosen to link the cause, quite sensibly, to October. I am grateful to the many members of Parliament who wore their egg badges today, which is why it was so important for me to bring this to the attention of the House. In April each year the Eggtober Foundation hosts the Purple Tie Charity Event to raise much-needed funds for research. The foundation also aims to improve service delivery in the detection and treatment of gynaecological cancers through the purchase of equipment and supplies for doctors and patients. The foundation was started by Lynda Chamberlain, who watched her own mother die from ovarian cancer in 2005 and, within months, was diagnosed with the same cancer. Fortunately, Lynda's cancer was discovered early and her treatment was successful. Realising the importance of an early diagnosis, Lynda has since made it her mission to raise awareness of this silent killer and to improve the survival rate of ovarian cancer in New South Wales.

The Eggtober Foundation primarily raises funds to support gynaecological cancer units, clinicians, patients, community awareness, education and research. Through further research it is hoped that better detection methods can be developed and that one day there will be a cure. Gynaecological cancers are cancers that start in a women's reproductive system. Most people would not be aware that gynaecological cancers are the fourth most common form of cancer in women and the fifth most common form causing premature death in women. These cancers are known as silent killers because they are often diagnosed at an advanced stage when prognosis is poor. Survival rates for ovarian cancer are often less than 40 per cent, which means that far too many women have their lives cut short by this disease. Interestingly, only 5 per cent to 10 per cent of women who develop ovarian cancer have an hereditary or family component and most ovarian cancers develop sporadically with no rhyme or reason.

Each year in New South Wales approximately 364 women develop ovarian cancer and 235 women will eventually die from it. It becomes more common with age, particularly as we reach 50, and in those who have gone through menopause. Family history is the next most important risk factor, especially if one's family members are affected at an early age. Regular pap smear tests have helped with early detection of cervical cancer. The aim of a smear test is to prevent cervical cancer, but it can also sometimes detect a cancer that has already developed before the patient develops symptoms. Surprisingly, uterine cancer remains one of the most common cancers affecting women in New South Wales and largely affects older post-menopausal women. In New South Wales the five-year survival rate is 70 per cent. Cancer of the vulva is most commonly diagnosed when it has become an obvious growth on the skin or an ulcerated area, while vaginal cancer forms in the tissues of the vagina or the birth canal.

These cancers are by no means glamorous and they do not attract the support of celebrities or sports people who have been affected. However, they each deserve the same amount of attention. The Eggtober Foundation is committed to improving the survival rates for women, even if the number of women affected is not as great as the number affected by breast cancer or prostate cancer. We have seen the benefits of extensive public support. The survival rate for prostate cancer has improved to 90 per cent and 88 per cent for breast cancer. With increased awareness and support, the Eggtober Foundation believes there is no reason that we cannot achieve similar results for gynaecological cancers. I commend the work of the Eggtober Foundation and thank Mrs Potter, the Eggtober Ambassador, and former New South Wales Leader of the Opposition Kerry Chikarovski for making me aware of this cause. Once again I thank all members for their support today.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE BOWLING CLUBS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [5.44 p.m.]: A constituent of mine recently told me that he enjoyed a social drink every Friday night at the St Ives Bowling Club, or "the bowlers" as he calls it. When asked how many years he had played lawn bowls, he surprisingly said he had never played but that he would when he was old. This gentleman is 83. That got me thinking about who does play lawn bowls. There are more than 280,000 lawn bowlers in Australia. That is perhaps not many when one compares it with the number of people who play soccer, netball or rugby. However, it is a large number when one considers that 90 per cent of players are more than 45 years old.

In contrast with more popular sports where participation rates decline progressively with age, the lawn bowls participation rate climbs steadily, with 52.8 per cent of players aged over 65 and an average age of 65 years. That is not to say younger people are not increasingly attracted to the sport. These days, barefoot bowls and even speed-dating bowls are popular events, introducing our Gen Ys and Xs to the game. In fact, social, corporate and school programs are the growth segment in Australian bowls, which has led to a 7.3 per cent growth between 2010 and 2011. There are nearly 250,000 non-playing members of bowls clubs throughout Australia who join for the social interaction that their local club provides.

I have five bowling clubs in my electorate of Davidson: Lindfield under President Leo Vilensky; Roseville under President Phil Lewis; Killara under Chairman Ian Armstrong; St Ives under Chairman Michael Doyland; and Belrose under Chairman Allan Hanson. Another three clubs border my electorate and many of my constituents are members. These are Forestville with RSL President Bruce Chisnall overseeing four bowling groups; Gordon with Chairman Ron Harvey; and Turrumurra with Chairman Harvey Fuller. All these clubs form vital connections to our community and often do not receive the recognition they deserve. I ask members to think of another sport that pulls teenagers, baby boomers and octogenarians together under the same roof. Indeed, in how many other mainstream sports do men and women compete with each other and against each other? In playing bowls friendships are made easily, whether players are competing at high levels in starched white uniforms or while playing socially in bare feet and shorts. It can be a team or individual sport, and low impact enough to include people with disabilities or creaking bones.

There is no question lawn bowls is unique—as unique as Cyril Sutton from Pymble. Mr Sutton is one of Australia's oldest drivers, boasting an unblemished driving record for 80 years. Mr Sutton plays with many of my constituents at Gordon Bowling Club, where he recently celebrated his 100th birthday with family and friends. He took up the game only 17 years ago at 83 years of age. Since then he has won seven titles. He is also a two-time winner of the annual trophy for the most wins and best attendance record. Last year, he and the relatively spritely 93-year-old Flora Potter became the oldest pair to compete in the club's mixed pairs. In what other sport would one find a team of two competitors with combined life experience spanning a phenomenal 193 years? While they did not win their game, with his competitive juices still flowing, Mr Sutton has not ruled out competing in the pairs again.

At the heart of bowling clubs are the volunteers forming the committees and organising the competitions, the fundraising and the social activities. Scores of people give their time in retirement to others to create a thriving hub of social and sporting activity to a broad cross-section of our community. Today I pay tribute to local lawn bowls clubs around the Davidson electorate for giving my constituents and residents of surrounding areas the pleasure and opportunity of continuing to be active, outdoors, interactive, and even competitive with others. Finally, let us not forget the friendships facilitated often at a time of life when friends are needed most.

HOUSING

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [5.49 p.m.]: Yesterday the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure introduced the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2012. The key objective of the legislation is to reduce the barriers to investment in new housing in New South Wales. I fully appreciate this need and I am proud that when I was the mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council our council performed very well in terms of providing land supply by implementing responsible strategic planning processes and by achieving a standard for determination of development applications that was better than State targets.

Provision of housing in an environmentally sustainable way is important and socially responsible because it provides jobs and maintains necessary skills in our communities. Most importantly, it provides sorely needed housing for our growing community and homes for our children and grandchildren and for those who

wish to move to our community to enjoy the wonderful lifestyle. While we await the delivery of a new planning system and legislation, that in itself and the amending bill introduced yesterday will go only so far toward solving the problem. A major impediment—and perhaps the main impediment—to the release of land and building of homes is the lack of infrastructure. The difficulty of delivering new residential subdivisions is illustrated by the Johnson Property Group's North Cooranbong development. This development, which should deliver more than 2,000 home sites over the next 15 to 20 years, is a key component of Lake Macquarie City Council's strategic plan to accommodate growth demand. Indeed, it is recognised as a key release area under the State's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

It is typical for the financing of major developments such as this to depend on staged construction, with the sales of earlier stages funding the construction of subsequent ones. The Johnson Property Group has been proceeding with the North Cooranbong project on this basis and had placed some reliance on Hunter Water Corporation's stated capacity to service approximately 350 lots before developer funding would be required for new regional lead-in sewer works. I can certainly understand the importance of this 350 lot buffer to the developer as a means of forestalling the larger expenditure and the problem that arises when the buffer is substantially reduced after construction has commenced.

I will not espouse a particular view on what level of capacity Hunter Water Corporation should be able to provide for the initial stage of the North Cooranbong development or its responsibility to provide its predicted capacity. However, the provision of sewerage infrastructure is currently a limiting factor in residential expansion in southern parts of the Lake Macquarie electorate and this is a particularly good example of the problem. Hunter Water Corporation had advised Johnson Property Group in writing that it could provide sewerage for approximately 350 lots before significant expenditure was required by the developer. This 350 lot capacity would have given the Johnson Property Group the critical mass necessary to fund construction of the regional lead-in works. However, the Hunter Water Corporation subsequently advised that it can only service 88 lots before major expenditure of over \$12 million becomes necessary. I am advised that this decision places the project in jeopardy.

The North Cooranbong project is a State significant major residential project identified in the New South Wales Government's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. In the absence of an infrastructure plan under this strategy, the Hunter Water Corporation required the Johnson Property Group to prepare a water and wastewater strategy based on optimal servicing arrangements for the North Cooranbong development. That was commenced in 2007 and finalised in May 2008. The estimated value of sewer works is \$12.6 million and for water \$10.3 million. In addition, the Johnson Property Group is also required to contribute approximately \$750,000 to relocate an existing pedestrian bridge crossing Dora Creek to facilitate the sewer crossing of the creek. It is a Roads and Maritime Services-controlled road bridge. The Minister for Transport, who is at the table, would be interested in this.

Up to September 2010, the Hunter Water Corporation spent approximately \$30 million upgrading the Dora Creek Waste Water Treatment Works to ensure its reliability and its capacity to cater for projected population growth within its catchment. This upgrade provided capacity at the treatment works for regional development in the area, including the North Cooranbong development. It does not, however, help with the infrastructure needed to transport the sewage—the mains, pump stations and associated works. North Cooranbong is the largest development in southern Lake Macquarie but it is by no means the only one. I acknowledge the effort of the Hunter Water Corporation's Managing Director, Kim Woods, to achieve a result with Wyee. There is more to be done. I call on the Government to find a solution to the infrastructure deficit in southern Lake Macquarie and I invite the Minister to visit the electorate to discuss the issue with the community, developers and the council.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT LAWRIE

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [5.54 p.m.]: I lament the sad passing of a great man and an outstanding unionist, Mr Robert "Bobby" Lawrie, who passed on 20 October 2012. I first met Bobby in the 1980s when he worked with Ted McAlear, then Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation. At that time the Miscellaneous Workers Union was based in Victoria Street and we shared an office with the Waterside Workers' Federation. Ted McAlear, Bobby, their clerical worker Veronica, my colleagues and I and our great clerical worker Irene Arrowsmith were close friends; we got to know each other very well. At that time the amalgamations had not taken place. Terry Tindale was the Secretary of the Seamen's Union and I represented the Waterfront Watchmen, and together we represented those workers on what was then known as the Ports Committee. It is interesting that today we fight for the protection and public ownership of the port. In the 1980s the fight would have been in a different forum, no doubt.

Bobby was known as a gentleman. He was a very gentle, kind, sweet human being and the beloved husband of his late wife, Gloria, who passed earlier this year. They were a wonderful team who were often seen around Wollongong. They greeted everybody with a smile and genuine affection. Bobby was the adored stepfather of Roger, Isla and Shirley and their partners and a much-loved grandfather and great-grandfather. Because it has been such a long time since Bobby was a union official, many people today would not know who Bobby Lawrie is. That is one of the sad things with the passing of time. Whilst older people are active in the workplace a name is remembered but as new people enter the workplace that memory diminishes. Bobby will never be lost from my memory. Bobby was active at a time when unions in the Illawarra had a touch one, touch all mantra. There was a genuine heartfelt honesty and integrity to work together for the betterment of workers' rights and entitlements. It was the joint position of all those involved.

If I try to recall a time when personality politics outweighed the interest of the movement I cannot. I do not recall it ever happening. I know there were fights internally but they hunted as a pack and the best interest of the movement was always at the forefront of all of our minds. I am often reminded by my dear friend who was an official for the Miners' Federation, now known as the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, that you have to get up and put one foot forward each day. That is the kind of sentiment that carries you through. Bobby and Gloria Lawrie are a great loss to the community. I am happy to have the opportunity to place their names on the record so that in the future their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, rather than just Google Bobby's name, will be able to access a speech in *Hansard* that says positive and lovely things about Bobby and Gloria.

PRINCES HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [5.59 p.m.]: This evening I inform the House of a recent visit to my electorate by Premier Barry O'Farrell. The Premier came to visit my electorate to look at the progression of the roadworks on the Princes Highway, following the major announcement made by the Government when in opposition. That seems like a lifetime ago. The primary reason for the Premier's visit to my electorate was to view current works and what has been achieved so far. A lot has happened since the Government made the announcement in the budget that it would cause real funds to be directed to the Princes Highway at Gerringong.

Stage one of this three-stage project is from Mount Pleasant off the Kiama bends through to Toolijooa. Along with the Premier, a whole bunch of people were loaded onto a bus to tour the roadworks that have occurred so far. We travelled past many of the farms that were the subject of property acquisition in order to progress the project. At this point, I thank all of the Gerringong community for working collaboratively with Roads and Maritime Services to achieve a road improvement that will save lives. Too often I have seen the loss of life that occurs on the Princes Highway. This section of road has all too frequently taken lives, particularly young lives of people who knew and used the local roads frequently.

How excited I was when in Opposition I stood with my good friend, Madam Speaker of the House, the member for South Coast, the Hon. John Ajaka, now the Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Transport, and the current Premier to announce that a Coalition Government would invest \$500 million into the Princes Highway with stage one between Mount Pleasant and Toolijooa at a cost of \$310 million. The current Premier famously said at the time that if he did not deliver people should not vote for him, and to be able to see the work well and truly underway means that I certainly have a message to take to the electorate when I front up for election again in 2015.

Roads and Maritime Services has done an outstanding job and I thank all of the people from the services, such as Brad Turner, who have coordinated it. I thank Fulton Hogan, the contractors of this project that have been doing some wonderful work, particularly Bush Breun and Paul DeBritt, who have made an outstanding contribution to this marvellous project. I could see the Premier was impressed. Having been born in Gerringong, I was proud to look over the largest ever single investment in the history of the Princes Highway with the Premier of New South Wales. Without his support, leadership and encouragement I have no doubt we would not be seeing this wonderful investment in infrastructure in my electorate today. One of the largest projects of any electorate in this State is happening in my electorate, and I am so proud to see it occurring in a place that I call home, and indeed in a town where I grew up. It was indeed a very proud moment.

I thank the Premier most sincerely as somebody who has supported and argued the case for this project at every level. Sometimes I know it has been difficult but I thank the Government and in particular the Premier for his unwavering support to ensure that we get the roads in our region that we need. I look forward to seeing future stages of the road supported. I also thank the Deputy Premier who assisted in arguing the case when he

was shadow roads Minister, as well as Duncan Gay as the Minister for Roads and Ports. I think he will be remembered as the one of the best Ministers for roads that this State has ever had. I also thank a number of staff, particularly James Boland-Rudder, who was working in opposition for the current Premier, until recently the chief of staff to the Minister for Roads and Ports and now working for the Premier. I also thank Ben Shine, who works in the office of the Deputy Leader, who was integral in ensuring this project could get across the line.

We have a long way to go and a lot of money has been invested into the Princes Highway. I take this opportunity to commend my friend, the member for South Coast, for a wonderful upgrade at south Nowra occurring at the moment, which will relieve traffic congestion. Anyone who knows the Shoalhaven well knows that that is a particular bottleneck during holiday periods. I know that it will make a huge difference. The next stage is the Berry bypass, which will be an important part of the highway upgrade. It will cost approximately double the investment in stage one. I will continue to advocate for that upgrade as a member of this House because I feel very strongly the need for the Berry bypass.

I understand we need to find the funds to finance this work. In recent weeks we have heard criticism from the Opposition in relation to the need to lease Port Kembla and Port Botany in order to fund these projects. I say again that, unlike the former Government that sold assets and dropped those funds into general revenue, only to fritter that money away on current expenditure, that is not the way this Government will work. We are recycling our assets and realising the full potential of those assets in order to build more infrastructure—vital road infrastructure which will support our district. I thank all the people who have contributed to this program. I sincerely thank my leader and our Premier for his unwavering support and his dedication to a project that has certainly served my electorate well, now and into the future.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.04 p.m. until
Tuesday 13 November 2012 at 12.00 noon.**
