

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 13 November 2012

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12.00 noon.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CORPORAL SCOTT JAMES SMITH

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vacluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.13 p.m.]: Today it is with great sadness that I pay tribute to Corporal Scott James Smith who was killed in action on 21 October 2012. Corporal Smith, a combat engineer with the Special Operations Engineer Regiment, was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated during an operation in northern Helmand province, Afghanistan. Corporal Smith was born in the Barossa Valley, South Australia, in 1988. He was 24 years old when he joined the Army in 2006. After completing his initial employment training, he was posted to the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, Darwin. In 2008 he was posted to the then Incident Response Regiment as a search operator. By all accounts, this young man was an exceptional soldier. He was a highly respected and well-liked combat engineer. He possessed all the qualities of a fine young leader. He was brave and selfless. His unit described him as a genuine, honest and dedicated member, probably one of the best junior non-commissioned officers the unit has seen. His loss will be deeply felt and his sacrifice for our safety will always be remembered and honoured.

Earlier this year Corporal Smith joined the North Bondi RSL Sub-branch. This club, which overlooks the beautiful expanse of beach and white sand at the northern end of Bondi Beach, was founded on 22 March 1944 by some of the original members of the Rats of Tobruk. It is often called Tobruk House, or the Rat House for short. I attended the opening of the North Bondi War Memorial on 27 November 2011. The date was chosen to coincide with the seventieth anniversary of the end of the siege of Tobruk. The memorial is adjacent to North Bondi RSL on Scarborough Crescent and replaces the old, dilapidated war memorial previously located at this site. Since the announcement of Corporal Smith's death, the community has been placing floral tributes on the North Bondi War Memorial. The cultural essence of the new war memorial symbolises the solidarity, unison, courage and spirit of Australian mateship at war. It is a place of quiet solitude and remembrance of those who have stepped up to fight for peace and the safety of our country. Corporal Smith's name and photograph have been added to the Killed-in-Action Honour Roll of the North Bondi RSL Sub-branch.

On 30 October 2012 I joined members of the Special Operations Engineer Regiment, their family and friends, and members of the North Bondi RSL Sub-branch in the laying of a wreath in honour of Corporal Smith. It was a moving service, short and to the point. It was a celebration of a brave life led by a dedicated and highly respected soldier, partner, son and brother. On 7 November 2012, his family, partner, friends and fellow soldiers commemorated his life at a military funeral service that was held in his hometown in the Barossa Valley. Lieutenant Colonel Scott Corrigan, commanding officer of the Special Operations Engineer Regiment, paid homage to Corporal Smith. He said he was one of the unit's very best and "a young man made of something special".

In 2010, as a member of the Special Operations Engineer Regiment based at Holsworthy Barracks, Sydney, Corporal Smith had served with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan. During 2006 he had been deployed to the Solomon Islands with the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. Corporal Smith is survived by his partner, Liv, whom I have met, his parents, Katrina Paterson and Murray Smith, and his sister Roxanne. All those in attendance on 7 November felt their grief. I am sure members from both sides of this Chamber will

join with me in paying respect to a great soldier and wonderful young man who selflessly served his country with tremendous honour and courage in very difficult circumstances. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and unit at this most difficult time. Lest we forget.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.18 p.m.]: I thank the member for Vaucluse for bringing to the attention of the House the important contribution made by Corporal Scott James Smith, who was recently killed in action when an improvised explosive device detonated during an operation in northern Helmand province, Afghanistan. On behalf of the Government and the people of New South Wales, I acknowledge the supreme sacrifice made by Corporal Smith and express our deepest sympathy and appreciation to his family and partner, Liv.

SURF RESCUE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [12.19 p.m.]: On Sunday 11 November 2012 a fisherman was washed off the rocks at Little Bay. The fisherman died; he should not have died. I am proud to say that in the electorate of Maroubra we have a large concentration of surf life saving and rescue personnel who are highly trained, well equipped and well funded. Indeed, they are the most capable rescue and resuscitation personnel on this planet. We have surf clubs at South Maroubra and Maroubra, Randwick City Council lifeguards and the offshore rescue boat at Malabar. There also is the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter at Cape Banks, which received \$800,000 funding from the Keneally Government and another \$1 million funding from the O'Farrell Government. None of these experts are worth anything if they are not called in situations such as this. Although they should always be called, they were not called on this occasion.

This morning I spoke to an eyewitness who was playing golf that morning. He saw three fishermen washed off the rocks and he immediately called 000. Thankfully two of the fishermen were washed back onto the rocks, but the other man remained in the water for 20 minutes. He struggled to stay alive for 15 minutes and then succumbed. Twenty minutes after he was washed into the water a wave delivered him back onto the rocks where the golfer, some other fishermen and a swimmer attempted resuscitation. They say he was unconscious at that time. The golfer was on the phone to the 000 service for the entirety of the event. A CHC helicopter arrived 35 minutes after the initial 000 call had been made.

A 13 telephone number—which I will not state because it is not for public consumption—can be used by rescue departments, police and ambulance services and 000 personnel to contact Surf Life Saving NSW. I will call it the 13 surf life saving number. That number was not called. This morning I spoke to the management of Randwick City Council. Neither the council nor its lifeguards who were on the beach at that time were notified. I also have spoken to Surf Life Saving NSW. They were not notified and the Westpac rescue helicopter was not notified through Surf Life Saving. There is an offshore rescue boat that performs rescues out at sea. It is a highly sophisticated Shark Cat boat manned by expert personnel and has an Oxy-Viva and other resuscitation equipment on board. At the moment this gentleman was fighting for his life that boat was 60 seconds away on the water at Malabar being used for training purposes.

No-one was called. The offshore rescue boat was not notified. Randwick City Council with its jet skis, the surf clubs with their inflatable rescue boats and the Westpac rescue helicopter, which I am told can be in the air in about six minutes, were not notified through the 13 surf life saving number. Why did it take the helicopter 35 minutes to get there? Why was the 13 surf life saving number not called? Were the water police notified? If they had been, perhaps they would have contacted the 13 surf lifesaving number. I know that Surf Life Saving has met with many government departments over the past few months and asked for the 13 surf life saving number to be inserted into standard operating procedures. Has it been so inserted? This man drowned amidst the most densely concentrated population of capable lifesavers on the planet. He died within arm's reach of the people who are the best in the business.

I want answers from the relevant Ministers to the questions that I have asked. I also will write to the Coroner to request a coronial inquest because although I cannot say conclusively, I am told that this is not the first time this situation has occurred. There is massive public interest in this incident. An education campaign should be mounted ferociously by everyone who can participate to educate fishermen. I know education initiatives have occurred, having attended a recent meeting at Bondi with Bob Carr, Senator Matthew Thistlethwaite, Stan Konstantaras from the Amateur Fishing Association, Surf Life Saving representatives and others. But that does not matter in this case. The eyewitness says that this man struggled for his life for 15 minutes when there were surf lifesavers and Randwick City Council lifeguards 60 seconds away. I want a coronial inquest into this matter. I want answers from the Minister. This should not have happened: this man should be alive today but he is dead.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.24 p.m.]: I thank the member for Maroubra for raising this important issue when emergency services were not contacted in a timely manner after fishermen were washed off rocks. As he indicated, after the first 000 call was made it took 35 minutes for the rescue helicopter to arrive. The man struggled for his life for 15 minutes despite the availability of numerous capable lifesavers in the immediate area. This is a matter of genuine concern. I will take it up with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services because incidents like this should not happen.

SOUTH TRALEE REZONING

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [12.25 p.m.]: Last week the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, announced the rezoning of South Tralee. After 10 years of inaction or reluctance by the previous Labor Government, last week the Minister announced a win-win solution for the South Tralee rezoning. Land will be made available for up to 2,000 new homes and public amenities such as sports fields and future public primary and high schools. We call it a win-win decision because at the same time it will allow for the long-term growth and viability of Canberra airport. South Tralee has been arguably one of the most entrenched land-use conflicts to be dealt with by the New South Wales Government.

The previous Labor Government found it too hard to resolve and allowed the issue to drag on for more than a decade. During the 2011 election the rezoning was a hot topic and an issue that was supported by the majority of my community and unanimously by the Queanbeyan City Council. The rezoning is a good decision that will allow for the future growth of another greenfield site. At a time when we have seen many greenfield sites and opportunities for affordable housing arise on the other side of the border in the Australian Capital Territory, we now have an opportunity for an additional 2,000 home sites on the New South Wales side. Added to one of the best first homeowner grants in the country, we will provide an opportunity for Australian Capital Territory residents to move across the border into beautiful Queanbeyan. As I said, it also will bring much-needed public amenities such as sports fields, an aquatic centre, road infrastructure, community halls and future school sites.

I bring to the attention of the House that 18 months ago I was elected on behalf of the people of Monaro and, on this issue, on behalf of the people of Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra. They gave me an opportunity to represent them and a mandate to fight for a decision on an issue that had dragged on for far too long. Unfortunately, over the past two weeks in the media cycle there has been a lot of propaganda and mistruths, especially from opponents to the Tralee decision. Minister Hazzard has ensured that the rezoning will contain key features to allow for housing and, as I said earlier, at the same time allow for Canberra airport to continue to grow and meet its master plan objective.

It will allow the ultimate capacity target of Canberra airport to be achieved, which is to increase to the size of Sydney airport today and to achieve the equivalent of a flight every 1 minute and 57 seconds. Unfortunately, the radio shock jocks who continually disagree with this decision have got it wrong. The facts are clear that not a single house in the South Tralee rezoning will be built under a flight path, but that is not what we have heard in recent media. I also note that the previous member for Monaro who now resides in the upper House, the Hon. Steve Whan, in early July 2011 attacked me and said that I was not standing up for my community. He said that "Mr Barilaro staked his candidacy on the approval of the Tralee development". He went on to say:

John Barilaro campaigned on delivering the Tralee development to meet the housing needs of the wider Queanbeyan and has failed abysmally at the very first hurdle. Mr Barilaro is returning the Monaro community already to the bad old days of National representation ...

Over the course of the next week or so I hope to receive an apology from the Hon. Steve Whan. Maybe during an adjournment speech in the upper House he will have the opportunity to acknowledge the work that I have done as the local member to bring about this announcement. I would love to receive an apology for what I believe are false statements. I was able to do in 18 months what he was not able to do in eight years as the member for Monaro and as a Minister in the previous Government.

I also note that the Federal member for Eden-Monaro, the Hon. Dr Mike Kelly, said that "the member for Monaro, John Barilaro, made an election commitment to ensure the Tralee development would be approved following his election and he has broken his promise". Dr Mike Kelly owes me and the communities of Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra an apology because we have delivered on Tralee. We have made a win-win decision and got on with the job of delivering infrastructure and affordable housing. At the same time we have

ensured that we do not impact on the future growth of Canberra airport. I look forward to a public apology from Dr Mike Kelly in relation to this great result for my community, which supports this development and will allow for much-needed affordable housing and public amenities.

BORDER RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [12.30 p.m.]: Defeating cancer was once thought to be almost impossible. But, as someone perceptive has said, "Some of the world's greatest feats were accomplished by people not smart enough to know they were impossible." Today we can acknowledge that the five-year survival rate for all cancers in New South Wales has increased from just under 50 per cent 30 years ago to 66 per cent now. Eleven years ago I was a member of the inaugural committee that established the Border Relay for Life—a major fundraising activity for the Cancer Council NSW. I helped to launch the first two Border Relays, the first that was held at Albury showgrounds and the second that was held in Wodonga. That tradition continues, with the event jumping the Murray River in alternate years, bringing people together as one community.

The event website had a running total of the amount of money that was being raised. While preparing a short speech for the opening function, I watched as the total increased by over \$20,000. Excitement was building minute by minute. The relay was held on a cool but sunny weekend at the end of October. As I looked out over the crowd at Wodonga's Birallee Park I could see an ocean of purple shirts—the official colour of the relay—along with purple and yellow balloons tied onto a dramatic archway that marked the start and finish lines. At the back of the field were the tents of the food suppliers, the masseurs and the teams' shelters for those resting during the 24-hour relay. It was a magnificent sight. The presence of a jumping castle only added to the sense of pageantry.

During the relay's Hope Ceremony, Deborah Birrell from the Mission Impossible team stepped up to the microphone but she did not deliver a speech. She placed her mobile phone to her ear and told her personal story about surviving cancer. The crowd was eavesdropping on her private conversation. Carl Friedlieb, chairperson of the Border Relay for Life said, "That really sparked everyone's attention. Deborah's speech was a highlight; it was something everyone was talking about as we kept doing countless laps throughout the night." Last year there was a leap in donations to \$364,000. Organisers believed that this was a one-off spike in the border region. Declining to set an impossible target for 2012, they set their goal at a modest \$260,000. In the end the amount raised by this year's relay was \$370,000 which exceeded the target by \$110,000 and established a new record.

What has happened on the border? This year 2,600 people were involved which is up from the figure of 2,400 last year. The number of teams grew the fastest, with a dramatic increase from 109 registered teams in 2011 to 172 registered teams this year. I am proud to inform members that in 2011 the border event was the third highest fundraising Relay for Life in the State, and the largest outside Sydney. What a tremendous effort from the border community. The catch cry of Relay for Life is, "Who will you relay for?" Cancer is personal and Relay for Life also is personal. The money raised by the relay will help to make a difference: it will fund research, assist in community education and support services.

The Albury Wodonga Carer Accommodation Centre—which is currently under construction at Albury Hospital and which is due to open its doors next month—will be yet another tremendous addition to our facilities. Those undergoing lengthy treatment will have a place to stay near the hospital, with their own private rooms. The community has raised \$2.5 million towards the cost of yet another dream that is about to be realised in Albury. The New South Wales Government quickly delivered three-quarters of a million dollars for this project and it provides financial support for the Cancer Council NSW in delivering education programs and information. In turn the Cancer Council NSW donated \$330,000 to the Albury Wodonga Carer Accommodation Centre in recognition of local fundraising over many years. In combination with the planned \$65 million Regional Cancer Centre, it is clear that Albury is establishing itself as a leading regional healing community for those dealing with cancer.

I acknowledge and thank all those who made the Border Relay for Life possible—organiser Annabel Macdonald; chairperson Carl Friedlieb and the organising committee; Annemaree Binger, Regional Manager for the Southwest Region of the Cancer Council NSW and the office staff; all the volunteers at the registration tent and elsewhere; and the helpers who spent the day massaging feet and tired bodies, applying sunscreen, and entertaining and feeding the masses. Major sponsors included the Commercial Club of Albury, The River, Prime 7, Terry White Chemists, Albury Sound and Lighting, Vitasoy, Feathertop Wines, Wodonga Homemaker Centre, the Border Mail and PGS Securities. Finally, but importantly, I thank all the entrants, carers and donors

for their efforts, their support for and their dedication to a wonderful event. Christopher Reeve, the actor famous for playing Superman, was paralysed following a horseriding accident. In the midst of his struggles he said, "Once you choose hope, anything is possible." Relay for Life is not just an idea; it is a physical expression of our hope and of our dreams that anything is possible when we work together.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.35 p.m.]: I thank the member for Albury for drawing the attention of the House to the 2012 Border Relay for Life and for his involvement and participation in that event. Many members have participated in similar events in their own electorates and will be impressed, as I was, to learn that the 2012 Border Relay for Life raised \$370,000. That is a new record for the Border Relay for Life. It is the third highest fund-raising effort in the State and the highest outside Sydney. Anyone who has been involved with Relay for Life, as I have over the years, will know that it is a truly inspirational event delivering extra money for research, community education and awareness on that most important task confronting us—to find a cure for cancer, in all its different forms.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.36 p.m.]: I acknowledge my granddaughter, Ellie Hay, and my great grandson, Anton, who are in the gallery. Anton, who is only nine weeks old, is probably the youngest visitor to this place. I acknowledge also my daughter, Leah, Anton's proud grandmother, who would have been present today had she not been required at work. I inform members of a number of events I attended recently, two of which involved outstanding police officers at Lake Illawarra Local Area Command. I acknowledge also the dedication of the Warrigal Care staff and management to the aged people they look after daily and to whom they provide good quality of life. I have said many times in this place that the Lake Illawarra and Wollongong local area commands provide policing that is second to none in New South Wales or in any other State. I was privileged to attend the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command annual medals and awards ceremony which was held in the Diamond Room at Warilla Bowling Club. The fact that my great grandson is crying in the background does not mean he does not like what I am saying; it is just that he does not like Government members.

Each year the medals and awards ceremony which is held in the Diamond Room at the Warilla Bowling Club recognises and pays tribute to dedication and bravery of our unsung heroes in the NSW Police Force. The ceremony is a prestigious occasion with a guest list as distinguished as the medal and award recipients. In attendance were Commissioner Andrew Scipione, APM; Deputy Commissioner Nick Kaldas, APM; Assistant Commissioner Michael Fuller, APM; local area commander Wayne Starling; Wollongong Local Area Commander Kyle Stewart; former Acting Area Commander Michael McLean; my parliamentary colleagues and the Minister for Police. Guests were pleased to attend to pay respect to those officers and volunteers who were recognised for their outstanding contribution to policing in the Illawarra.

I take this opportunity to mention Uncle Gerald Brown who as always gave a moving welcome to country on behalf of elders past and present. Sergeant Lawrence Lucas, master of ceremonies, Senior Constable Jacqui Chadwick and Senior Constable Russell Crowe, protocol officers, are to be commended for organising a ceremony that went off without a hitch. Forty-one medals and awards were presented to a number of officers for many acts of valour and bravery, and five certificates of appreciation were presented to volunteers in policing who gave up their time to be involved in and who form an integral part of the policing team. I congratulate all those who received awards and medals on the day.

The second event I attended was the state-of-the-art police station in the Oakflats area which, once again, involved the officers of the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command as well as local Kooris. The auspicious event was an Aboriginal flag-raising ceremony at the relatively new station which was funded and established under the former Labor Government. Raising the Aboriginal flag was traditional at the former area command station at Warilla. Uncle Gerald Brown, who performed the welcome to country, regaled us with a tale concerning the late and great Auntie Mary Davis who would call or stop in at the old police station and give police officers a hard time if the Aboriginal flag was not raised. Uncle Gerald has sworn to uphold this tradition, and I have no doubt that he will. A great relationship has been developed between police officers of the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command and Illawarra Aboriginal communities to such an extent that the improvement is being acknowledged throughout the State.

Layne Brown was the master of ceremonies and did an outstanding job. A talented schoolgirl, Taliah King, sang the national anthem in Dharawal. Taliah is one talented young lady whom I have seen perform on a number of occasions. I look forward to seeing her probably on *The Voice* or the *X Factor* one day. A traditional

smoking ceremony was held. This ancient custom among Indigenous Australians involves various native plants smouldering, and our Indigenous Australians believe that the smoke has cleansing properties and the power to ward off bad spirits. The ceremony was performed by Richard Campbell. The sense of community was outstanding. As always, I felt privileged to be invited to attend and to be part of that special occasion. The last event of the day was the annual Warrigal Care dinner. The 2012 theme for the dinner was "New Secrets to Growing Older Well." The special guest speaker was Audrey Guy, who is a part-time tutor at the University of Canberra. I congratulate all those who were involved.

NUNDLE TIDY TOWNS AWARDS

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [12.41 p.m.]: I wish to bring my colleagues and the New South Wales Parliament up to date on an award-winning village in my electorate—Nundle. This great small town recently cleaned up at the 2012 Tidy Towns Awards by winning six categories in its population category of one to 350. The awards were: Winner of the Cultural Heritage Award for the Nundle Go For Gold—Chinese Easter Festival, Winner of the Wildlife Corridors and Habitats Conservation Award for the Nundle Riverside Beautification, Winner of the Schools Environment Award for the Nundle Public School, Winner of the Waste Management and Litter Reduction Award for Nundle's waste minimisation, Winner of the Water Conservation Award for Nundle's water conservation programs, and Winner of the Overall Town Category.

I sincerely congratulate everyone in this wonderful village who participated to make Nundle the great village that it is and on achieving recognition in the Keep Australia Beautiful overall winner's category. Nundle Public School also received an environmental trust grant for its fantastic vegetable garden. Led by Kay Deaves and the school's principal, Ian Worley, the school set a great example for young people of taking vegetables from the garden to the kitchen and onto the plate. The school is educating our young children to make healthy lifestyle choices. Kay Deaves told me that the students have become more willing to try different foods after sampling companion vegetables that had been grown in their very own garden at the school.

Nundle has a population of 350 and is the centre for some wonderful events and attractions, such as the Dag Sheep Station, the Peel Inn, Fossickers' Tourist Park, Nundle Woollen Mill, Mount Misery Gold Mine, and the Nundle Gourmet Picnic, to name just a few. Some of the events held in this wonderful village include the Nundle Go For Gold, the Great Nundle Dog Race and the Nundle Country Women's Association [CWA] Art Exhibition. I attended the Nundle Country Women's Association Art Exhibition on Friday 9 November which was coordinated by Margaret Schofield. The first Nundle Country Women's Association Art Exhibition was held in 1969 to assist in funding an extension of the Country Women's Association's rooms to continue to accommodate the Nundle Country Women's Association preschool. The art exhibition ran consecutively for many years but lapsed temporarily owing to drought.

In 2003, following further extension to the rooms, the Nundle Country Women's Association Art Exhibition revived and continues to grow in popularity. It attracts many visitors to the village and each year exciting new entries are received from all areas of New South Wales, southern Queensland and Victoria. The exhibition traditionally is held in the Nundle Memorial Hall in Jenkins Street. It was not lost on me when I attended the exhibition last Friday night that the roof of the hall is in desperate need of repair. Proceeds from the exhibition will go to the Nundle Country Women's Association Preschool and Health Facilities building. Nundle is a great village. It is leading the State in adopting a coordinated approach to promote this fair town. It is an absolute pleasure and privilege to represent the progressive village of Nundle. The next time my colleagues in the New South Wales Parliament visit the Tamworth electorate I encourage them to take a drive to visit the village of Nundle, where they will be made most welcome.

DRUMMOND MEMORIAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [12.45 p.m.]: Most people are familiar with the traditional Nigerian proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. It essentially highlights the importance of community in the task of raising the next generation. The Australian norm of two parents or, increasingly commonly, one parent raising a single child puts pressure on parents to manage competing demands of paid work and family responsibilities. It often means children are placed in before and after school care for extended periods. Rather than children being communally raised, they are more likely to experience highly structured activities throughout the day delivered by one adult. As the demographics of Australian rural communities change and more migrant and refugee families settle outside metropolitan areas along with existing Aboriginal and non-Indigenous residents, new challenges along with new opportunities arise.

As a society we need to be on the front foot to better address the disadvantage that rural students have always faced and be innovative in addressing new concerns. In my hometown of Armidale I recently visited the Drummond Memorial Public School to meet with a group of people who are working to better understand how they can work together to create a community in which the students attending this school will be raised. It is a relatively small school with 135 enrolments and the students, who have come to Armidale from a wide variety of backgrounds, include Aboriginal children, refugee children from many African countries that have been torn apart by war, and children from elsewhere throughout the world who attend school while their parent or parents engage in education at the University of New England.

This cultural mix makes for a rich learning environment for the children. I have visited the school on a number of occasions and cannot help but form that view each time I visit. The school's environment is embraced by the teaching staff. Significant focus is placed on the meaning of culture and respecting cultural practices of many different places. However, the children are being challenged by complex circumstances that the teachers and the school administration are struggling to address. The challenges being experienced by the children include poverty, overcrowded housing or the lack of appropriate housing, nutrition deficiencies, unmet health needs and, increasingly, mental ill health. Many small programs have been run by the school, including a breakfast club to ensure that the children have an adequate and healthy meal prior to the start of the school day and a homework centre. Yet too many children are still falling between the cracks.

In 2010 the Department of Education and Communities [DEC] regional director for the New England region, Mr Jim White, and the principal of the school, Mrs Julianne Crompton, approached the education and social work departments at the University of New England to discuss ways to better support the students and to provide an environment in which they have the best possible start. From those initial discussions, a new partnership formed that involves the school, the university, the local Medicare, elders in the community and many non-government organisations. Today I will describe some of the ways in which the school fence—a barrier that traditionally separates children from the village in which they need to be nurtured—is, figuratively speaking, being torn down.

On my recent visit to the school I met two social work students from the University of New England who currently are undertaking their placement in the school. Their task is to begin mapping the needs within the school and to be the group's eyes and ears on the ground, assessing where opportunities and challenges lie. They have implemented projects that will assist year 6 children to high school and a mental health promotion program for the year 4 students. During their placement, they are supervised by a postdoctoral fellow, Dr Mapedzahama, from the federally funded Collaborative Research Network on Mental Health and Well-being in Rural and Regional Communities, of which the University of New England is the lead agency. Dr Mapedzahama's expertise in migration, culture and racism provides fertile ground on which to challenge the ways in which schools traditionally provide for their student community as they compete to achieve high literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Associate Professor Myfanwy Maple and Dr Bawa Kuyini from the social work program at the University of New England are overseeing the project and bringing in other disciplines, including nursing and medicine, to work with the children and their families. The long-term vision of this project is to build on the school's capacity to respond to the needs of the children and their families and to break cycles of poverty and disadvantage. Programs such as the one I have described today should be recognised and valued for their contribution to thinking outside the box and working in a non-traditional manner to address some of the concerns of rural children.

GOULBURN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [12.50 p.m.]: I have noted on a previous occasion in this House that Chisholm Ross mental health facility in Goulburn has been allocated funding for an extra 12 beds. Last month I was pleased to welcome my colleague Kevin Humphries, the Minister for Mental Health, to Goulburn and I joined him on a tour of the work in progress. We were also joined by members of the Southern NSW Local Health District, Dr Pavan Bhandari, who is the Clinical Director, Mental Health Drug and Alcohol, Chief Executive Officer Max Alexander, Acting Chair Jenny Simons and others, including the Mayor, Geoff Kettle. Wearing high-visibility vests and hard hats we were shown around the new buildings. The mental health unit is undergoing considerable construction without any loss of service or bed closures, a credit to the design team, the site workers and the medical and nursing staff.

The new staff offices and a temporary high-dependency unit have already been completed and we also had access to the new nine-bed high dependency unit, which is near completion. The units are divided into wings so there is a small intimate feel to the centre which belies its importance as the main acute admission facility in the Southern NSW Local Health District. In its current form the Chisholm Ross Centre is a 20-bed acute adult inpatient unit located on the grounds of Goulburn Base Hospital. The unit is supported by six interim acute psychiatric inpatient beds at Bega Hospital. The 12-bed extension includes six additional open ward beds, taking the total to 23. The six additional high-dependency unit beds will take the total to nine. This increases overall bed numbers from 20 to 32.

Patients in need of high-dependency accommodation require a higher level of care and observation than is given in the general acute inpatient unit. The 12-bed extension will provide a state-of-the-art facility which, as I have already mentioned, will be supplemented by a 20-bed inpatient psychiatric unit in Bega. The extra patients the additional beds will attract will require, of course, more staff to support them, and I am pleased to say that when this facility is complete it will provide 15 extra positions. That is welcome news indeed for our great regional city.

Chisholm Ross Centre is part of a larger mental health inpatient service in Goulburn. The new Kenmore Hospital, on the site of the historic former Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital, holds 32 beds as specialist mental health services for older people and a 22-bed rehabilitation unit. Chisholm Ross also has close links with the 16-bed transitional behavioural intervention and assessment services, or T-base units, located on the grounds of the Bourke Street Health Service. Bourke Street is a 54-bed hospital which provides rehabilitation, aged care, palliative care and dementia services. All these units work together providing timely access to the acute inpatient care best suited to each individual's needs. Goulburn has truly become the district hub for mental health services and I thank my colleague Kevin Humphries and the O'Farrell Government for their commitment to creating this coordinated approach to mental health care across this very spread out local health district.

I also pay tribute to the staff I met on my visits. Many of the nurses are young women and men who are dealing with patients much larger and stronger than they are. It is testament to their patience and care and their great skills that the patients I saw were cheerful and relaxed whilst chatting with the staff. I am sure the role of the medical and ancillary staff comes with many challenges that many of us never face in the workplace. I am sure all members will join me in thanking them for taking on such a compassionate role in caring for patients when they are at their most vulnerable.

On a lighter note, I would also like to mention my visit to the Bourke Street Health Service last month. In true Goulburn style, long tables were laid out with cakes, scones, sandwiches, biscuits and other delicious treats, all in honour of Sister Eileen Regan, who was moving back to Western Australia the next day. It was a momentous occasion marking the end of the Sisters of St John of God in our city. The Bourke Street facility had been run by the sisters since they arrived in the city in 1916 and Sister Eileen was the last one still in residence. The sisters had been an integral part of the city since being invited by the bishop to establish a 13-bed hospital. This small facility grew, like Topsy, and by the 1950s comprised 70 beds with 17 sisters in attendance. It became a private provider of publicly funded health care in the 1970s. With a diminishing number of sisters, the hospital was transferred to what was then the Greater Southern Area Health Service in 2004.

Sister Eileen's skills and experience and the warmth of her humanity made her a lynchpin in the hospital community as numerous accounts of her care testified. She would come into the hospital at any time. Many tears were shed last week and there were many gifts on that day, but the large turnout of people was the greatest gift of all to Sister Eileen. We all wish Sister Eileen a happy retirement back in Western Australia and thank her for her devotion to the citizens of Goulburn.

NEWCASTLE LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [12.55 p.m.]: I pay special tribute today to the Newcastle Local Area Command. Yesterday, in a ceremony at Parliament House, the command's licensing unit received a prestigious national award for a ground-breaking project designed to reduce the incidence of alcohol-related violence. The project is one of only seven national winners in the annual Australian Institute of Criminology Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards and I was honoured to witness officers from the local area command receiving the award. Newcastle Local Area Command introduced the project in 2008 following a disturbing increase in alcohol-related violence such as assault, malicious damage and street fighting in the Newcastle area. After extensive consultation at the time with the community and other agencies, police sought agreement from the

relevant authorities to impose a number of strict conditions, such as, reduced trading hours, security enhancements and restrictions on the type and quantity of alcohol served, on 14 licensed premises around Newcastle.

An independent study assessing the project's first three years has revealed 35 per cent fewer reports of non domestic-related assaults and 50 per cent fewer night-time street offences. There was also a 25 per cent reduction in night-time, assault-related presentations at emergency departments in Newcastle. Importantly, these reductions have been sustained over time and in some cases have improved. I also commend a number of the licensed premises in Newcastle that have introduced the Newcastle entertainment precinct coordination process that has significantly reduced those numbers. The results reflect a concerted effort over many years. That hard work is continuing and includes working closely with the licensed venues, which have adopted a very proactive approach to reducing alcohol-related incidents in and near their premises. This is the model that is now the basis for the Kings Cross alcohol management process that we recently implemented. So remarkable are the results achieved via this program it is my strong belief that it should be used as a blueprint for law enforcement across the nation to deal with alcohol-related crime and violence.

I also would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the local area command and the Newcastle City Council on their holistic approach to combating alcohol-related violence in Newcastle. It is great to see the local area command and the council working together so closely. They have involved me in much of that process and it has been a pleasure to work with them. This has been a significant year for the Newcastle Local Area Command which joined with police from across the State to mark 150 years of proud policing traditions in New South Wales. The NSW Police Force has had an influential role in shaping New South Wales and the 150th anniversary is as significant to the community as it is to the NSW Police Force, particularly in Newcastle. As the member representing that great city, I find great comfort in knowing that the Newcastle Local Area Command and the surrounding commands are here to serve and protect our community. I would like to thank police officers past and present for their loyal service to our community. Officers, your dedication is one of our city's greatest assets and I look forward to continuing to offer you my full support in the coming years.

CRYSTAL DEBUTANTE BALL

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [12.59 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to an outstanding event that was held in Orange on 19 October 2012, the Crystal Debutante Ball which was for students of Kinross Wolaroi School at Orange. It was held at the Orange Function Centre and hundreds of people attended. The venue was packed. The guest of honour was local lawyer and former Kinross Wolaroi captain Olivia West, who gave a very poignant address to the students. She left them with the thought that happiness is not the absence of problems but the ability to deal with them. It was an outstanding address.

Debutantes came from all over western New South Wales. They included Jade Ryan, the daughter of Sandie and Dean Ryan from Cowra, who was accompanied by Cameron Hilder. There was Sophie Mitton, who is the eldest child of Sally and Michael Mitton and who was partnered by Dominic Parkman. He comes from Young and is the son of Peter and Leanne. Annabelle Carter also made her debut. She is the daughter of Ian and Sarah Carter of Orange. Her partner was Michael Gattone, the son of Sharyn Gattone from Orange and Danny Gattone from Sydney. Arabella Jorgensen-Hull, the daughter of Geoff Hull and Terri Jorgensen, was partnered by Duncan Kennedy, the son of Bronwyn and Phillip Kennedy.

Other debutantes included Isobella Grist, who is the daughter of Doone and Dugald Grist of Orange. She was partnered by Connor Mendham, the son of Sue Mendham of Orange and David Mendham of Blayney. Pip Johnson also made her debut. She is from Cudal and is the daughter of Will and Sue Johnson. Simon Douch was her partner and he is the son of Jane and Tom Douch of Young. Other debutantes included Edwina Jones from Orange, who is the daughter of Barbara and Randall Jones. She was partnered by Jake Coleman, who is the son of June and Mark Coleman. Maddie Silvester of Orange also made her debut. She is the daughter of Conrad and Jane Silvester, and was partnered by Tyler Matheson, who is the son of Trevor and Andrea Matheson.

Morgan Collens also made her debut. She is the daughter of Jennifer Collens and was partnered by Nathan Denholm, who is the son of Meaghan Denholm. Liz Denison, the daughter of Penny and Michael Denison of Coonamble, made her debut as well. She was partnered by James Coles, the son of Joanne and Alan Coles of Reids Flat. Brydie McGregor of Kerrs Creek made her debut. She is the daughter of Jeff and Caroline McGregor. Brydie was partnered by Josh Hay-McKenzie, who is the son of Wendy Hay and Colin McKenzie of Walgett. Liesl Gray, the daughter of Michael and Astrid Gray, made her debut. She was partnered by Logan Brockmann, who is the son of Ian and Kylie Brockmann.

Also making her debut was Georgia Maree Opie, who is the daughter of Lisa and Richard Opie. She was partnered by Andrew Maurice, the son of Catriona and Richard Maurice of Canberra. Brooke Hamilton made her debut also. She is the daughter of Bruce and Lyn Hamilton. She was escorted on the evening by Charles McIntosh, the son of Chris and Richard McIntosh of Molong. Olivia Williams made her debut. She is the daughter of Craig and Kerrie Williams. She was partnered by Arthur Hancock. Gemma Plunkett, the daughter of Bronwyn and John Plunkett of Warren, made her debut, partnered by Billy Freeman, the son of Robyn Freeman of Cargo. Also making her debut was Eliza Coles, the daughter of Joanne and Alan Coles. She was partnered by Angus Williams whose parents are Martin and Cindy. Nikki Wilson also made her debut. She was partnered by James Aitken, the son of Cate and Greg Aitken of Orange. Mandy Colless, the daughter of Peter and Frances Colless of Condobolin, also made her debut. Nick Lukins, the son of Hugh and Felicity Lukins, partnered Mandy on the evening.

Lauryn Wilson, the youngest daughter of Sue and Trevor Wilson of Warren, made her debut. She was partnered by Stan Alston, who is the son of Karen and Peter Alston of Lake Cargelligo. Other debutantes included Shelby Archer, who was partnered by Dylan Prince. Virginia Green, the daughter of Andrew and Jodie Green, was partnered by Tom Bristow. Meg Coles made her debut, partnered by Lachlan Williams. Jordan Brodie was partnered by Nick Shillington. He is the son of Michael and Julia Shillington of Orange. Kate Wilson was partnered by Jackson Ryan. Stephanie Raftery was partnered by Blake Hansen. Megan Hunt was partnered by Tom Rummery, the son of Greg and Lyn Rummery of Walgett. I make special mention of the organising committee: Jodie Green, Cate Aitken, Greg Aitken and Barbara Jones. The music on the night was provided by Gabe Middleton, Mal Key and Chris Paul. Gabe Middleton is a singer of great repute in the local area. The instructors were Bruce and Rebecca Southwood. It was an outstanding event, and long may debutante balls continue in the Orange electorate.

FOOTBALL UNITED

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [1.04 p.m.]: Football United is an innovative initiative of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine located at the University of New South Wales in my electorate. On 19 October I joined the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, the Hon. Victor Dominello, at the University of New South Wales to witness the publication of research into Football United's impact on multicultural relations and social behaviours. The project was entitled Playing for Change. The study was the first of its kind in the world, and sought to subject the program's goals to robust scrutiny. The goal was to identify the benefits, if any, of sport for recently migrated refugee communities.

We all know intuitively that sport is one of the most effective ways to help break down some of society's most insurmountable barriers. With the tone of political debate surrounding asylum seekers and refugees being so relentlessly negative, it is easy for us to forget that when a refugee is finally granted asylum in Australia we are left with a human being who is feeling vulnerable, insecure about their future and facing enormous challenges to understand and respond appropriately to the subtle societal norms of a new and different environment. Many of these people are trying to balance learning our language, running their lives and dealing with the enormous emotional trauma of their past. Social isolation and disengagement fragments and burdens those communities with high numbers of refugees.

Football United was developed from a vision that people's love for football, or soccer, can be used to build opportunities for belonging, racial harmony and community cohesion. Football United's six years of operation confirm the Federal Government's Crawford report findings and highlights other effects of inequity in participation—specifically, gaps in equity of participation in both community and public education sector sport that can contribute to general disaffection within society, including leaving school, aggressive behaviour and unemployment; and the lack of opportunity to interact across cultural groups, which can translate into racism and the ensuing problems that provokes. Football United addresses these issues, basing its foundations on the premise that structural variables and social processes act at multiple levels to impact on health and social behaviour.

Results of the research in this report underline Football United's positive impact on participating young people's sense of self and appreciation for and engagement with peers from diverse backgrounds. Interviews revealed unanticipated connections between participating in Football United and learning English, positive engagement with school and building self-confidence. Benefits of Football United beyond the physical are clear and the study outlines key policy recommendations to improve social cohesion among migrant and refugee youth. This research shows that Football United can assist in overcoming the many challenges experienced by young people and their families in engaging with sporting activities by bringing to them a sport they love and

providing offerings adapted to each unique situation. These research findings and the broader impact of Football United have implications for a range of government departments, non-government organisations and the sport sector as they grapple with the challenges of engaging children and young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

The authors of this report believe an adequate national strategy to address these issues cannot simply rely on the overburdened community sports sector or on slow, systemic change within the education system. Overcoming these challenges and the problems that arise if they are not adequately addressed requires cross-sectoral approaches, particularly from the health, community services, education, youth, sports and social inclusion sectors. Football United has entered a new partnership with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth for the upscaling and national development of the program. Football United has won numerous awards, including the Australian National Human Rights award, the University of New South Wales Vice-Chancellor's award, the New South Wales Building Inclusive Communities Award, second place in the American Sports Media awards, the 2012 Australian Parliamentary Community Sports Award, the top television award at the Australian Human Rights Commission Medals and Awards in 2010, and the Parliamentary Community Sports Award from Sports Advocacy Group Australia.

From one program site in 2007 the program has reached more than 4,000 youth and families, with 13 programs in New South Wales, seven in South Australia and two in Canberra. It is interesting to note that 33 per cent of newly arrived immigrant youths in New South Wales in 2011 were aged between 12 and 17, born in 43 countries and live in 59 suburbs of south-western and southern Sydney. Social isolation and disengagement fragments local communities. Evidence indicates that refugee families are highly vulnerable to social isolation in their countries of resettlement. Sport as a mechanism to build relationships across cultural boundaries and to build positive interactions among young people has often been promoted in literature. However, a robust evaluation of the impact of sport-for-development programs is limited, hence the significance of this study. I commend the foresight of individuals who championed this world-first study, but make special mention of its founder and director, Ms Anne Bunde-Birouste.

NEWCASTLE-LAKE MACQUARIE RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [1.09 p.m.]: The Relay for Life is one of the most significant and well-known annual fundraising events for the Cancer Council NSW. I acknowledge my colleague the member for Albury, who spoke earlier about the great importance of the Relay for Life not only in raising awareness of cancer but also in raising much-needed funding for cancer research. I had great pleasure participating in this year's Newcastle-Lake Macquarie Relay for Life—the eleventh such event—which was held at the Hunter Sports Centre at Glendale on Saturday 3 November and Sunday 4 November. I was also honoured when the event organisers asked me to be the face of the Relay for Life. During my pre-relay address on the day, I commented to attendees that it was indeed fortunate that I was not required to win a beauty contest in order to be named as the face of the event. However, comments later in the day revealed that many who were present found that difficult to believe. As part of my role as the face of the relay I was asked to share the story of my journey through cancer and beyond and to pass on words of encouragement to sufferers and carers who are still in the process of their own cancer journeys.

Two run-on starters in my relay team—aptly named The Puffin' Pollies—included my parliamentary colleagues the member for Charlestown, Andrew Cornwell, and the member for Newcastle, Tim Owen. They were there to support me on the day, along with Andrew's two boys, Lachlan and Harry, and Tim's wife, Charlotte. I cannot say for sure how many laps they did but I appreciate their mateship and support. Thank you, Andrew and Tim. Also in my team were my wife, Pat; daughter, Julia; the endorsed Liberal candidate for Shortland, John Church; Lake Macquarie city councillors Jason Pauling and Robert Denton; and my electorate office staffers Nick Jones, Gerald Cowan and Erin Chalkley. The eleventh Newcastle-Lake Macquarie Relay for Life was a record-breaking event. There were a record number of teams and more than 2,000 participants, both young and old, and the event raised a sum in excess of \$200,000, which is still growing. These funds will be used for vital cancer research.

The Relay for Life was a moving occasion. All the participants were united in their efforts to raise much-needed funds for the Cancer Council and to come together in an unconditional and uninhibited spirit of remembrance and hope. Walking the opening lap of the relay with other survivors and carers was a special experience. I was proud to rub shoulders with so many people who had had their own cancer journeys, and it was a pleasure to meet some of the many carers of cancer survivors, carers of those still undergoing cancer

treatment as well as carers for those who had lost their fight against the disease. Without the ongoing support and selfless dedication of carers—many of whom are family members—those suffering from cancer would find their ordeals infinitely worse, and even impossible in some cases.

I congratulate the Newcastle-Lake Macquarie Relay for Life Volunteer Organising Committee, participants, friends and families, all other supporters and sponsors of this year's successful, record-breaking event, and those who participated in their own relays in their respective communities. I acknowledge Brian Collins from the organising committee for the Newcastle-Lake Macquarie event. Brian, who was my first contact with the Cancer Council, was master of ceremonies extraordinaire and chair. I acknowledge also Verity Currey and Dr Fran Jones, renowned breast surgeon. By supporting initiatives like the relay we can all assist our medical researchers to develop more effective treatments for cancer and eventually a treatment that will see this totally non-discriminatory and insidious disease removed from the human medical landscape. I commend this event to the House and thank members for their indulgence.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [1.14 p.m.]: I had the honour to be part of Remembrance Day on Sunday 11 November 2012, and to share the day with veterans and their families. This weekend marked the ninety-fourth annual Remembrance Day, a memorial day that has been observed across the Commonwealth since the end of the First World War to honour members of our armed forces who have died in the line of duty. This day was originally known as Armistice Day to commemorate the armistice signed by the Allies and Germany in Compiègne, France, in 1918, after which at 11.00 a.m. on 11 November guns fell silent on the Western Front. Following the Second World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name of this day to Remembrance Day to recognise and honour all those who have died in war.

At the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month each year people across New South Wales, and indeed Australia, stop to observe one minute's silence. This minute of silence allows us to remember the brave sacrifice made by so many to preserve the way of life that those across our nation enjoy today. This year I was honoured to join Smithfield Returned Service League members, including President Bill Newall, senior vice-president John Webb and other members of the Smithfield RSL Sub-branch to mark this special occasion at McCarthy Memorial Park on the Cumberland Highway. The First World War was meant to end all wars. Australia lost 60,000 of its best soldiers in that war and only two decades later it was engaged in the Second World War, in which a further 40,000 soldiers died. Since then many more have died in other conflicts.

I represented the Premier Barry O'Farrell at the commemoration at Smithfield RSL at 3.00 p.m. I also attended the commemoration organised by the New South Wales Chapter of the Vietnamese Community in Australia at Cabravale Memorial Park on Railway Parade in Cabramatta, which included the unveiling of the Vietnam Veterans' Remembrance Day plaque and the laying of a wreath on behalf of the Premier. We were joined by many distinguished guests, but I acknowledge particularly Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales; Mr David McCann, JP, Vice-President of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia; Mr Thanh Nguyen, President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, New South Wales Chapter; and many Australian and Vietnamese veterans and their families.

Remembrance Day this year was significant to the Australian-Vietnamese community because not only was it a commemoration of the ninety-fourth anniversary of Remembrance Day but also it marked the fiftieth anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War—Australia's longest war. At the ceremony the Vietnam War Comradeship Memorial Plaque was unveiled by Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales. The wall-mounted bronze plaque included the roll of honour of the 521 Australian soldiers who lost their lives in that conflict. The plaque symbolises the friendship between the Australian soldiers and the South Vietnamese soldiers who fought and died together to stop communist attacks. The sacrifices made in Vietnam were clearly in the Anzac tradition of those at Gallipoli, Kokoda, Kapyong and Tarin Kowt. Only one member in this Parliament served in that war, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Hon. Charlie Lynn, MLC, who is also the Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans Affairs.

The fighting on land during the Vietnam War is largely remembered as a war of patrols in which Australian soldiers spent weeks combing the countryside for communist forces. These searches were frequently punctuated by short but bloody contacts with an elusive enemy. The friendships and bonds that formed between the Australian and Vietnamese soldiers during the war were forged as a result of sharing sacrifices for a common cause: fighting for freedom and stopping communist oppression. It is a friendship that endures today in the joint and invaluable work of the Vietnamese community in Australia and the Vietnam Veterans' Association

of Australia to ensure that Australia never forgets the legacy of the Vietnam War. We must not forget. May we remember all members of our armed forces who have died in the line of duty and their families. Finally, at 8.00 p.m. on Remembrance Day I attended a fundraiser organised by the Vietnamese Community in Australia, New South Wales Chapter, in support of the legacy of the Vietnam veterans and their families and to help them recover from the trauma of that war. Today we remember all members of our armed forces who have died in the line of duty and their families. Lest we forget.

ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [1.19 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to St Gabriel's School in Castle Hill, which recently celebrated its ninetieth anniversary—a remarkable achievement for a community-based school. St Gabriel's School caters for students with hearing and speech impediments, as well as other special needs such as intellectual disability and autism in the mild to moderate range. For 90 years St Gabriel's has offered a unique and individualised program for its students, allowing them an authentic learning experience that might not otherwise be possible. From humble beginnings to its now proud traditions and history, the school encapsulates the amazing community focus and spirit of service that has become a hallmark of the Castle Hill electorate.

St Gabriel's School, previously known as St Gabriel's School for Hearing-Impaired Children, was founded by Archbishop Michael Kelly in 1922. After seeing some of the work of the Irish Christian Brothers caring for and educating deaf children in Ireland, Archbishop Kelly decided to open a similar institution in Sydney. With the help of two Christian Brothers loaned from the model school in Ireland, Archbishop Kelly set about the daunting task of establishing a specialised disability-focused educational institute in Castle Hill. After selecting a property consisting of a fine old residence—a cottage nearer the road and 35 acres of good land—the first foundation stone was laid and blessed by Archbishop Kelly on 10 September 1922.

Throughout its proud history St Gabriel's has experienced much change and evolution, whilst maintaining its core principles of educating those with physical and intellectual impairments. One such change occurred in 1973 when the school changed from a residential day school for deaf boys only to a coeducational day school with its first female students. In 2009 the school underwent a transition when some difficult decisions were made to ensure its future. With the development and continued advancement of cochlear implants and other technologies, many more children with hearing impairments have entered the mainstream education system. St Gabriel's has long supported these transition programs, and this has allowed for a greater extension of enrolment criteria as places became available. As such, from 2010 the school expanded its range of programs to cater not only for hearing-impaired children but also for those with a wider range of disabilities, including intellectual disabilities and moderate autism.

In an attempt to sum up the values espoused by St Gabriel's School, one need look no further than the school crest. It has adopted a variation of the Christian Brothers' congregational crest and added features specific to the services provided by St Gabriel's. Along with the Christian Brothers' Celtic cross, circle and star, the vine associated with the Edmund Rice Education Australia network on which the school is modelled has been added. The omega and circles symbol honours St Gabriel's foundation as a school for deaf students. The crest is a reflection of the values and traditions the school continues to resonate. St Gabriel's has an active voluntary fundraising committee that raises vital funds to ensure the school's students continue to receive the biggest gift of all—the gift of communication.

Earlier this year, St Gabriel's hosted the Gift of the Gab fundraiser night, an event that spoke volumes about The Hills community spirit. A number of celebrity guests filled the Castle Hill RSL with laughter and stories of their varied careers. Adding to the excitement in the room were moving stories told by Brother Gerry McGrath, one of the longstanding principals at St Gabriel's; Lisa Lipovac, a current parent of a child at St Gabriel's; and Stephen Lawlor, an ex-student—all in the name of celebrating St Gabriel's turning 90 years old and providing education to generations of children with special needs. The evening was a roaring success and a testament to the community's generosity, raising \$55,000 to ensure the future education of children attending St Gabriel's.

I had the honour of attending recently the ninetieth anniversary celebration of St Gabriel's hosted by the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, Bishop Anthony Fisher. The bishop spoke of the wonderful services provided by the staff and supporting community that have made the vision of St Gabriel's possible for almost a century. He reserved particular praise for the school's leaders and numerous benefactors, without whom the mission and the vision of the school would be lost. The virtues of charity, generosity and alms giving as well

as respect for the dignity of every human life are among the numerous and often unseen qualities of St Gabriel's. I commend the principal of St Gabriel's, Kathy Freeman, for ensuring that these qualities are continued in the school environment and I share her passion for an exciting future for the school. Once again, I congratulate St Gabriel's on 90 fantastic years, and I am sure there are many more to come.

COMPASS HOUSING

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyang) [1.24 p.m.]: On Tuesday 9 October I was honoured to be asked to officially open Compass Housing's new Tuggerah office located in the Tuggerah Business Park, situated on the boundary between The Entrance and Wyong electorates. I take this opportunity to publicly thank and congratulate Compass Housing, its staff and management on the ongoing work and services provided not only to the people in my electorate of Wyong but across the entire Central Coast. It is vital that affordable housing is available for all sectors of the Central Coast community. I am acutely aware of the many cost-of-living pressures that residents in my electorate face daily and our continued efforts to alleviate high rental and property costs. Securing affordable housing remains one of our ongoing priorities. This Government has taken positive steps to ensure that sensible strategic planning is used to provide good-quality and affordable housing, and most importantly on the Central Coast not repeating the mistakes of previous governments by having high-density, high-concentration social and affordable housing.

The new Tuggerah Compass Housing premises are a sight to behold. I was pleased to join with tenant staff management and the member for Gosford, Chris Holstein, at the opening. During my speech I noticed that one of my favourite treats—scones, jam and cream—was available and I am happy to say that, despite the presence of the member for Gosford, there were plenty to go around. I was able to down a few when I completed my speech. Compass Housing plays an important role in ensuring an adequate supply of available homes, particularly for disadvantaged residents and their families. I am happy to say that Compass Housing does this in a way that no government can: with heart and understanding. At the end of the day it makes sure that tenants feel like human beings and have accommodation of a standard that any of us would expect when paying rent as a private tenant. Many families in my electorate simply cannot afford high market rents and for many, sadly, home purchase is not a realistic option. It is vital that services such as those provided by Compass Housing continue to expand so that the amount and variety of housing available to the community is increased.

Compass Housing Services is a not-for-profit organisation that was established way back in 1984. Its purpose primarily is to alleviate the hardship of housing stress for low-to-moderate income earning households by providing secure and affordable housing. In addition, Compass Housing delivers housing products for disadvantaged people who have difficulty sourcing adequate and affordable housing. Since its launch on the Central Coast in 2008, Compass Housing has grown from managing 156 properties to now managing some 800 properties, primarily across the northern parts of the Central Coast but now also expanding into the south. We hope that rapid and professional growth will continue. This means that people from all over my electorate of Wyong can seek assistance from Compass Housing when times are tough and they need safe and affordable housing.

I spoke with Compass Housing management about possibly partnering with the Government to deliver crisis accommodation, particularly for fathers. Crisis accommodation is available for mothers but when fathers and sons reach a certain age they cannot be housed in the same facility, for understandable reasons. Males now constitute a high percentage of domestic violence victims, and unfortunately the Wyong electorate is in the top five for domestic violence rates in Australia. This issue must be addressed sooner rather than later. Once again, I congratulate Compass Housing and thank it for its tireless efforts. I wish it well at its new Tuggerah premises and look forward to continuing to work closely with it over the years ahead for the benefit of residents in my electorate.

SPRINGWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [1.28 p.m.]: The Blue Mountains has six neighbourhood centres: Blaxland, Springwood, Winmalee, Mid Mountains, Katoomba and Blackheath. Each centre serves its community, responding to individual challenges in its unique area. Each centre is staffed by some very dedicated workers who are committed to helping their communities. These workers are ably supported by numerous volunteers who give their time and expertise to help their fellow man. Last week I attended a very special annual general meeting of Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, which is situated a short walk from my office. This is the oldest neighbourhood centre in the Blue Mountains, having been established in 1978, and is currently located in the Springwood Civic Centre precinct. This 1970s civic centre will finally be redeveloped,

with modern, purpose-built performance space, rooms and offices to house the many various community groups located in the now very cramped Springwood Neighbourhood Centre building. The new civic centre—the redevelopment of which is expected to commence early next year—will be a vast improvement on current facilities.

I digress a little to inform the House of the wonderful new facility that the Mayor of Blue Mountains, Daniel Miles—a great Liberal mayor—has championed for several years. After extensive community consultation the final draft design was recently unveiled for further community comment. The project is magnificent and it will be a first-class facility for the Blue Mountains, comprising a purpose-built performance space that is sadly lacking and desperately needed in the mountains. I am pleased to advise the House that the Blue Mountains City Council was successful in obtaining a low-interest local government infrastructure loan from the New South Wales Government to the value of \$15.5 million for this project. I also note that the Federal Labor Government's funding promised during the election campaign before last has not yet materialised, and as far as I know it was not mentioned in the last Federal budget. Members may call me cynical but I predict that the promise will be resurrected during the next Federal election campaign.

The annual general meeting of the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre was historic because it was the last time such a meeting will be held in the current building. The neighbourhood centre is home to many groups that work in partnership on various projects. Toni Quigley, who has been the manager for many years, runs a tight and very efficient organisation. She is a wonderful advocate for the service and is well loved by all the staff, both paid and volunteer. The effervescent Elizabeth Murphy, the community development officer, has always been at the forefront of the many events that I have attended. I also helped Liz with the Seniors Week lunch, for which the centre received a State Government grant. Liz also organised NAIDOC Day at the Springwood town centre, which was held on a very cold winter's day and which involved children's activities. Celia Lotus, the operations coordinator, is the Dementia Carers Support Group coordinator, Kay Spriggs is the new finance coordinator, and Anne Snowden coordinates the Community Visitors Scheme and the Volunteer Home Visitors Program.

Finally, Tina Napier is the very passionate coordinator of the Kinship Care Regional Project, which connects various organisations and networks to support kinship carers from the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith areas. The carers who use the service have told me that they find it extremely beneficial. It provides reassurance that they are not alone and allows them to share their experiences. I congratulate the new board of directors—all volunteers—who give of their time to direct the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre along with Toni Quigley. Newly re-elected chairperson Keith Dowling very ably chaired the annual general meeting. I will provide members with information about some of the wonderful activities undertaken at the neighbourhood centre.

One of the very important organisations that use the facilities is Tanderra Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care. Treasurer Allen Laird mentioned in his financial report that the use of these services is increasing. The Art Social Group and Healing Through Creativity, which targets those with mental illness, are two of the many social inclusion groups that also meet at the centre. At a recent meeting with the Open Doors group I was very thoroughly grilled by a gathering of politically engaged and sharp seniors. It is evident that the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre is a wonderful hive of activity in the community and I congratulate all involved on the wonderful work they do.

Private members' statements concluded.

[Acting-Speaker (Ms Melanie Gibbons) left the chair at 1.33 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The SPEAKER: I note that today most members are wearing red poppies. Last Sunday marked the ninety-fourth annual Remembrance Day, a memorial day observed in Commonwealth countries since the end of the First World War to honour members of our armed services who have died in the line of duty. This day was originally known as Armistice Day to commemorate the armistice signed by the Allies and Germany in Compiegne, France, in 1918, after which, at 11.00 a.m. on 11 November, guns fell silent on the Western Front.

Following World War II, the Australian and British Governments changed the name of this day to Remembrance Day to recognise that it honours all our war dead, no matter in which war or conflict they died.

Each year, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, schools, workplaces, RSL sub-branches, community groups, and individuals across New South Wales stop to observe a minute's silence and to remember the brave sacrifice made by so many.

Sadly, such sacrifice is a reality for members of our armed forces to this day. In 2012 alone, seven Australians have lost their lives in the service of our nation. Three soldiers who lost their lives in 2012, Corporal Scott Smith, Lance Corporal Mervyn McDonald and Private Nathanael Gallagher, are among the 14 killed from military units stationed at Holsworthy Army Barracks in Sydney. These men have served and testified to the Anzac spirit, and they provide a poignant reminder of the commitment made to the families of those who did not return from the First World War, to remember courageous sacrifice made on our behalf, both on Remembrance Day and throughout the year.

I invite all members of the House to rise and observe a minute of silence as a mark of respect to the fallen and their families.

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

ACTING DEPUTY SERJEANT-AT-ARMS

The SPEAKER: I advise members that Ms Cheryl Samuels will be acting as Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms during the absence this week of Jonathan Elliott.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the Speaker's Gallery members of a delegation from the Senate of the California State Legislature—Senator the Honorable Mark DeSaulnier, Senator the Honorable Bob Huff and Senator the Honorable Juan Vargas—led by Senator the Honorable Jean Fuller. I take this opportunity to congratulate Senator the Honorable Juan Vargas on his recent election to the United States Congress in Washington. All members are invited to take part in a panel discussion with the delegation, which will be hosted by the Australasian Study of Parliament Group in the Government Party Room, room 814-815, commencing at 5.00 p.m. today.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF SYDNEY

Return of Writ: Election of Alexander Hart Greenwich

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that the writ issued on 8 October 2012, pursuant to section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Sydney in place of Clover Moore, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of Alexander Hart Greenwich to serve as the member for the electoral district of Sydney.

PLEDGE OF LOYALTY

Mr Alexander Greenwich took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Tabling of Papers

Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That, for the remainder of the 2012 sittings, standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide:

- (1) the tabling of papers by Ministers may be effected by an announcement in the House without handing up copies of such papers; and
- (2) any papers tabled by announcement shall be lodged with the Table Office prior to their announcement in the House.

I too congratulate the new member for Sydney on his election and convey the good wishes of members on this side of the House and I am sure the best wishes of members opposite.

Ms Linda Burney: Thanks, Brad.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will show respect. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Actually, I genuinely do, and I am sure the member for Canterbury knows that. Members would be aware that generally at this time of the year annual reports are brought to the House and quite a number are tabled; indeed, they comprise large volumes from time to time. There have been discussions about these issues and all members have agreed to the sensible approach outlined to ease the burden on staff who have to cope with substantial volumes of annual reports. To reflect modern times I have suspended standing orders to allow the tabling of papers by Ministers to be effected by an announcement in the House without any requirement for copies of such papers to be handed up and for any papers tabled by announcement to be lodged with the Table Office prior to such announcement; they will effectively be deemed to have been tabled.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:

T F BATHURST
Lieutenant-Governor

Office of the Governor
Sydney, 26 October 2012

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he assumed the administration of the government of the State at 10.25 a.m. on Friday, 26 October 2012.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills were reported:

Boarding Houses Bill 2012
Passenger Transport Amendment (Ticketing and Passenger Conduct) Bill 2012
State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2012
Swimming Pools Amendment Bill 2012
Cancer Institute (NSW) Amendment Bill 2012
Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Legislation Amendment (Interstate Transfers) Bill 2012
Director of Public Prosecutions Amendment (Disclosures) Bill 2012
Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012
Rail Safety (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012
Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Register of Disclosures by Members) Bill 2012
Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Royalties and Penalties) Bill 2012
Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2012

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.29 p.m.]

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ROYAL COMMISSION

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House how the New South Wales Government will support and work with the Commonwealth to establish a royal commission into child sexual abuse and how this will interact with the separate inquiry the Premier announced on Friday?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I can inform him that at five o'clock last evening the Prime Minister rang to tell me about her impending announcement of a national royal commission—a national royal commission that I think is welcomed by communities across New South Wales. As I did this morning, I again pay tribute to the member for Dubbo—a former police officer who has investigated paedophilia cases—for showing the same sort of courage as that displayed by Hetty Johnston from Bravehearts and Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox in advocating for a national royal commission. I indicated to the Prime Minister last night that New South Wales State agencies would fully cooperate with any royal commission because we are determined, as evidenced by our commitment on Friday, to try to put an end to the scourge of abuse by paedophiles, whether it is abuse by clergy or from other institutions across our community.

In 1997 in this State Justice Jim Wood presented a report into the sexual abuse of children as a separate part of his police royal commission. Having looked again this morning at Justice Wood's report and having reviewed some of the recommendations, I regret that whilst those recommendations have particularly changed the way in which government agencies work with children and the way they deal with complaints about how children have been affected, it is clear that such issues are still occurring across this community. Young people are being robbed of their futures by the acts of paedophiles and that is something that no-one in government, no-one in opposition, no-one in the Parliament and no-one in the community should ever be happy with. We will fully cooperate with the national royal commission. The Prime Minister indicated last night that she would be consulting State and Territory leaders about the terms of reference for that royal commission.

I indicated that we would be keen to be consulted to ensure that we are able to see the sorts of issues that have been raised in this State in recent times covered by those terms of reference. In response to the claims made by Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox through the media last week—I think it was on Thursday in the *Newcastle Herald* and on Thursday night on ABC *Lateline*—on Friday, after consultation with the Attorney General and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I announced that New South Wales would seek to establish a special commission of inquiry, an inquiry which, under our legislation, has all the powers of a royal commission—a royal commission by another name. That special commission of inquiry was to look at the issues raised by Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox that related to suggestions that an investigation into paedophile activities by clergy had been taken out of his hands by senior police and that the church had actively sought to interfere or disrupt his efforts to bring to justice those who allegedly abused young people in the Hunter.

I will wait to see the terms of reference of the national royal commission and see whether or not they reflect the issues raised by Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox. We are continuing to progress our special commission of inquiry but I have no intention of allowing any duplication or having inquiries falling over each other. My intention is to ensure that the allegations raised by Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox are adequately investigated. My intention is that people such as Detective Chief Inspector Fox who come forward and do a remarkable thing in raising serious concerns through the media about what they regard as wrong action, whether by the Police Force, a church or any other organisation, have their concerns seriously investigated.

That is why I committed on Friday to the special commission of inquiry; it is why I said we would appoint Deputy Crown Prosecutor Margaret Cunneen—someone whose life has been dedicated to locking up villains, particularly sexual abuse villains, including paedophiles; it is why I welcome the Prime Minister's announcement of a national royal commission; it is why this State will work closely to ensure maximum cooperation between New South Wales agencies and the national royal commission; and it is why I am committed to considering the terms of reference that eventually come out and then determining where we go with the special commission of inquiry.

HUNTER CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Mr GARRY EDWARDS: My question is directed to the Premier. What is the State Government doing about allegations that child sexual abuse in the Hunter have been covered up by the Catholic Church and the police?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: As I have just said, on Friday I indicated that it was the intention of this State Government to establish, effectively, a royal commission into those very serious allegations. Let us not be under any illusion: child abuse and paedophile activities are not things one wants to hear about but it is important that people should hear about them because paedophilia is one of the greatest evils that exists across any society. One cannot hear allegations from someone of the stature of Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox and

do nothing. Calls for royal commissions and inquiries in relation to matters that have been happening in the Hunter for far too long are not new. What is new is that on Friday a State government decided to take the allegations seriously and to appoint Margaret Cunneen to head up a special commission of inquiry—someone who has the legal and forensics skills to get to the bottom of such allegations.

I have already spoken about events that have taken place since Friday. We are determined as a government and I am determined not just as the Premier but as a parent of two boys to ensure that these claims are adequately investigated and that we get to the bottom of whether or not a church or any other organisation has in some way sought to cover up what are illegal acts. During lunchtime I heard comments made by Cardinal George Pell in relation to the national royal commission. He made it clear that the Catholic Church had nothing to hide and he made it clear that that part of the Catholic Church for which he is responsible has nothing to hide. He made clear his record as Archbishop of Melbourne and as Archbishop of Sydney in trying to put together an arms-length process to ensure that complaints about paedophile activities by clergy were appropriately investigated. I welcome that proclamation by the Cardinal.

I said in July, when the church in New South Wales appointed former Federal judge Antony Whitlam to undertake an investigation of what had been happening within the church in relation to these matters, that it was important that the church ensure that that report be handed to police when it was concluded. The Whitlam report will be important—it will be important as a special commission of inquiry gets underway in New South Wales and it will be important to the national royal commission—but it should be given to police. It should be given to police because too often it has been discovered that organisations—not just churches but other community organisations that have been involved in this issue—have undertaken their own internal investigations and nothing has ever come of them. We are talking here about illegal acts, we are talking about the preying upon young people, we are talking about some of the most vicious crimes that exist within our community, and that is not good enough. So I again urge the New South Wales Catholic Church to ensure that the Whitlam report is handed over to police.

I raise one other issue, and I do this personally—I do not do this on behalf of my Government—because of my concern about what we are seeing happen. I heard Cardinal Pell today indicate that the bonds of the confessional will remain intact. As a Catholic—not a particularly good Catholic—I understand that that is an important sacrament within my church, but I struggle to understand why if a priest confesses to another priest that he has been involved with paedophile activities, that that information should not be brought to the notice of police.

HUNTER CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. What steps will the Premier take to ensure that Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox is not unfairly targeted or disadvantaged as a result of his decision to speak out against alleged mishandling of child sexual abuse cases in the Hunter?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I have been asked about this on a number of occasions and I think that those who may or may not be dispassionate observers of politics in this State will have already noticed the difference between my response to those who blow the whistle on alleged corruption or other activities within government in New South Wales and the response that usually came from those opposite. Put aside the issue of paedophilia. Too often the former member for Heffron and former Premiers from that side of the House would attack the whistleblower when confronted with a public servant, police officer or someone else who blew the whistle on what they thought was wrongdoing within the broader aspect of government.

Since Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox first raised his allegations I have done nothing other than pay him due credit and due respect for the years of work that he has put into investigating these terrible crimes in the Hunter. As I said earlier today, the member for Dubbo was in the Hunter investigating these matters and I spoke to him after he was interviewed on ABC radio—my favourite radio station—last Friday. He indicated to me that Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox was a good guy who had worked hard and that he was well motivated. All of my actions have been based on ensuring that Detective Chief Inspector Fox's allegations are properly investigated because that is what they deserve. I have also said that in essence what Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox has done is make a protected disclosure. He may have made it publicly through the media but as far as I am concerned it is a protected disclosure.

We have legislation in this State to ensure that those who work in the public sector who make protected disclosures are protected from what is described as adverse action. That could be bullying, dismissal or being sent from an inner-city police station to the great municipality of Broken Hill. I will continue to say that

Detective Chief Inspector Fox deserves praise and not any suggestion of criticism. I will continue to say that Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox's allegations deserve a proper investigation. I will work with the Federal Government to ensure that if its terms of reference do not provide for such an investigation our special commission of inquiry will. I am not suggesting that the Leader of the Opposition is lecturing me, but I have been in this place for a long time. I came here in 1995 and for a number of terms sat with a Minister of the Crown on the other side who is now in jail for paedophile activities. What I vividly remember—

Ms Linda Burney: You can't help yourself.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Canterbury ought to keep quiet for just a moment. What I vividly remember is that members of the Labor Party were told about his activities and they did nothing. That is not what this Government will ever do.

PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: My question is directed to the Premier. How is the Government making sure that the public sector delivers for the people of New South Wales?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: If the member for Canterbury did not interrupt so much and actually listened on occasions she would not fall for the tricks of the Leader of the Opposition of going out and running stories that not even he will touch with a barge pole.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order. The Premier has the call.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am delighted to talk about the state of the New South Wales public sector because, whether people realise it or not, it affects everyone in this State every day. Whether it is the train they catch to work, the great teaching they get in education, the hospital emergency department they turn up to, the State Emergency Service they ring in Penrith when another hailstorm goes through, or the Legislative Assembly attendants who assist people into the gallery, in each and every way those people provide service on behalf of the Government of New South Wales. We are determined to have a world-class public service so that the people of this State get the first-class services that they deserve and that they voted for in March last year.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I hear the member for middle management sharpening his lead pencil. For those reasons we have produced the first state of the public sector report in this State's history. These reports are commonplace in every other State in Australia and they reveal what is happening within the public sector in a warts-and-all fashion. They reveal the good, the bad and the ugly across the public sector for the purpose of seeing how performance lifts each year.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: This first report will be the benchmark that will form the basis upon which future performance will be judged not just by us but also by those on the other side. This report shows that over the past 12 months there has been very little growth in the public service. I think it is 0.65 per cent. Most of that growth has been due to increases in the health sector and those 2,900 nurses that the Minister for Health has employed since the last election. It highlights many positives within our public service, such as its diversity. That is one of its great strengths, as the Minister for Citizenship and Communities knows. It highlights its highly educated workforce and its strong grasp of the core values that we legislated for the public service last year of service, trust, integrity and accountability. As I said, it is also a warts-and-all report and highlights some unacceptable features. Amongst those unacceptable features are the need to improve workplace bullying and place greater focus on accountability, financial management expertise and workforce planning.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is no laughing matter for either taxpayers or those who rely upon government services that, after 16 years of those opposite, people across the public sector could barely add up.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: As a Government we are determined to make our public sector world class and to ensure that services provided to the public in rural, regional and metropolitan New South Wales are first-class services that can be relied upon as people seek to build their lives. We also are determined to try to attract the best and brightest to our public sector by making it a place where people want to work. We established the Public Service Commission and put in place an independent Public Service Commissioner to put an end to the sorts of rorts that members opposite presided over when in government—such as the rort that saw the member for Keira appointed Deputy Director General of Transport. It will involve itself in merit selection and in ensuring that we get the best and brightest, because the Government understands that people across this State want effective and well-produced services delivered in a cost-effective way.

STATE BUDGET

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Leader of the House will come to order. The member for Maroubra has the call.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Is the Treasurer prepared to detail for the House each of the 37 errors identified by the Auditor General in the Treasurer's State budget, including the two errors each worth more than \$1 billion?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for the question, but I have to say it is incredible that those opposite—

The SPEAKER: Order! An Opposition member asked the question; Opposition members should listen to the answer.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is incredible that members opposite want to talk about financial management. Are they kidding?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If we turned them into a case study for every high school and university student or business across the planet they would learn exactly what not to do.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is the fiscal legacy Labor left behind. The Auditor-General's report confirmed what we already knew: Labor needed new financial reporting systems, new skills and a new culture across the whole of government in terms of financial reporting. That is what the Auditor-General's report said.

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: We know what the Auditor-General said. We have his report.

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

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. The question is simple: Is the Treasurer prepared to detail the budget errors or not?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Treasurer is being generally relevant. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If Labor members read the Auditor-General's Report they will know he detailed those. But we have to say that as a result of the problems Labor had with its last full budget, from the time of the forecast to the year's end result, the difference was \$2 billion, and it was close to \$900 million from the budget to the year's end result. That was under Labor's system, so what this Government did was fix it up.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Madam Speaker, I ask you to direct the Treasurer to go somewhere close to answering the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have no power to ask the Treasurer to answer the question specifically.

Ms Linda Burney: There were 37 errors.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The point that I make to members of the House is this: When Labor had its variance in its last major budget what did it do? The former Treasurer was asked about that. Members may have heard of Labor's former Treasurer.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He was asked questions in the upper House about the variance, and his response was, "It's a bit unfair to talk about the variances." Indeed, he went further and said in relation to the former Labor Government and its financial reporting systems—get this—"We have the respect of many other parts of the world because of our solid reporting." That is what the Labor Treasurer said. The former Labor Government was proud of its financial reporting system.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: "Hello ostrich, where's the sand?" Stick your head in the sand and pretend there are no problems, as though you do not care. The Auditor-General said 10 years, and all his criticisms are set out in this bundle of reports. What did Labor do about that? The usual—it did absolutely nothing.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The Treasurer has been speaking for four minutes. It is a simple question: Is the Treasurer going to cough up the details, or not?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on this point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: He is not answering the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have no power to direct the Treasurer to answer the question specifically. The member for Maroubra should know better than to take such a point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What has this Government done in response to the Auditor-General's reports? The Government suspected there were problems, so we commissioned the Schott report. We awaited the recommendations, which were published earlier this year. What has this Government done? This Government has taken action—because that is what we do. We take problems created by Labor and we fix them. That is exactly what this Government does. This Government has taken action and will continue to take action. This Government will fix the mess that Labor left behind.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I am finding it very difficult to hear the member with the call.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Has the Federal Government adequately addressed the impact of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan on our Murray-Darling Basin farmers and communities?

Mr ANDREW STONER: That is a very good question from a member who is rightly concerned about the future of inland communities in his electorate in the face of a Commonwealth Government plan that simply falls short as far as New South Wales is concerned. Earlier this month the Federal Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Tony Burke, said that the Commonwealth and the States had struck a "reluctant consensus" regarding the Murray-Darling Basin plan. Let me be absolutely clear: New South Wales has not struck a consensus, reluctant or otherwise, with the Commonwealth Government on this

important issue. Misleading the national media will not change the core fact that New South Wales is simply not happy with the Commonwealth's plan. The New South Wales Government has repeatedly made its position clear to the Federal Government but, true to form, the Federal Government simply is not listening.

From day one, the New South Wales Government has worked constructively and cooperatively in good faith with the Commonwealth Government to develop a realistic plan that New South Wales can live with, in particular the rural communities in the Murray-Darling Basin. However, the advice the New South Wales Government has provided to the Commonwealth Government seems to be unheeded. The New South Wales Government has not engaged in high-profile political stunts and theatrics like the South Australian Government; instead, it has chosen to sit down and get some good policy on the table. The Commonwealth Government should be in no doubt that New South Wales is the biggest player in the Murray-Darling Basin and that, without our support, a Murray-Darling Basin plan will not go ahead.

At this stage of the process, the New South Wales Government and the communities it represents are not happy with the plan that has been presented, and we will not agree to or implement the plan unless substantial changes are made. Simply put, the New South Wales Government will not sit idly by while the Murray-Darling Basin Authority decimates our regional communities. To assist the Commonwealth Government, the New South Wales Government will provide a step-by-step checklist of actions the Commonwealth Government should take to resolve the issue. First, the plan should limit buybacks to allow communities and industries time to adjust. The New South Wales Government maintains that any further buybacks must be strategic and must be carried out at a sensible rate. The rate needs to be limited to 3 per cent of entitlement per valley per decade. If the Commonwealth Government will not include that proposal in its plan, the New South Wales Government will seek to implement its own limit.

Secondly, greater emphasis must be given to infrastructure and the better use of available water to achieve environmental outcomes. If the Commonwealth Government wants to support communities and industry as well as enhance the environment by investing in the future of the Murray-Darling Basin through infrastructure, it will have the support of the New South Wales Government. Unfortunately, too often the Commonwealth Government takes the lazy and destructive option of non-strategic buybacks and this cannot and will not continue in New South Wales. Thirdly, the Commonwealth Government must show a genuine commitment to helping our communities adjust to any changes that this plan imposes upon them. To date, the New South Wales Government has not seen anything that is really worthwhile, which is in contrast to the \$85 million allocated to affected South Australian communities, which are fewer and far smaller than those of New South Wales.

Fourthly, the Commonwealth Government must listen to the expert advice of New South Wales hydrogeologists when setting groundwater limits. This State will not accept arbitrary numbers that are set for no apparent scientific reason when that will negatively impact on development of our regional industries and economies. I make the point to all people in Sydney who enjoy the fantastic food that is served in our restaurants, offered in supermarkets and sold in our corner stores that the great majority of that food comes from the Murray-Darling Basin. It simply does not make sense to limit our productive capacity.

I put the Commonwealth Government on notice: If this plan is tabled in Federal Parliament without New South Wales concerns first having been addressed, the New South Wales Government will not be in a position to provide support for the plan. Today the New South Wales Government is drawing a line in the sand. The New South Wales Government has a number of options that can be exercised in response to the plan. Our final response will depend on whether the Federal Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities addresses the concerns of New South Wales. But this much is certain: The New South Wales Government will not let the State's inland communities be sold down the river.

STATE BUDGET

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given the Auditor-General has found \$1 billion in the budget that the Treasurer did not know existed, will he now reverse the \$1.7 billion in cuts to education that are causing such distress across New South Wales?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am disappointed in the member for Marrickville for asking that question, because I like the member for Marrickville. We have been very clear: The O'Farrell Government is prepared to look after the long-term interests of the State. It also is prepared to take the decisions that are necessary to ensure it can look after the future of the State. A lot of them are not easy—many are tough—but they are the

right decisions to make. That is what we must do. Members opposite show their understanding of financial management in asking that question, and that is pretty clear. The surplus was brought about mainly because of the Commonwealth Government shuffling money to the States earlier than it should have done. They were not my words. Whose were they? The former Auditor-General Tony Harris said that. Members opposite talk about Tony Harris when it suits them.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He confirmed that. Tony Harris also said, "The Treasurer is saying that this is an unsustainable surplus, and I think he is right."

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease shouting across the Chamber and interjecting. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If members opposite do not agree with Tony Harris, they might agree with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, that great spreadsheet, which reported, "This is part of Wayne Swan's pea and thimble trick when he shifted spending from one year to another to try to boost a surplus before the next election"—and this is the important point—"It makes little difference to the long-term finances of New South Wales." That is the truth. That is the underlying challenge we are left with. We know the challenges members opposite left behind. They left us with a forecast debt level of between \$14 billion and \$55 billion. They left us with that infrastructure backlog, which Infrastructure NSW assesses over the next 10 years will be \$31 billion. What members opposite clearly do not understand about financial management—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order: I refer to relevance under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is making a valiant attempt to demonstrate that he knows about budgets, but we want to know about the education cuts. That is what the question is about.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have said what we will do in relation to the finances of the State—we will live within our means. Members opposite can pretend that GST is not falling, when that is exactly what it is doing. Indeed, we have more than \$10 billion less for the next four years than those opposite had when they were in government. Members opposite can try to pretend that Standard and Poor's has not changed the outlook to negative. Standard and Poor's has done that in New South Wales because it acknowledges two things. It acknowledges that the State is under significant revenue pressure and that at the same time it has a huge infrastructure backlog to deal with.

What does that require? That requires a government that is prepared to live within its means and make decisions that are about the long-term interests of the State and be prepared to back them. I pay tribute to all those Ministers who sit on our frontbench. They are prepared to make decisions in the long-term interest of the State. We will not leave the problems to future generations, which is exactly what the former Labor Government did. It did not take the decisions; it took the easy way out. If members opposite understood that under the former Labor Government revenue was 5.6 per cent and it has now come down to 4 per cent, what does that mean? That means we have to control expenditure. We are happy to take the decisions in the long-term interest of the State because that is what we were elected to do.

HEALTH FUNDING

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. What is the impact on the community of the Federal Government's changes to funding?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Gosford is a champion for health services in his electorate. It has been my very great pleasure to be with the member, and other members representing electorates on the Central Coast, on a number of occasions to talk about the new facilities we are opening on the Central Coast. We are heading for troubled times because the Federal Labor Government has recently announced major health cuts not just to New South Wales but to every State in Australia. At the health Ministers council in Perth last Friday I was joined by all States, including the two Labor States, in protest against the

Federal Government's cuts to the health budget. I will explain the shonky deal it has made to justify this cut. I will read part of the communiqué that was put out after the meeting of the Council of Australian Governments, which states:

State health ministers expressed concern about the reduction in Commonwealth health changes which resulted in:

One, retrospective and future reductions to state funding which will seriously impact on State budgets that have already been set, and

Two, the factual basis of the decision relies on disputed population figures.

Members of the House should understand how this has happened. The Federal Minister tried to say that we all agreed under prior Council of Australian Governments agreements to the way we would sign up to this agreement. But we did not sign up to figures that are straight-out lies, which are being perpetuated by the Commonwealth Treasury.

Dr Andrew McDonald: It is the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The shadow Minister for Health should not interject. They are not Australian Bureau of Statistics figures; they are figures put out by the Commonwealth Treasury. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures are there on the website for all to see—3101.0 Australian demographic statistics, March 2012, population growth over the period in question, 1.5 per cent. The Commonwealth claims it was 0.03 per cent. Can members believe that the population grew by only 0.03 per cent? No wonder we were joined by the Labor health Minister in South Australia and by the Labor health Minister in Tasmania and by all the States' health Ministers. This amounts to \$50 million, not only this year but also last year—money that has already been spent, along with other cuts—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. How dare you blame—

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a valid point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Canterbury would do better to talk to the Commonwealth to try to get the money restored to New South Wales. Along with a reduction in the indexation rates—the Commonwealth is also saying indexation is being reduced to 2.27 per cent rather than 3 per cent—New South Wales Treasury has calculated that for the period 2012-13 this amounts to a \$138.7 million cut from our Health budget. The \$50 million that is cut because of population changes would provide 1,500 cardiac bypass operations and 2,600 cochlear implants, something I am very passionate about.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister has not yet mentioned the \$3 billion worth of cuts from her side.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked. The point of order is not upheld. The Minister has the call.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I would love the shadow Minister to ask me about the so-called \$3 billion. Interestingly, the Federal Minister tried to say that to the media in Perth. [*Extension of time granted.*]

That is simply a lie and the member knows it. The Federal Minister knows it too. We have provided \$2.2 billion in efficiency savings—a policy introduced by the Labor Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease shouting at the Minister and interjecting. I remind the member for Macquarie Fields that two Opposition members are on three calls to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: For those in the public gallery who do not know already, that policy was introduced by the Government when that man was the Parliamentary Secretary for Health. It is a very good policy. It takes \$2.2 billion of money spent in health to be kept in health and provided for front-line services and the delivery of other services. The General Secretary of the New South Wales Nurses Association wrote to me confirming what he said to me in a conversation. He wanted me to acknowledge that.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: I ask the Minister to table the letter.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am happy to table the letter once I finish quoting from it. He said he would be very happy for me to table it provided I also mention that there is \$775 million in the labour expenses cap.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: Has the Minister agreed to table the full letter?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is my understanding of the Minister's response.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I would be very happy to table this letter for the benefit of members because it shows that the member is peddling a lie. There is no \$3 billion cut. Everyone should know that there is no \$3 billion cut. These are efficiency savings under a policy started by Labor and continued by us. This will give those on the front line—the doctors, nurses and wonderful people running our hospitals—the opportunity to better spend the money on new models of care and new ways of treating patients. I seek leave to table the letter, for the benefit of members.

GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question without notice is directed to the Treasurer. In light of the Treasurer's previous non-answer to the member for Marrickville, why did the member for Oxley, as Acting Premier, tell the residents of Lismore on 31 October regarding the newly discovered surplus that there were "all sorts of things we could spend the money on" and that reopening Grafton jail was "in the mix"?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is difficult not to laugh when those opposite talk about financial management. I cannot take them seriously.

The SPEAKER: Order! An Opposition member has asked the question and Opposition members would listen to the answer if they were serious about this issue.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: When talking about the budget and financial management, we go back to the Auditor-General's report. Who was the finance Minister in 2010?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do not know what the Auditor-General's report says. What does it say? It says, "Significant errors included: Roads and Traffic Authority— which I think was his former agency—\$4.3 billion: misstatement of earthwork assets. It says, "Roads and Traffic Authority, \$1 billion: spreadsheet error in roads valuation." This happened under the member for Maroubra as the finance Minister and today he is talking about financial management. He is kidding. Reports after reports after reports, and what did they do?

Government members: Nothing.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Absolutely nothing. That is what they do; that is in the textbook. When they see a problem, they stick their heads in the sand and let someone else deal with it.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much arguing across the table. Opposition members will cease shouting at the Treasurer. I will wait for the House to come to order before I call the member for Maroubra. The member for Maroubra has a perfect right to raise a point of order and to be heard in silence.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier is out spending the surplus. We want to know from the Treasurer why the Deputy Premier is spending when he says it does not exist.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not the way to take a point of order. The member for Maroubra is being argumentative, as he has been for all of question time. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have acknowledged that we need to improve the system. We have taken action. We have read the report and we have taken action. Indeed, we have allocated in the budget money for a new financial reporting system because that is what the report recommended to fix the problem. That is ticked.

We also have started recruiting because the Schott report said that we need to improve skills. Indeed, we placed an advertisement in the paper. I might add that the advertised position will help to fix the problem. It said that the key priorities of the new role will include forecasting, reform and budget management. We are taking action to get the right people.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that he is already on three calls to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What did the member for Maroubra say about that? What was his response to the problem and the need to bring in a person to drive it? What do members think he would say? I would imagine from the past two weeks that he would give it a big tick and say, "Yes, that's a great thing to do. We need new skills. The Treasurer has read his reports and we need to fix the problem." I do not think that is what he said. The Government is taking action to fix the problem and those opposite have been going on about it for two weeks. He said, "That is an obscene waste of money." What do you want? Tell us what you want.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They are saying, "Fix it. Fix it." We start fixing it and then they say, "That's obscene." They are kidding. They cannot come into this place—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —and lecture us on financial management. They cannot do that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the three members who are on three calls to order that if they continue with their disruptive behaviour they will find themselves out of this Chamber for the rest of the day.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite should be apologising to the people of New South Wales for the mess they left after 16 years; every day is getting longer and longer. We will fix their mess; we are on that job. One thing drives me crazy about their past performance. It would be simple if they stuck to a budget. That is pretty easy. If they stuck to a budget then we could go forward. What did we see from those opposite? I hate to pick on the member for Maroubra, but why not? When he was Minister in 2008-09, by how much did he blow his budget? Would it be \$10 million? No, it was \$316 million. What did he do in 2009-10? His budget blowout was \$244 million. In two years under the member for Maroubra there was \$500 million in budget blowouts—money that could have gone to service the infrastructure of the State. We are fixing their problem and we are taking the State forward.

FAIR TRADING MOBILE APPLICATIONS

Mr TONY ISSA: My question is addressed to the Minister for Fair Trading. What action has the Government taken to help New South Wales consumers when purchasing motor vehicles?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Minister is about to answer a question and will be heard in silence. The member for Murray-Darling will come to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for his question and for his interest in consumer affairs issues. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government is working to empower consumers to be more informed and better equipped in the modern marketplace. I can report to the House that under the Liberal-Nationals Government Fair Trading is providing more electronic resources than ever before to serve and empower the people of New South Wales. It is utilising technology to provide a more modern, innovative and service-driven agency for the people. Technology today enables more innovative tools and wider accessibility to information. It also enables information to be available at people's fingertips, on hand where and when they need it, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. Last week I joined the member for Granville to launch the latest exciting Fair Trading innovation at Granville Boys High School: the free mobile car application called My Next Car.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will listen in silence to the Minister's answer.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: This launch was conducted as part of Fair Trading Week. I express my gratitude to Granville Boys High School for hosting the event. It is a fine local educational institution. The new My Next Car mobile phone application is a very useful tool that empowers consumers to gain as much information as they need to ensure the next car they buy is right for them.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: It is an Eddie app.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: As the Premier says, it is an Eddie app. Whether people are shopping for their next Toyota Camry or a Honda CRV for the family, Fair Trading's My Next Car application will ensure that they get best value for their money, or someone else's money. My Next Car allows consumers, using their mobile phone, to conduct a thorough check of any car they are thinking of buying, record details of cars they are interested in, use inspection check lists to identify, record and take photos of any problems, compare cars side by side, calculate loan amounts, look up tips and advice—that function is a good one—and, most importantly, conduct debt checks on any privately sold vehicle to ensure that there are no outstanding loans or money owing on the vehicle.

My Next Car will help people in New South Wales to avoid purchasing a vehicle that is encumbered, has previously been written off or has been stolen. I am delighted to launch this resource and I am happy to provide the Leader of the Opposition with a one-to-one lesson should he wish to pass on some car-buying tips to his backbench. The My Next Car mobile phone application adds to the growing suite of Fair Trading mobile phone applications. It is an achievement that this Government is proud of. ShopSmart and Scam Buster are additional free Fair Trading mobile phone applications that empower consumers. ShopSmart has been a great success since its release last year, providing handy access to information about refunds, lay-by rights and warranties to consumers while they shop.

Scam Buster enables consumers to be scam-wise and stay one step ahead of the criminals who prey upon the unwary. To date, there have been over 16,000 downloads by the public of these three mobile phone applications. These mobile phone applications are a great resource for consumers. They demonstrate smart, practical innovations from a Government that is delivering stronger outcomes for the people of New South Wales. It means that consumers are more empowered and informed in the marketplace across this great State. It means that consumers have more options and access to information how and when they want it. It means that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is listening and connecting with consumers throughout the State and delivering better and more convenient services. There is still more to do. Unlike Labor, we are embracing new approaches to service provision. It is because Labor did not care about what was best for the people of New South Wales that these mobile phone applications are a newcomer to Fair Trading. [*Extension of time granted.*]

If there were decisions to be made those opposite delayed making them; if there was action to be taken those opposite postponed it; and if there was work to be done they avoided it. No more; this Government is getting on with the job.

Question time concluded at 3.25 p.m.

CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM

Report

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 34I of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, of the report of the NSW Child Death Review Team for 2011, received 26 October 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 26 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, of the report of the Commission for Children and Young People for the year ended 30 June 2012, received 26 October 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION**Report**

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 103 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996, of the following reports for the year ended 30 June, received on 26 October 2012:

Police Integrity Commission
Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission

Ordered to be printed.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN**Report**

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 190 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, of the report of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2012, received 26 October 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Report**

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled, "Investigation into allegations that staff from a number of local councils and other public authorities accepted secret benefits from suppliers and that staff from two local councils facilitated payment of false invoices from suppliers", dated October 2012, received 29 October 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION**Report**

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 61D of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and section 39 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission for the year ended 30 June 2012, incorporating the reports of the Privacy Commissioner and the Information Commissioner, received 31 October 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW TEAM**Report**

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 101K of the Coroners Act 2009, of the report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team for the year ended 30 June 2012, received 31 October 2012.

Ordered to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Report for 2012, Volume Three, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 31 October 2012.

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Performance Audit Report entitled, "The impact of the raised school leaving age: Department of Education and Communities", received out of session and authorised to be printed on 1 November 2012.

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Report for 2012, Volume Four, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 7 November 2012.

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Report for 2012, Volume Five, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 12 November 2012.

PUBLIC FINANCE AND AUDIT ACT

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the report on State Finances 2011-2012, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 31 October 2012.

INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT SAFETY REGULATOR

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 74 of the Rail Safety Act 2008, of the report entitled, "Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the Final Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Waterfall Rail Accident Reporting period: July-September 2012", received out of session and authorised to be printed on 9 November 2012.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt of the Government Response to Report 4/55 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled, "Report on the follow-up of the repeat recommendations from the Auditor-General's financial audits 2010", received out of session and authorised to be printed on 9 November 2012.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

Mr Stephen Bromhead, as Chair, tabled the report entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 28/55", dated 13 November 2012, together with the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 27/55, dated 23 October 2012.

Report ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Stephen Bromhead.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER-GENERAL

Reference

Mr MATT KEAN: I inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 299 (1), the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General has resolved to conduct an inquiry into issues arising out of the eighth general meeting with the Valuer-General, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

PETITIONS

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

Palliative Care Services

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

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**.

Eastern Suburbs Bus Service 311

Petition requesting the retention of the 311 bus service link to Central and Circular Quay and improvements to frequency and reliability, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pets on Public Transport

Petition requesting that pets be allowed on public transport, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport

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

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

Petition requesting the ban of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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**.

Container Deposit Levy

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

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

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Tweed Byron Local Area Command Centre—lodged 18 September 2012 (Mr Geoff Provest)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Gosford Foreshore Development—lodged 20 September 2012 (Mr Chris Holstein)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Business Lapsed

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 630, 673, 679, 681 to 683 and 686, and General Business Order of the Day No. 1, Truth in Labelling (Free-range Eggs) Bill 2011, lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 105 (3).

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it that General Business Order of the Day No. 1, Truth in Labelling (Free-range Eggs) Bill 2011 had lapsed.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Child Sexual Abuse

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.32 p.m.]: I ask that priority be given to my motion, which states that this House supports the Commonwealth's decision to implement a national royal commission into child sexual abuse in religious organisations and other institutions. The Prime Minister said that the royal commission would cover all religious organisations, schools, government bodies and non-profit groups, such as scouts and sports clubs, and that it would examine the response of institutions, children's services, police and the legal system. She further said:

Child sexual abuse is a vile thing, it's an evil thing. It's done by evil people, but we've seen too, I think, in recent revelations, it's not just the evil people who do it. There has been a systemic failure to respond to it and to better protect children.

We need to learn the lesson about how institutions can best respond when there are allegations of sexual abuse of children.

This motion deserves priority because the children and victims in this country need a voice, a voice that is long overdue to be heard. Those responsible who have preyed upon children and have not been held to account, those who have covered up and those who have orchestrated the movement of paedophiles across this State, across the seas and throughout the world finally must be held to account. This is not a new issue. The issue has plagued this nation for too long. It is a tragic stain on our nation's history. It is a national problem and it needs a national response, and we have received that with the Prime Minister's announcement of a royal commission.

Unfortunately, I have had the personal experience of being the lead investigator into child sexual assaults by clergy within the Maitland-Newcastle diocese. This motion deserves priority because already 11 clergy within that diocese have been charged and convicted since my investigation started in 1995. In addition, six Catholic teachers have been convicted and three priests are currently on trial. This year for the first time a priest has been charged with concealing the crimes of another and 12 priests are involved in substantial compensation claims. The highest known compensation payout to a victim—one of the 35 victims for whom I have investigated—amounted to \$3 million. Today two police strike forces are investigating whether church officials were involved in covering up crimes. I can produce material evidence that proves in my matter that they did cover up the crime. They should be ashamed and finally they will be held to account. That is why this motion deserves priority.

Child Sexual Abuse

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.35 p.m.]: My motion, which deserves priority, is that the House acknowledges the pain and hurt inflicted on so many victims of child sexual abuse, congratulates the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, on announcing the establishment of a royal commission into child sexual abuse, and pledges to work in a bipartisan manner with the Commonwealth to overcome any barriers to a royal commission having unfettered powers to investigate these matters.

I also move this motion to demonstrate our bipartisan support for this absolute scourge on our society. For far too long child sexual abuse victims have not received the support they need and, more importantly, deserve. For far too long this unspoken atrocity has been committed across our society, not just in religious and community organisations but also, tragically, in the home. Far too often children who need protection and special treatment have been put in unacceptable and untenable situations. In many instances, they have been placed in the care of those who should have been beyond reproach, who should have known better and who should have been people they could trust.

This week the Prime Minister has taken action that is long overdue because this matter warrants a royal commission. It is pleasing that now something is being done on this significant issue. My hope is not only that the royal commission will expose the perpetrators of this appalling crime but, more importantly, that solutions will be found to make it easier for prosecutions to take place. I hope that victims who are forced to give evidence and recount appalling things—things that most of us could not even comprehend—will be given the support they need to deal with their post-traumatic stress at the time of relaying their experiences and following prosecutions.

It is important that we as a Parliament and a nation finally acknowledge the circumstances in which these people have found themselves and give them the support they need at every level necessary. These people have lived with an unspeakable truth, although a few have come forward over the years to fight for justice for

these victims. My hope is that not only will justice come in conviction but that justice will come in changes to our system which lead to circumstances where people are confident that when they speak out they will get support, that they will not be questioned about the credibility of the allegations they make, and that this Parliament, the Commonwealth Parliament and the community will show them the support, regard and respect that they need and deserve.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Motions Accorded Priority

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.38 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide:

- (1) That the following motion, to be moved by the member for Dubbo, be considered as the motion accorded priority at this sitting:

"That this House:

 - (1) supports the Commonwealth's decision to implement a national royal commission into child sexual abuse in religious organisations and other institutions;
 - (2) acknowledges the pain and hurt inflicted on so many victims of child sexual abuse;
 - (3) congratulates the Prime Minister on announcing the establishment of a royal commission into child sexual abuse; and
 - (4) pledges to work in a bipartisan manner with the Commonwealth to overcome any barriers to a royal commission having unfettered powers to investigate these matters."
- (2) The following speaking time limits apply:
 - (a) member for Dubbo—5 minutes;
 - (b) Leader of the Opposition—5 minutes;
 - (c) two Government members—3 minutes each;
 - (d) two Opposition members—3 minutes each;
 - (e) member for Northern Tablelands—3 minutes;
 - (f) member for Lake Macquarie—3 minutes; and
 - (g) member for Dubbo in reply—3 minutes.
- (3) Permit the conclusion of the motion accorded priority prior to the commencement of government business.

In the normal course, the House would vote when dealing with two competing motions to be accorded priority. In this case, the motions to be moved by the member for Dubbo and the Leader of the Opposition appear to have a unanimous purpose, namely, the belief that the evil deeds of the people involved in such actions should be exposed. In the circumstances, I propose that we deal with both motions as a merged motion. I note that, in view of the fact that members will be effectively debating a merged motion, I propose that the following speaking times apply: the member for Dubbo, five minutes; the Leader of the Opposition, five minutes; two Government members, two Opposition members, the member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Lake Macquarie, three minutes each; and the member for Dubbo in reply, three minutes. I propose that consideration of government business be deferred until the conclusion of this debate. I acknowledge that this is a highly unusual action—and one I do not think I have seen occur in this place in my two decades here—but I believe it is appropriate because this is a very significant and important motion. As I said, there is significant oneness of mind and of purpose on the part of the House and this is the best way to approach this debate.

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

Motion agreed to.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**Motion Accorded Priority**

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.42 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) supports the Commonwealth's decision to implement a national royal commission into child sexual abuse in religious organisations and other institutions;
- (2) acknowledges the pain and hurt inflicted on so many victims of child sexual abuse;
- (3) congratulates the Prime Minister on announcing the establishment of a royal commission into child sexual abuse; and
- (4) pledges to work in a bipartisan manner with the Commonwealth to overcome any barriers to a royal commission having unfettered powers to investigate these matters.

The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18, verses 1 to 14, states:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes! 8 And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out, throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven ...

14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

For too many generations too many of our children have perished at the hands of predators across religious organisations and many other institutions, government and non-government—and enough is enough. Those words in the Gospel of Matthew, written some 1,900 years ago, pronounce very clearly that the consideration of ever harming a child in the most abhorrent way is not acceptable in any form. Those who stand at the pulpit and preach the gospels to people in the congregation and then sin against those very gospels commit the grossest act of betrayal that can befall any human, and it is the second grossest act that can befall an innocent child.

That has happened far too often in our community, and this royal commission is well overdue. I commend the many advocates who for generations have pursued relentlessly and tirelessly the establishment of a royal commission, which will finally be held. I commend the Premier of New South Wales for last Friday showing his leadership on this issue and saying enough is enough in relation to specific allegations raised by Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox. I commend the Premier for his courage, which I am sure was instrumental in the Federal Government's acknowledging 48 hours later the vital need for a long-overdue investigation into this issue by a royal commission.

We finally have an opportunity to give a voice to the victims of the obscene abuse that has occurred—a tragic stain on our nation's history, which needs to be corrected forthwith. My involvement with this issue relates to investigations of the Catholic Church, but I acknowledge that clergy are not the only perpetrators of this horrible offence. I acknowledge that in recent years the Catholic Church has put in place systems to deal better with incidents that are brought to its attention. But too many decades of unresolved issues still need to be drawn to the attention of the community in a proper format and structure so that the perpetrators can be brought to account. Too many atrocities from the past need finally to see the light of day.

As I said in my opening remarks, in 1995 I unfortunately had to interview many victims of a predator, Father Vincent Gerard Ryan, who assaulted 35 victims over a 20-year period. The tragedy is there for everyone to see. In 1975 when those offences were reported the church covered them up. The church cast him out to Victoria to spend a year there swanning around before returning to the diocese where he preyed upon more children—another 23 children who should never have been victims of sexual assault but who were due to the behaviour and the criminality of people who finally will be held to account. Father Ryan was convicted and he received the jail sentence he deserved.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.47 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I unequivocally support the decision that has been taken to conduct a national royal commission into

child sexual abuse, as announced by the Prime Minister. I congratulate the Prime Minister on her strong, wise and compassionate leadership in establishing a royal commission. There are times when a good and strong leader has to make a gut call—a call that is sometimes difficult and can create difficulties. But a call such as this one is the right call. For far too long, this issue has been swept under the carpet by too many people within organisations—religious, community, educational or other institutions in our community—in this State and this nation.

For far too long, people who have been placed in positions of trust have used that position of authority and trust to exploit young, vulnerable children across this nation. Those children were put in circumstances where when they raised concerns with their parents their allegations were doubted simply because the perpetrators of these absolutely disgusting and disgraceful crimes used their position of authority to intimidate and stand over parents. In some cases they simply used their position of trust to convince parents it was beyond belief that they would perpetrate crimes of such an appalling, disgusting and despicable nature.

This royal commission needs to do a series of things. First, it needs to bring closure to victims whose suffering has stretched over decades. Victims need closure not just for the period during which they were abused but also for the period after the abuse, when they dealt with their feelings of guilt and questioned whether they had contributed to the circumstances in which they found themselves. Sadly, this royal commission comes too late for some. Some victims struggled for years and years with the guilt, questions and doubt, and tragically ended their lives because no-one would listen, no-one would believe and no-one would give them the support and comfort they needed.

For those who are still with us, hopefully this royal commission will bring closure and more. Hopefully it will make recommendations about counselling and other assistance that victims require to get on with their lives. Hopefully this royal commission will make recommendations about how we should prosecute these matters and find that we should not question the veracity of a young person or treat their evidence in court as questionable because of their age. The nature of these allegations warrants their being treated with respect; they should not be questioned. In years gone by we saw changes made in cases involving women who were victims of sexual assault, and I hope this royal commission will recommend that similar changes be made in cases of child sexual assault so that prosecutions can occur. I hope this royal commission will recommend that victims not be questioned about their motivation or about whether events really occurred, and that their evidence will be treated in an appropriate manner.

I hope this royal commission will ensure also that perpetrators of this most despicable and destructive crime are brought to justice. If there are systemic issues within organisations or within our legal system I hope this royal commission identifies those problems and makes recommendations to this place and to the Commonwealth that we can implement to remove any doubt that people who perpetrate a crime such as this have nowhere to hide. The system will not hide them from justice and the victims of these crimes will not see the system fail them. When crimes such as this are perpetrated we do not want a legal system; we want a justice system. We want to ensure that justice is done, not some legal process, and that these victims get the justice they so rightly deserve.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [3.52 p.m.]: I support this motion because our society needs to tackle the insidious evil of child sexual abuse thoroughly, vigorously and transparently. To do this, first, we need a royal commission because there are not just isolated but repeated incidents of criminality. There are not just instances of criminality but systemic failures to respond to allegations. Secondly, we need a national approach because child sexual abuse transcends State borders. Thirdly, we need to look beyond the Roman Catholic Church to all organisations, government and non-government, religious and secular, because the sweeping under the carpet to which the Leader of the Opposition referred has infected organisations far and wide. We need no definitive time limit on the investigations of the royal commission. As Federal Opposition legal affairs spokesman, Senator Brandis, said, while we should have an indicative time limit, we must make sure that when avenues of inquiry are uncovered they are fully explored.

We need to consult with interested parties. We need to consult victims groups, religious leaders and community organisations about the terms of reference for the royal commission. Whatever the trauma, embarrassment or shame that is caused to institutions, they will have nothing to fear in the long run because whether they are religious organisations seeking to serve God and their fellow citizens or secular organisations seeking to serve the public interest, they will be better organisations if we root out the insidious evil of child sexual abuse. More important than the long-term welfare of these institutions is the long-term welfare of victims. We need a royal commission so that the victims have a chance to be heard and a chance for justice and

for healing. We need a royal commission to get to the truth and to punish perpetrators and heal the victims. We also need a royal commission to prevent a recurrence of what has happened in the past. By that I mean not only the horrendous child abuse but also the wilful blindness of institutions or their sheer negligence in not having proper safeguards. We need cultural change. I hope this royal commission will achieve all those things and prevent a recurrence of the evils of the past.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [3.55 p.m.]: I support this significant motion in the spirit of bipartisanship and in the understanding that the Prime Minister has made a momentous announcement. A royal commission does many things, one of which is perhaps something we have not considered yet. It will ensure that this unspeakable issue, which is difficult for people to talk about, will be at the forefront of the Australian public mind. That is a very good thing. All members will agree that the abuse of trust of these children, often babies, can never be rectified. I do not think a royal commission can do it, but that is not the point. Young people who were entrusted to the care of church organisations, non-government organisations and in some cases government organisations had their innocence taken from them and have lived with the consequences of that their whole lives. It often makes it difficult for them to parent in the way they would probably like, and so the cycle of abuse may be repeated.

From my experience with the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in the 1980s, I know that a royal commission also does something else: It provides a place where people who have been through horrendous experiences can go to talk about them. Many can finally be vindicated by having their stories heard. That is a powerful aspect of a royal commission. The human cost of sexual assault can never be estimated. In many cases, children were not just sexually abused but also physically assaulted, starved and tortured. The mental anguish and the emotional scars can never be erased, but I am proud to join all members of the House in supporting this royal commission. I remind the House that as we all know—and as I am sure the Minister for Community Services, who is in the Chamber, will agree—most sexual assault takes place in homes, in bedrooms and lounge rooms. This motion, however, concerns the horrendous institutional abuse of children who were entrusted to the care of churches and other organisations.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.58 p.m.]: I support the motion. As was observed earlier, it is an unusual motion in the sense that it is a combination of Opposition and Government motions, but I think that is a reflection of current thinking. We recognise that it is now appropriate to expose what has been swept under the carpet and hidden away for too long and to bring to justice those who have offended against all human decency.

I was the shadow Minister for Community Services for some years and I worked extensively with many affected families, including a very substantial number of Indigenous families when I was the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for 11 years, so I am able to say that the damage that was done to generations of people—those who were young people at the time but who are now adults—is inestimable. Both the actions last week of the Premier in instituting a special commission of inquiry and more recently the Federal Government in establishing a broader inquiry across the entire country reflect the community concern about these issues, as they rightfully should.

It must be said that there are many good people in each of the institutions and the churches that will be investigated. As a police officer, the member for Dubbo has firsthand experience of investigating a particular area. I hope—and this is certainly the impression I obtained as shadow Minister—that a minority of people in each institution has committed those heinous crimes. Nevertheless, this debate is an opportunity for the House to strongly condemn the actions of the perpetrators and simultaneously support the action of the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government. It is an opportunity to set politics aside and support the community's commitment to ensuring that we put right what has been wrong for so many years.

The simple fact is that we now have the chance of finding those who hopefully are a minority in each of the institutions—the churches and organisations—and to ensure that they are brought to justice so that, as best we can and as difficult and challenging as it is, we give some sense of closure and some sense of resolution to victims, as the Leader of the Opposition said. I am not sure we will achieve that but at least we will do what the community should have done many years ago—stand up for vulnerable people, stand up for young people, and make sure that the evil purveyors of those heinous crimes are brought to justice.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.01 p.m.]: My contribution to discussion of this omnibus motion in this bipartisan debate will be brief. Already comments have been made that this is an unusual proceeding, but it reflects the significance of the issue and of decisions made recently. I wish to make a couple of points about the

decision made by the Prime Minister. First, it is essential, in my view, for a national inquiry to be undertaken. Abuse and assault do not stop at State boundaries. The institutions that have been focused upon are not confined to one jurisdiction. One concern I had about calls for State inquiries was that a State inquiry would miss that national aspect, so a national inquiry is particularly welcome in that sense. Of course many of the jurisdictional issues are State based, so it is absolutely essential for the States to cooperate with the national inquiry; otherwise, the national inquiry simply will not go anywhere.

I support a broad-ranging inquiry. Reports to date have tended to focus on one institution. I am the last person to say that that institution does not have things to answer for, but it is certainly the case that the focus should extend beyond just the Catholic Church. We would be denying the reality of the pain experienced by a whole range of people if we did not understand how broad and wide ranging the inquiry needs to be. I am particularly pleased that we have not followed the Victorian example of holding a parliamentary committee of inquiry. Frankly, I could not imagine anything worse than a parliamentary committee inquiring into the issues. Regardless of what happens, it is essential that the inquiry is not a parliamentary but a proper inquiry. I am delighted that it will be a proper inquiry.

It is worth noting just how widespread is the sexual assault of children. The point has been made already that the vast majority of instances occur in the home. Certainly, having attended a Catholic school and having been a legal practitioner for a number of years, the issues are not unknown to me but I am astonished at how widespread they are. Since I became the shadow Attorney General, quite a large number of people have complained to me about things that have happened to them or their family, including people I know who had not previously disclosed the complaint to me. It is extraordinary how widespread the incidence is, which simply reinforces the need for a proper inquiry to be conducted.

The royal commission terms of reference have not yet been decided, but one aspect I am particularly interested in is some research about the extraordinarily high rate of victims' suicides. That was one matter that prompted the Victorian inquiry and suicides have been raised with me on a number of occasions by advocates in the field. Last year I placed some questions on the *Notice Paper* relating to evidence that may exist in the New South Wales jurisdiction. There does not seem to have been any collection of that evidence. I am not seeking to make a partisan point; it is just the way the incidence has developed. It would be useful to research that aspect of the issue. While it is important to provide a platform from which people may tell their stories, as the member for Canterbury said, it is also terribly important for the inquiries to focus on who did what, and on apprehending the perpetrators as well as those who protected the perpetrators.

Mr RICHARD TORBAY (Northern Tablelands) [4.04 p.m.]: I support the motion before the House and acknowledge the appropriately bipartisan way in which it is being debated. At a time when parliaments are regarded in a somewhat negative light, issues such as this highlight the best of our parliamentary processes and the best of members of Parliament, who are advocates on behalf of the community. It always takes courage to arrive at a position where we can debate an issue such as child sexual abuse. I commend all those who have had the courage to speak up and speak out. Most recently the member for Dubbo adopted a very courageous position, and I commend him for that. I mention also that some months ago the member for Lake Macquarie approached me to obtain my support for a royal commission and for a motion that he wanted to move in the House. He received the support he sought, and I commend him for having the courage to speak up some considerable time ago in relation to this issue. I note for the record that other members have acted similarly. I congratulate the Prime Minister on the action she has taken.

A number of issues concerning my electorate have been highlighted, and one is a particularly high-profile issue. I will not deal with the matter in detail because it is under investigation. However, I took the opportunity to visit the family of the victim—the parents of a young man who had committed suicide. That matter is under investigation so I cannot elaborate, but for as long as I live I will never forget the look on the faces of his mother and father. Many years later, his father is still wiping away tears every 15 seconds when he discusses the facts. He told me that nobody listened, nobody appeared to care; that is the position that was adopted.

The royal commission is appropriate and needed. Parliamentarians must ensure that its terms of reference meet community expectation. That is critical. I am sure that many members of this Parliament have seen what I saw, and what I will never forget: the look of complete despair and hopelessness on the face of a parent. I had never felt more helpless in my life than when I listened to the parents of a young man who committed suicide because of sexual abuse. The inquiries will provide an opportunity for people to see that the system will listen. It will not sweep matters under the carpet. It will not, as has happened to date—which was

the only conclusion I could reach as a result of meeting with the parents of that young man—call victims and parents liars by its actions and make them feel completely abandoned. I commend the motion to the House. Let us do something good for this country and its victims.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [4.07 p.m.]: At the outset, I thank the Government and the Opposition for the respectful manner in which this motion has been brought forward and for bipartisan debate of the issues. That approach is entirely appropriate in light of the gravity of the issues. In August I wrote to the Premier and asked him to cause a royal commission of inquiry to be conducted into sexual abuse within the Catholic Church and other institutions. The letter states in part:

I wish to draw your attention to the recent case, of which I know you are aware, in which Mr John Pirona, a resident of Lake Macquarie, member of the NSW Fire Service, and most importantly a husband, and father of two young children took his own life, no longer able to bear the pain that he carried since being sexually abused by a Catholic priest in the 1970s. This is only one of a seemingly interminable list of offences against innocent and vulnerable young people that we know has occurred.

For every offence we are aware of it is highly likely there have been many more—many victims have no doubt carried the knowledge of their abuse with them to their graves, never having felt able to tell what happened, let alone seek justice or compensation.

Premier, this deplorable situation has to stop.

I will not go on with the letter, but I congratulate those who have brought about the situation where we now have the ultimate inquiry into sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and other institutions. I say specifically the Catholic Church because, if we aggregate all the instances around the country, the Catholic Church will not be the majority but it probably is the most represented single entity. It is disingenuous for Cardinal Pell to dismiss the significance of those numbers. On 16 September I attended a rally at Panthers in Newcastle, which was attended by 400 people. I helped to dispense water—it was a very hot and emotionally charged day as people gave their stories of sexual abuse and its impact on them or their families.

There were moments when the faces of the 400 people at the meeting reflected painful memories that were re-ignited and you could see the tears fall. Some courageous people were at that meeting: Joanne McCarthy of the *Newcastle Herald* should be acknowledged, as should be David Shoebridge, MLC, from The Greens, who brought about that meeting; Tracy and Lou Pirona, the family of John Pirona; Peter Gogarty, of whom I am sure the member for Dubbo is aware; and Detective Inspector Peter Fox. Many courageous people and victims have been involved. I pay tribute to the Government and particularly to Troy Grant, the member for Dubbo. I thank him for his courage and leadership on this matter.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.10 p.m.], in reply: I acknowledge and thank the Leader of the Opposition for his heartfelt contribution to this motion and I commend him for his sincerity and bipartisan approach. I know how genuine his words were and I thank him on behalf of my 35 victims—or, rather, 34, and I will explain that shortly. The member for Cronulla, the member for Canterbury, the Leader of the House, the member for Liverpool, the member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Lake Macquarie each spoke from heartfelt experience. Although we have limited time to canvass such a complex and wide-ranging subject, this debate has covered many issues. For example, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the sweeping under the carpet, the member for Canterbury spoke about the mental torture and different types of abuse that befall children, and the member for Northern Tablelands spoke about his experiences. I thank members very much for their fine contributions to debate on this motion. The announcement of a royal commission has provided hope to victims.

I mentioned that I was involved with 34 victims and that I would explain why I initially referred to my 35 victims. During my investigation I had the grim task of having to locate, approach and identify a large number of victims who were previously unknown to me but whom the priest disclosed to me during a record of interview. When I put to him that I had significant evidence of other victims he disclosed another 23 to me and I had to track them down. He had had enough and he had to get it off his chest. He disclosed a total number of 35 victims. I found 34 of them. I could not find the thirty-fifth victim. I tracked down his parents, I went to their house and asked for his whereabouts. Unfortunately, he was in the cemetery. The parents of that victim had no idea why their son took his own life.

I have done a lot of tough things in my life, but one of the toughest things was explaining to those parents why their son had died and that his death was totally preventable. But because of the actions of an arrogant, selfish bastard of a man by the name of Monsignor Patrick Cotter and a number of nuns from the Sisters of St Joseph based in Lochinvar in the Newcastle diocese, those parents never had the opportunity to

grieve for their son properly until a police officer knocked on their door one terrible night in 1995. This is only one example of the stories that will be told. This royal commission will provide families and victims with the opportunity to tell their stories properly about what has befallen them. I will be lining up with my skates on to give evidence at this royal commission because, unfortunately, I have far too many tragic tales to tell.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I am sure I speak for every member of the House in thanking members for their contributions this afternoon. I am sure many other members would have liked to have taken part in the debate. The sincerity of the contributions this afternoon was certainly appreciated and indicates the feeling, support and love that this House has for all the victims and families who have been involved.

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

Motion agreed to.

RETAIL TRADING AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Discharge of Order of the Day

The Deputy-Speaker reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day discharged the order of the day for the second reading of the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012.

Legislative Council
13 November 2012

NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES
Deputy President

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second Reading

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [4.16 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill was introduced in the other place on 17 October 2012 and is in the same form. The second reading speech appears at pages 15748 to 15751 in the *Hansard* for that day. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Richard Amery and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

MARINE SAFETY AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL VESSEL NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION) BILL 2012

Second Reading

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.17 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 4 to 6 of the proof *Hansard* for that day, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.17 p.m.]: I have the honour to lead on behalf of the Opposition in debate on the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessels National Law Application) Bill 2012. I thank the Minister for Roads and Ports for making maritime officials available to provide a briefing to the Opposition on this legislation. The bill is the result of discussions between the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers at the 2007 Council of Australian Governments to endeavour to introduce a common law to

regulate commercial vessels. At the time there was some criticism about wall-to-wall Labor governments, but that is the genesis of the bill. In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to begin to negotiate an intergovernmental agreement, which was finally executed in August 2011.

The bill creates the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. In effect, it applies the Commonwealth law that was enacted in September 2012 in the Commonwealth Maritime Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act to ensure that there are no constitutional limitations to its application. As the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure and Transport pointed out in his second reading speech in May, the Commonwealth legislation, which this bill will ensure applies in New South Wales, replaces some 50 Acts in seven Australian jurisdictions to provide clarity. Its purpose is to create one single law for the regulation of commercial vessels and attempts to remove what was called the "regulatory burden". So ridiculous were those regulatory burdens on the seven jurisdictions that a boatbuilder who sold a commercial vessel for operation in another State had to spend a significant amount to ensure the vessel complied with the particular State's legislation.

The Commonwealth legislation adopted in this bill will apply to 9,500 New South Wales commercial vessels and 15,000 people who hold a New South Wales licence to operate commercial vessels. The Commonwealth and New South Wales governments envisage that the application of this legislation could commence as early as January next year and could be a model for economic reform in this nation. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority will be the peak organisation that administers the national regulations. However, individual States will have a delegated function. For example, Roads and Maritime Services in New South Wales will operate under the Australian Maritime Safety Authority to administer the national regulations, which will not be terribly difficult because, as Roads and Maritime Services representatives assured me, the national standard is based on New South Wales standards. Regardless of whether that is the case, each State will be delegated under the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, which means that the cost of establishing the national regulation is almost minuscule.

All States will continue to apply a particular national standard under the Commonwealth legislation. My observation is that it has taken at least five years to come up with a sensible solution. Why do the States and the Commonwealth haggle to retain control over their own dungheaps? In August 2011 the Commonwealth and all the States signed off on a joint communiqué—interestingly, involving the New South Wales Premier—agreeing that Australia is well placed to ride out the current global turbulence. Our solid economic growth, strong labour market, health and public finances, and well-regulated and well-capitalised financial institutions place us in good stead. We have a good track record in dealing with global instability. It seems that discussions held between the Premiers and the Prime Minister do not reflect those that take place in this House regarding bipartisan cooperation.

All members of this House know that the private sector has been screaming out for agreement between the Commonwealth and the States to provide legislative consistency. The private sector simply wants national standards to apply as businesses cross State boundaries. As the communiqué indicated, if Australia is to remain well placed in the world to withstand the economic pressures, the States need to get over their parochialism. This legislation indicates that the States and the Commonwealth can easily apply national standards and national regulatory regimes. I hope that future agreements of this nature and their implementation do not take the five years this has taken to reach fruition. Nevertheless, this bill should provide a benchmark of the ways in which the Commonwealth and the States can work together for the national benefit rather than fight their little parochial battles along individual colonial State lines.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [4.25 p.m.]: I support the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill 2012. The bill amends the Marine Safety Act 1998 to give effect in New South Wales to a nationally consistent scheme to regulate marine safety in relation to domestic commercial vessels in two ways. First, by applying the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law of the Commonwealth as a law of New South Wales and, secondly, by making provision to help ensure that the Commonwealth law and the applied law of this State are administered uniformly by the Commonwealth as if they constituted a single Commonwealth law. In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a national approach to regulating domestic commercial vessels in Australia and to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority being the national safety regulator.

In August 2011 the State Premiers, the Territory Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister signed an intergovernmental agreement on commercial vessel safety reform. That agreement set out the administrative governance and funding arrangements for the national system. The Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 was passed by the Commonwealth Parliament and received royal assent in

September 2012. That Act will commence by proclamation, perhaps as early as January next year, and will apply the national law to the extent of the Commonwealth's constitutional reach. This legislation, if enacted, will apply that national law in New South Wales to cover any gap in the Commonwealth's constitutional reach. The bill will establish clear and consistent requirements that will improve safety, and provide economic benefits and more certainty for the New South Wales commercial vessel industry. The national law will establish a national system that will unify, simplify and improve commercial vessel safety across Australia.

New South Wales has almost 9,500 commercial vessels and 15,000 holders of a licence to operate a commercial vessel to which the national law will apply. The national law will apply to vessels used for commercial, government or research activities, with some exclusions. The national law will not apply to recreational vessels, foreign vessels, defence vessels, vessels regulated under the Navigation Act 2012, vessels owned by schools or community groups, inflatable rafts, sailboards, paddleboards, surf skis, kiteboards or towed recreational equipment. The inclusion or exclusion of vessels in the national system will be determined by regulation and agreed to by the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials Committee. This will ensure that recreational boat share of vessels will not be captured in the national system. However, boat share vessels used in connection with a commercial activity will still be regulated as commercial vessels, as they currently are under New South Wales law.

Similarly, the regulations under the national law ensure that a vessel is not captured simply because it is sponsored during a sporting event, used for a promotional activity, has a person paid to operate the vessel or be a crew member, or used for paid training by the vessel owner. There has been consultation with stakeholder groups such as the Boating Industry Association of NSW, Yachting Australia and the Australian Institute of Sport to ensure that there are no unintended consequences for particular groups or activities. The national law establishes a national system for commercial vessel safety regulation. It establishes the Australian Maritime Safety Authority as the national regulator, national requirements for vessels and crew, safety obligations for individuals who have a role in the production and operation of commercial vessels, and a national compliance and enforcement system with consistent offences and penalties for safety breaches that put passengers or crew at risk.

The bill will provide agreed national standards for the design, construction, operation and crewing of commercial vessels and will ensure consistency in the application of these safety standards across the country. These standards are already applied in New South Wales. The consistent application of national standards will allow boatbuilders in New South Wales to sell their vessels to buyers and operators in other States, knowing that the vessel will not be subject to further inspections and possibly costly modifications when operated in another State. There will be transitional arrangements under the national law. Existing New South Wales vessels will continue to operate under their current arrangements, and New South Wales registration and survey certificates will continue to be recognised. As these certificates expire, they will be replaced with national certificates.

The new standards will bring benefits to the industry. For example, new licences specifically designed for the aquaculture industry are proposed as part of the review of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels, part D, Crew Competencies. These new licences require minimal sea service and only entry level training. They will make it easier for those entering the fishing industry to obtain a commercial licence and they will provide industry with access to a larger qualified labour pool. New South Wales will have responsibility for regulating New South Wales waterways, ports, harbours and moorings. New South Wales will continue to enforce speed limits, and drug and alcohol offences on New South Wales waterways. Roads and Maritime Services will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the national system in New South Wales under delegation from the Australian Marine Safety Authority. Roads and Maritime Services will also continue to conduct survey inspections and issue survey, crew and operating certificates. New South Wales will set the fees for these services.

I now turn to funding of the new national system, which is based on the Council of Australian Governments Intergovernmental Agreement on Commercial Vessel Safety Reform. The budget for the national regulator is \$4 million in 2011 dollars for 2013. That is twice the amount of funding provided to the National Marine Safety Committee for the development of national standards for commercial vessels. The additional funding recognises the extra oversight and coordination that is necessary to ensure that the new national system is implemented effectively. The Commonwealth and all jurisdictions will fund the national regulator in accordance with arrangements set out in the Intergovernmental Agreement on Commercial Vessel Safety Reform. In 2013 New South Wales will contribute \$0.89 million and in 2014 and beyond it will contribute \$1.04 million. The New South Wales Government contribution for 2013 will be \$0.29 million, which is more than the current New South Wales contribution to the National Marine Safety Committee.

In the first half of 2016, or at a later date, funding arrangements will be reviewed by the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure. The bill will not affect current fees or funding arrangements. The New South Wales fee structure will continue to apply, but the Council of Australian Governments Intergovernmental Agreement commits all jurisdictions in the long term to move progressively to full cost recovery. Transport for NSW will work with industry to develop a new fee structure that will achieve this objective. I contrast the funding model that I have just described with what had been proposed initially by the Commonwealth: that the cost of the national system including all Marine Safety Authority and jurisdictional costs be recovered directly from the industry. That would have imposed excessive fee increases on industry. It was unanimously rejected by all jurisdictions and the funding model is as I just described.

To summarise: The new national system is a significant advance. It will reduce the regulatory burden on the maritime industry by providing consistent regulation of the domestic commercial vessel industry across Australia without compromising safety. There has been extensive consultation with industry and other stakeholders on the new system and there has been strong support for the system. It is another way that cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States can reduce red tape for industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.35 p.m.]: I join with my colleague the Member for Heffron in addressing the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill 2012. I will make a brief contribution to the debate on this legislation. I note at the outset that the New South Wales Opposition will not oppose the bill, which is the result of a 2009 Council of Australian Governments agreement to adopt a national approach to regulating domestic commercial vessels in Australia and establishing the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. The relevant Commonwealth Act is the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012, which aims to apply a single law throughout Australia for the regulation of all commercial vessels. While the Opposition supports this legislation and recognises the value of nationalising commercial law for marine vessels in Australia, I take this opportunity to reflect on intergovernmental relations in this country.

At the time of Federation in 1901 it was envisaged that the States would do the majority of governing in Australia. A few key areas of responsibility were to be managed by the Federal Government, including foreign policy and defence. The Australian Constitution explicitly states that any power not attributed directly to the Commonwealth Government by the Constitution was to be the responsibility of the States until such a time as they chose to invest that power in the Commonwealth. Since World War II there has been a trend in increasing authority of the Federal Government in areas that were traditionally the purview of the States. While we might support this legislation, members of this House must always be vigilant in safeguarding the responsibilities of this Parliament.

This legislation is required to counteract the aforementioned provision within the Constitution, which requires the formal consent of each State in order to hand any responsibility over to the Commonwealth. The purpose of this legislation is to provide a single regulatory system for commercial vessels. The legislation will reduce the regulatory burden on the maritime industry, provide consistency in relation to domestic commercial vessels and maintain safety standards. The bill will apply to approximately 10,000 commercial vessels throughout New South Wales. The bill does not affect recreational vessels, foreign vessels, defence vessels or vessels owned by schools and community groups. Watercraft such as inflatable rafts, sailboards, paddleboards, and surf skis are also excluded from the bill.

In his second reading speech in the other place the Minister confirmed that extensive consultation has been undertaken with the industry to ensure there are no unintended consequences of this legislation. I understand this consultation was a factor in the aforementioned exemptions of certain watercraft. As I said earlier, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will be the primary regulatory body responsible for overseeing maritime safety in Australia. This body was established by the principal Commonwealth Act and will be funded jointly by the States and the Commonwealth Government. The new legislation is scheduled to come into operation in January 2013, but existing vessels will be able to continue to operate under the previous legislation until their licenses expire, or 2016, whichever comes first. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [4.39 p.m.]: I support the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill 2012. Safety, whether it is on our roads or on our waterways, is of primary importance to this Government and it is in that context that the provisions of this legislation are enshrined. This bill is the result of extensive consultation and investigative work by key agencies such as Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime Services, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, other marine safety authorities and industry stakeholders.

This legislation will establish a national approach, as mentioned by the member for Bankstown, to regulating domestic commercial vessels in Australia and give the Australian Maritime Safety Authority the responsibility of national regulation. Included in the bill are provisions to allow for New South Wales to effect a seamless transition to the new national system. Under the provisions, vessels operating in New South Wales will continue to operate under their current arrangements, and registration and survey certificates in New South Wales will continue to be recognised as valid. As the current certificates expire, they will be replaced with national certificates. Crews will be able to continue working on New South Wales vessels using their existing certificates until they expire. Once the certificates have expired, crew members will be issued with a national certificate of competency.

I now turn to the fundamental provisions of the bill and why this Government is bringing it before the Parliament at this time. The national law will take effect from 1 January 2013, so it is essential that this legislation is passed through this Parliament as a matter of urgency. In 2013 the regulation of commercial vessel safety in Australia will change in three ways: first, a Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessels) National Law Act will apply to operations of the domestic commercial vessel fleet in all States and mainland Territories; second, the national law will enable a national system for commercial vessel safety; and, third, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will become the national regulator of the national system.

A national system has two very basic benefits. It will reduce complexity and increase certainty for the commercial vessel owners, operators, surveyors and suppliers on the requirements applying to design, construction, equipment, operation and qualifications. It will also promote a more efficient national market and reduce costs for business and labour by eliminating barriers to the transfer of skilled marine labour and commercial vessels between jurisdictions. The Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, when introducing this legislation in the other place, said:

The bill will also establish clear and consistent requirements that will improve safety and provide economic benefits and greater certainty for the New South Wales commercial vessel industry.

The new laws will result in a national system that will unify, simplify and improve commercial vessel safety across the country. It will apply to nearly 9,500 New South Wales commercial vessels and 15,000 people who hold a New South Wales licence to operate a commercial vessel. It will not apply to recreational vessels, foreign vessels, defence vessels, vessels regulated under the Navigation Act 2012 or vessels owned by primary or secondary schools or community groups. I remind the House at this time that this legislation has been three years in the making. It has been the subject of an extensive consultative process at the Commonwealth level, with input from relevant New South Wales agencies.

All along the way support for the reform has been strong. It simplifies processes and makes it easier for those people operating commercial vessels to get on with the job. Those people who rely on commercial vessels for their livelihoods can be confident that every commercial vessel operating in Australian waters will be required to meet the same standards set down in the national law. This means that those who design and build commercial vessels in one jurisdiction will not have to have that vessel recertified each time it enters different State-controlled waterways.

I am pleased to say that this legislation has been developed with mutual consent from various State and Commonwealth governments. Party politics have been put to one side in the interests of what is best for the industry and on that basis I would not expect any opposition to this bill from members opposite. This legislation will enable the New South Wales commercial fleet to make the most of its opportunities and build on its success by freeing up the weight of government restrictions and red tape.

Again, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of this legislation because it comprises reforms that the industry has been seeking for some time. The industry has been crying out for a system that makes sense instead of the current cumbersome system. Expecting busy commercial operators to get their heads around eight different sets of regulations is ridiculous. This legislation will ultimately have huge benefits for the New South Wales commercial vessels in the pursuit of their economic endeavours. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.45 p.m.]: I speak on the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill 2012. The purpose of the bill is to apply the Commonwealth Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Act Law 2012 to New South Wales so as to apply one law throughout Australia to the regulation of all commercial vessels. This bill arises from an intergovernmental

agreement on commercial vessel safety reform, which was agreed by the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers. A partnership between the Commonwealth and the States made it possible to establish this national system of regulation of all commercial vessels in Australia.

The introduction of this bill will allow for the establishment of a national system for commercial vessel safety to commence as early as January 2013. The introduction of consistent regulation would be of significant assistance to all parties affected by these changes by reducing the regulatory burden on the maritime industry. The implementation of a national system for commercial vessel safety regulation establishes the Australian Maritime Safety Authority as the national regulator. Once introduced, boatbuilders will no longer be required to make numerous modifications of vessels, thus enabling a nation-wide standard for production.

I know from growing up with family members who were primary producers on Sydney Harbour the difficulties involved in boatbuilding during the 1970s and 1980s. When vessels were sold to different jurisdictions they had to be modified, which placed considerable stresses on both the sellers and the purchasers. It is great to see that we will now have a national system. Vessel operators and their crewmen also will benefit by having the ability to work throughout the Commonwealth without being required to acquire new working certificates. Once this policy is introduced, the new standard will be the national certificate of competency. Measures have been taken to ensure there will be no interruption to vessels or their crew.

With the introduction of this legislation, all certificate or competency holders will be able to use their current certificates or competencies until they expire. This new nationalised structure will establish clear and consistent requirements that will improve safety for both the vessels and their crew. My family background has clearly shown me that safety is paramount on these commercial vessels, whether inside or outside Sydney Harbour, for both the crew and the captains. The national approach is welcomed by the Opposition. This bill will apply to the 9,500 commercial vessels and 15,000 people who hold a New South Wales licence to operate commercial vessels.

The national law will apply only to vessels used for commercial, government or research activities, subject to some exclusions. Extensive consultation has been carried out to ensure that there are no unintended consequences for the industry. The national law will not apply to recreational vessels, foreign vessels, defence vessels, vessels owned by primary or secondary schools or community groups or any vessels regulated under the Navigation Act 2012. The implementation of this bill will create one single national standard, which will consecutively bolster the safety for crew members onboard all commercial, government and research vessels and ensure that the regulatory burden presently affecting the maritime industry is alleviated through the creation of consistent regulation throughout Australia. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.49 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill 2012. The object of the bill is to amend the Marine Safety Act 1998 to provide a nationally consistent scheme for the regulation of marine safety in relation to domestic commercial vessels. The bill also makes provision to help ensure that the Commonwealth law and applied law of this State are administered on a uniform basis by the Commonwealth. The bill represents the culmination of a cross-agency and multijurisdictional effort by Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime Services, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, other marine safety authorities and industry stakeholders. All agencies are to be congratulated on their cooperation. A national system for commercial vessel safety will be established, which will start possibly as early as January 2013. The bill will apply the national law in New South Wales to cover any gap in the Commonwealth's constitutional reach.

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a national approach to regulating domestic commercial vessels in Australia and agreed that the Australian Maritime Safety Authority would be the national safety regulator. The adoption and application of nationally agreed safety standards is a benefit for the vessel construction industry, which currently faces confusing regulations. Vessel builders will now have a clear direction while working in a national market with national safety standards that they do not have to amend or change for interstate customers. The consistent application of national standards will allow boat builders in New South Wales to sell their vessels to buyers and operators in other States, safe in the knowledge that the vessel will not be subject to further inspections and possibly costly modifications when it operates in another State.

The national system also will allow qualified crew of commercial vessels to relocate to other States and avoid the costly and time-consuming process of gaining recognition of their qualifications. It has received strong

support, as it removes the red tape for the industry. The national law will apply to nearly 9,500 New South Wales commercial vessels and 15,000 people who hold a New South Wales licence to operate a commercial vessel. The national law will apply to vessels used for commercial, government or research activities, subject to some exclusions. It will not apply to recreational vessels, foreign vessels, defence vessels, vessels regulated under the Navigation Act 2012 or vessels owned by primary or secondary schools or community groups. It will not apply to inflatable rafts, sailboards, paddleboards, surf skis, kiteboards or towed recreational equipment.

New South Wales will retain responsibility for regulating New South Wales waterways, ports, harbours and moorings and will continue to enforce speed limits and monitor drug and alcohol offences on New South Wales waterways. Roads and Maritime Services will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the national system in New South Wales under delegation from the Australian Marine Safety Authority. Roads and Maritime Services also will continue to conduct survey inspections and issue survey, crew and operating certificates. Fees for these services will continue to be set by New South Wales. The policy of the Liberals and The Nationals is to reduce regulatory costs and cut red tape for businesses and the community. This bill helps to deliver that. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.53 p.m.], in reply: I commend and acknowledge all members who have contributed to this important debate on the Marine Safety Amendment (Domestic Commercial Vessel National Law Application) Bill 2012. I particularly thank the member for Heffron, the member for Cronulla, the member for Bankstown, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Fairfield and the member for Port Stephens, who have in a very articulate way highlighted the main provisions in the bill and demonstrated its application in New South Wales.

The bill will ensure that one national law applies to all commercial vessels across the country. There will be one national regulator, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, one set of national standards and a single administrative system that will provide consistent regulation without compromising safety. It is a very important step forward. It will simplify requirements for industry, allow industry to take advantage of opportunities for growth and slash red tape. The 3,300 commercial operators, nearly 10,000 vessels and 15,000 people who hold a New South Wales licence to operate a commercial vessel will benefit directly as a result of this bill.

The consistent application of national standards also will allow boat builders in New South Wales to sell their vessels to buyers and operators in other States, safe in the knowledge that the vessel will not be subject to further inspections and possibly costly modifications. Similarly, crew with New South Wales qualifications will be able to work in other States without having to undertake additional training or apply to have their certificate recognised in that jurisdiction, thereby avoiding a time-consuming and potentially costly process. Crew moving to New South Wales have had the benefit for some time of having their qualifications automatically recognised. Now New South Wales crew will benefit in the same way if they choose to move or take up positions interstate.

This is a significant achievement, replacing eight systems for the regulation of commercial vessels with one national system. The new national system will slash red tape for vessel builders, operators and crew, making it easier for industry to respond to opportunities for growth and for local communities to reap the benefits of a robust industry. I again thank all members who participated in the debate in this place and I congratulate my colleague and friend the Minister for Roads and Ports in the other place, who ensured that the New South Wales Government was able to introduce the bill. 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 Ms Gladys Berejiklian agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012**Second Reading****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.56 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I lead for the Opposition in this place; the shadow Minister for Primary Industries with carriage of this bill is the Hon. Steve Whan in the other place. This bill is what might be called an omnibus amendment bill that deals with comparatively minor amendments to a number of pieces of legislation within the Primary Industries portfolio. The Acts proposed for amendment are the Apiaries Act 1985, the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Stock Foods Act 1940 and the Stock Medicines Act 1989, and a minor amendment is proposed to the Pesticides Act 1999. The proposed amendments to the Apiaries Act include simplifying the process for the registration of beekeepers; extending the powers of the director general with respect to the removal or destruction of apiaries or beehives from or on land where the keeping of bees is prohibited or restricted; and allowing inspectors to issue permits authorising the movement or keeping of bees, beehives, apiary products or appliances that would otherwise contravene the Act.

The proposed amendment to the Fisheries Management Act is to make further provision with respect to the powers of Fisheries officers to require information for the purposes of the Act, including the production of records relating to commercial fishing activities, and the power to require persons to provide information and answer questions. The proposed amendments to the Stock Foods Act 1940 include removing exemptions that allow a person to sell stock food, whether in packages or in bulk, without providing information about that stock food either on the packaging or in a written statement with the delivery of bulk stock food, and allowing the director general to delegate the authorisation of inspectors and analysts under the Act.

The proposed amendments to the Stock Medicines Act 1989 include allowing veterinary practitioners to use low-risk animal pesticide products in a manner contrary to the usage instructions on the products; ensuring that unregistered stock medicines are prohibited for use on stock that is a member of a food-producing species; clarifying the responsibility of veterinary practitioners to keep records in relation to the use of restricted substances on food-producing species of stock; and removing the unnecessary regulatory requirements relating to the taking of samples, the manner of advertising of notices and the form of certificates issued by analysts. As I indicated, we regard these amendments as comparatively minor but they are perhaps of significance. As the Opposition indicated in the other place, we do not oppose the bill.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [4.59 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Camden has a long and proud history of agricultural production. John Macarthur founded Australia's sheep and dairy industries there and his two sons later introduced viticulture, fruit growing and wheat farming. It is because of this family and other families that settled in the Camden area and because of these very industries that it is said that Camden is the birthplace of the nation's wealth. Many families in Camden have been on the land in and surrounding Camden for generations and intend to continue to do so.

Having previously contributed to debate regarding our primary industries through the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill, the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment (Biosecurity) Bill and the Noxious Weeds Amendment Bill, I acknowledge the always changing needs of our agricultural industry and the need to make amendments, however small they may be, to improve the operation of legislation that regulates and governs this wideranging sector. Our primary industries are major contributors to our economy. Farmers are some of the hardest working people around and without them we would go hungry. I turn now to the amendments of this bill. Currently, the Fisheries Management Act 1994 allows a Fisheries officer to request information by a certain time. The Act will be amended to allow a Fisheries officer asking a question in relation to information and records that relate to commercial fishing activities and fish receivers to specify when this question should be answered and whether the answer should be in writing or given verbally, and to tailor the request to the matter being investigated.

This Act will also be amended to correct section 258A, which was amended in 2010. Section 258A provides a special power to require information in relation to aquatic habitats and threatened species conservation. The intention of this section was for urgent situations and where protection and/or minimisation of damage were urgent. Section 258B went on to provide for the issuing of warnings and for the protection against self-incrimination in these instances. However, section 258B, at the time was applied quite broadly in the

2010 amendments and took in the information requests of section 258. This bill will amend the Act and will bring back the original intention of section 258B to apply only under section 258A and not the entire section 258 so as to allow Fisheries investigations to not be unduly hindered.

This bill will amend the Stock Medicines Act 1985 and the Pesticides Act to allow low-risk animal pesticide products to be classed as stock medicines and not as pesticides under the Pesticide Act 1999. There will be no change to the classification of cattle and sheep dips and back liners. This amendment brings New South Wales in line with classifications used by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. The Stock Medicines Act will be amended to include a compounded substance prepared by a veterinarian or by a pharmacist on instruction from a veterinarian in the definition of "stock medicine". The Act will also be amended to clarify section 39E so that restricted substances are themselves a registered stock medicine and therefore clarify the current requirements of veterinarians when record keeping on the use of registered stock medicines.

The final amendment to this Act will remove unnecessary references to the manner in which certain matters are prescribed. They are the power of the inspector to take samples of stock medicine for analysis and examination; the manner in which notices are advertised by the director general relating to property forfeiture to the Crown; and the content or setting out of a certificate that an analyst issues under the purposes of the Act. This bill intends to amend the Stock Foods Act 1940. The first amendment aims to reduce the risk of disease and infection in animals by removing the exemption of bagged stock food to be sold unlabelled after repackaging provided the contents have not been altered or added to. The final amendment to this Act will allow the director general to delegate the authorisation of inspectors and analysts. Previously he has been unable to do so, which has led to inefficiencies and is out of line with other biosecurity-related legislation.

The final Act that this bill intends to amend is the Apiaries Act 1985. The first amendment will simplify part 3 of the Act, which makes provision for the registration of beekeepers. Unnecessary provisions will be removed and instead will be prescribed in the regulations or included as a condition for registration. Full public consultation will take place on the proposed regulation and will form part of the repeal program. The Minister indicated that the consultation process will occur by September next year. Secondly, the bill will allow different fees to be charged in different classes of registration and for an online class of registration. Currently the Act does not allow for this to occur. Clearly, a different registration fee should be charged for a person beekeeping as a hobby than for a person beekeeping for commercial purposes.

The third amendment to the Apiaries Act 1985 proposed by this bill will allow inspectors to issue permits to allow the movement and keeping of bees and related bee equipment and housing in relation to the prevention or spread of a bee disease. This will provide for a swift response and flexibility in bee movements or movement restrictions in an outbreak. The final amendment will increase the director general's powers to allow the director general to direct an inspector to remove excess beehives where there has been an order from the director general to reduce the number of hives at that premise. This will bring into line the current power the director general has to direct an inspector to remove all beehives at a property, if the beekeeper or owner of those bees has ignored the director general's original order to remove those hives in the interest of public health or safety. The content of this bill will allow simplification, flexibility, clarification and improved enforcement of particular Acts. Costs will be minimised in certain cases for both the department and the industry and, in turn, the public, and red tape will be cut. This is a minor housekeeping bill but nonetheless it is relevant to make our agricultural industry efficient, economic and disease-free. For those reasons I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.07 p.m.]: The objects of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 are:

- (a) to amend the Apiaries Act 1985:
 - (i) to simplify the process of registration for beekeepers, and
 - (ii) to extend the powers of the Director-General with respect to the removal or destruction of apiaries or beehives from or on land where the keeping of bees is prohibited or restricted, and
 - (iii) to allow inspectors to issue permits authorising the movement or keeping of bees, beehives, apiary products or appliances that would otherwise contravene the Act, and
- (b) to amend the Fisheries Management Act 1994 to make further provision with respect to the powers of fisheries officers to require information for the purposes of that Act, including the production of records relating to commercial fishing activities and the power to require persons to provide information and answer questions, and

- (c) to amend the Stock Foods Act 1940, and
- (d) to amend the Stock Medicines Act 1989, and
- (e) to make a minor amendment to the Pesticides Act 1999 as a consequence of the changes to the Stock Medicines Act 1989.

The agricultural sector is very important to the economy and the people of New South Wales. As a key contributor to our nation's terms of trade, our agricultural and fisheries sectors serve us internally as well as throughout the many markets in our region. This legislation will simplify the process of the registration of beekeepers. In New South Wales people keep bees professionally and recreationally. The wording of the current Act does not allow for different fees to be charged for different classes of registration. This legislation fixes that. Different classes of registration will be provided with different fees.

For example, it is appropriate that those who engage in beekeeping for recreation will not have to pay as much for registration as those who engage in beekeeping professionally. An online registration also will be available and feature lower fees, which the Government says will lower administration costs and create savings. Although an efficient system of administration and registration is good, I hope that relevant departments within the Primary Industries portfolio do not get rid of hardworking staff. We all know that the O'Farrell Government is no friend of the worker. The Government's continual rationalisation of public sector staff is taking away the income and livelihoods of families across New South Wales.

Other amendments to the Act effected by this bill will improve responsiveness in the event of outbreaks of animal and human diseases and pests. In relation to the Stock Medicines Act 1989, one amendment will allow some low-risk animal pesticides to be classified as stock medicine. This includes things like flea collars. At present flea collars and the like are listed in the Pesticides Act 1999 alongside products that are far more toxic. The change will bring New South Wales into line with classifications used by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. In practical terms, veterinarians will have greater flexibility when using these products and will be able to engage better in the battle against animal parasites, thereby directly helping our friends in the agricultural sector.

As I stated earlier, this legislation makes further changes to a few Acts—all with the intention of improving the flexibility of the agricultural sector. A more streamlined system will assist our farmers and veterinarians in their work. My only concern is the potential for job losses that may eventuate from the online registration of beekeepers. When the current New South Wales Government amends legislation or information requirements, the greatest concern in the mind of any Labor Party member is the loss of jobs. Labor members must be vigilant. In the past 18 months under the O'Farrell Government, New South Wales has witnessed a widespread loss of jobs. But I digress. While acknowledging the importance of our rural and agricultural sectors, the New South Wales Labor Party will always protect workers first. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.12 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I congratulate the Minister for Primary Industries on introducing this legislation, which is very important to my electorate, particularly to people engaged in primary industries. The bill was introduced to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of legislation governing agriculture and fisheries in New South Wales. This legislation is very important to the fishing industry in Myall Lakes and fishers who operate out of the Manning River, in Wallis Lake and offshore. The bill seeks to clarify existing provisions and remove anomalies that impact on the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement operations. During his second reading speech the Minister for Roads and Ports indicated that the New South Wales Farmers Association supported the amendments relating to agriculture. The objects of the bill are:

- (a) to amend the Apiaries Act 1985:
 - (i) to simplify the process of registration for beekeepers, and
 - (ii) to extend the powers of the Director-General with respect to the removal or destruction of apiaries or beehives from or on land where the keeping of bees is prohibited or restricted, and
 - (iii) to allow inspectors to issue permits authorising the movement or keeping of bees, beehives, apiary products or appliances that would otherwise contravene that Act, and
- (b) to amend the Fisheries Management Act 1994 to make further provision with respect to the powers of fisheries officers to require information for the purposes of that Act, including the production of records relating to commercial fishing activities and the power to require persons to provide information and answer questions, and

- (c) to amend the Stock Foods Act 1940:
 - (i) to remove exemptions that allow a person to sell stock food (whether in packages or in bulk) without providing information about that stock food either on the packaging or in a written statement with the delivery of bulk stock food, and
 - (ii) to allow the Director-General to delegate the authorisation of inspectors and analysts under that Act, and
- (d) to amend the Stock Medicines Act 1989:
 - (i) to allow veterinary practitioners to use low-risk animal pesticide products in a manner contrary to the usage instructions on the products, and
 - (ii) to ensure that unregistered stock medicines are prohibited for use on stock that is a member of a food-producing species, and
 - (iii) to clarify the responsibility of veterinary practitioners to keep records in relation to the use of restricted substances on food producing species of stock, and
 - (iv) to remove unnecessary regulatory requirements relating to the taking of samples, the manner of advertising of notices and the form of certificates issued by analysts, and
- (e) to make a minor amendment to the Pesticides Act 1999 as a consequence of the changes to the Stock Medicines Act 1989.

In his second reading speech the Minister stated:

Amendments to the Stock Foods Act 1940 and the Apiaries Act 1985 will improve the Government's responsiveness in controlling animal and human disease and pest outbreaks. Other amendments to the Apiaries Act 1985 will update and simplify the registration process for beekeepers. Amendments to the Stock Medicines Act 1940 and consequential amendments to the Pesticides Act 1999 will increase flexibility for vets in treating animals. They will also clarify issues relating to the use of stock medicines. Amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 will improve enforcement of the Act by clarifying requirements concerning records of commercial fishing activities and fish receivers, and by amending certain requirements regarding the power to require information.

The Minister went on to say:

The first proposed amendment to this Act relates to the labelling of stock foods. Currently the Act contains an exemption that allows bagged stock food to be sold unlabelled where the contents have been repackaged but not altered or added to. The stock food most commonly supplied in this way is poultry feed, and poultry feed generally contains meat and bone. These ingredients may not be fed to ruminant animals such as cattle and sheep because of the risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy [BSE], more commonly known as mad cow disease. The current exemption means that there is a risk that rebagged, unlabelled poultry feed could be fed to calves or lambs. This is extremely dangerous because calves and lambs are most at risk of contracting and spreading bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The amendment will remove the existing exemption and will avoid this risk. This will bring the Act into line with current best practice and national recommendations for animal disease prevention.

The importance of the amendments to the Stock Foods Act is obvious from the Minister's comments. It could be disastrous for Australian agriculture if current practices continue and an outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy were to occur. The member for Cabramatta referred to fleas, which reminded me of that mob known as The Greens. I will not refer to The Greens as a political party because they do not have enough members to warrant recognition as a political party. The Greens, who are affectionately known as the Eastern Bloc because of their connection to the Communist Party in Moscow, have been running rampant in regional New South Wales telling lies, misrepresenting the facts and spreading misinformation. Government members know that prior to the 2011 State election the greatest advocates of coal seam gas were The Greens.

Mr Andrew Gee: Oh, they loved it then.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Yes, but what changed? An election occurred, which resulted in Labor no longer being in government and The Greens no longer controlling things. Suddenly, after the election The Greens were opposed to coal seam gas. Today that useless member of the other place Dr John Kaye stated in my local newspaper that I had vilified a local organisation known as the Manning Alliance. This incident is an example of the usual misrepresentations and lies emanating from The Greens. I said that rank and file members of the Manning Alliance ought to be careful because its executive is associating with The Greens. In that context, the comment made by the member for Cabramatta about fleas reminded me of the saying, "If you lie down with dogs, you'll get up with fleas." I was not vilifying the Manning Alliance; it was The Greens. Dr John Kaye, in his usual manner, has twisted the facts and told lies—and they are in the paper today. I certainly was not talking about the good people of Myall Lakes; I was talking about those involved with The Greens.

The member for Cabramatta also spoke about the loss of jobs. One of the greatest ways of employing people in this State is to get the economy back on track. This State has a \$70 billion debt left to us by 16 years of Labor government. If we can get the economy right for private enterprise and small business, we will increase employment. In the past 18 months we have created 54,000 new jobs in New South Wales. Contrary to what the member for Cabramatta said about lost jobs, we have been improving the economy and, in doing so, creating an environment for employment in which businesses can reduce the impact of government and employ more people. What a great job we are doing in that area.

Mr Nick Lalich: What about TAFE teachers?

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: As far as TAFE is concerned, we are following the advice of the Council of Australian Governments, which said that qualifications are most important to the Australian economy. They are given the highest priority and are being looked after in the policies we have introduced. I commend the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [5.21 p.m.]: I support the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill proposes amendments to five Acts: the Stock Foods Act 1940, the Apiaries Act 1985, the Stock Medicines Act 1940, the Pesticides Act 1999 and the Fisheries Management Act 1994. I turn first to the Apiaries Act 1985. The first set of amendments will update, streamline and simplify part 3 of the Act, which makes provision for the registration of beekeepers. Some unnecessary and overly prescriptive provisions will be removed from the Act. The necessary detail will instead be prescribed in regulations or included as a condition of registration.

The second set of amendments to the Apiaries Act 1985 will provide greater flexibility in the setting of registration and renewal fees, and will allow a fee to be charged for permit applications. At the moment the Act does not allow different fees to be charged in different classes of registration. The bill provides for different classes of registration to be prescribed and will allow for different fees to apply to different classes. For example, the regulation may make provision for commercial, recreational and pensioner beekeepers, and for different fees to apply to each class. So pensioners or people keeping bees as a hobby may be charged a lower fee for registration than commercial beekeepers. It is also proposed to have online registration with a lower registration fee for this class of registration. This should encourage online applications, resulting in administrative savings for the Government and a simple, cost-effective method of registration for beekeepers.

The third amendment to the Apiaries Act will allow inspectors under that Act to issue permits for the movement or keeping of bees, beehives, apiary products and appliances that would otherwise contravene the provisions of the Act. At the moment the Act empowers the Minister to make certain orders to regulate the manner in which bees, beehives, apiary products and appliances can be brought into New South Wales or into a specified part of New South Wales. At the moment the Governor also has the power to make certain orders prohibiting or regulating the keeping of bees in some areas of the State. Those orders are made to prevent the introduction or spread of a notifiable bee disease. They often contain detailed and complex conditions that do not allow the flexibility to provide for specific circumstances or individual cases. Disease outbreaks are dynamic. Legislation needs to permit a quick response to changing circumstances. Therefore, the bill will include provisions that allow inspectors to issue permits to authorise the movement and keeping of bees, beehives, apiary products and appliances that would otherwise contravene a provision of the Act.

The final amendments to the Apiaries Act 1985 will improve the director general's power to prohibit or restrict beekeeping on some premises. At the moment the director general can direct a beekeeper to remove some or all of the beehives on their property where, for example, beekeeping on those premises is a public nuisance or a danger to public health or safety. For example, if someone is keeping bees on premises that are posing a risk to public health or safety, the director general can issue an order that the beekeeper remove some or all of the beehives on the property. Under the current arrangements, if there is a failure to comply with such a direction the director general can direct an inspector to remove those beehives. But where the order is to reduce the number of hives to a particular number, at the moment the director general has no corresponding power to direct an inspector to remove the excess hives if the beekeeper has not complied with the order. That is an anomaly that will be removed by the amendments in this bill. This will help to address problem or nuisance bees.

The next set of amendments relates to the Fisheries Management Act 1994. The bill proposes two minor amendments to that Act. The first corrects anomalies regarding requirements to produce certain information and records relating to commercial fishing activities and fish receivers, and to answer questions

with respect to those matters. The second amendment concerns some new provisions that started in 2010. One of those provisions is section 258A. It introduced a special power to require information with respect to aquatic habitats and threatened species conservation. The power is a strong one: It is designed for situations where information is required urgently to protect or minimise damage to aquatic habitats and or threatened species. Given the nature of this new power, the 2010 amendments also included section 258B, which concerned the issuing of warnings and a protection against self-incrimination.

That further provision—section 258B—was only ever intended to apply to the new information requirement that was inserted in 2010, but it currently applies more broadly by including requests for information under the longstanding section 258. That section contains a more general power to require certain limited information. Historically, that section has never been subject to requirements like those in section 258B of the Act. Imposing the requirements of section 258B on fisheries officers has been a hindrance in the investigation of general matters. The amendment proposed by this bill will rectify this issue by limiting the application of section 258B to information requirements under section 258A.

I now deal with proposed amendments to the Stock Foods Act 1940. The next amendment I am describing is perhaps the most important in the entire bill and relates to the labelling of stock foods. At present the Stock Foods Act 1940 contains an exemption that allows bagged stock food to be sold unlabelled where the contents have been repackaged but not altered or added to. The stock food most commonly supplied in this way is poultry feed. Poultry feed generally contains meat and bone. These ingredients may not be fed to ruminant animals such as cattle and sheep because of the risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease. The current exemption means there is a risk that rebagged, unlabelled poultry feed could be fed to calves or lambs. That is extremely dangerous because calves and lambs are most at risk of contracting and spreading mad cow disease. The amendment will remove the existing exemption and will avoid that risk. This will bring the Act into line with best practice and national recommendations for animal disease prevention.

The second proposed amendment to the Stock Foods Act 1940 will allow the director general to delegate the authorisation of inspectors and analysts appointed under the Stock Foods Act. At the moment that power to delegate does not exist and this has resulted in an inefficient administrative process inconsistent with other biosecurity-related legislation administered by the department, such as the Stock Diseases Act 1923 and the Noxious Weeds Act 1983. I refer now to the proposed amendments to the Stock Medicines Act 1989. The first of the two main amendments will allow certain low-risk animal pesticide products, such as flea collars and spot-on flea control products, to be classified as stock medicines.

Currently, these low-risk products are classified as pesticides under the Pesticides Act 1999, along with far more toxic products such as cattle and sheep dips, lice pour-ons and back liners. The Stock Medicines Act 1985 allows vets to use stock medicines off label—in other words, contrary to the instructions on the label in certain circumstances. That is not possible for products classified as pesticides. It is not appropriate for low-risk products used for the treating of small animals to be classified as pesticides. Therefore, this amendment will allow vets greater flexibility in using these products and will broaden the range of treatment options available to control animal parasites.

This brings New South Wales into line with classifications used by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. These classifications have been adopted already by other Australian jurisdictions. This amendment will require corresponding amendments to the definition of "pesticides" in the Pesticides Act 1999. Products such as cattle and sheep dips will continue to be classified as pesticides, which is appropriate in view of their associated environmental and health issues. The final two minor amendments to the Stock Medicines Act 1989 were addressed in the second reading speech in the other place. In conclusion, the amendments will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing agricultural and fisheries legislation. No additional burden will be imposed on stakeholders and there will be some reduction of the regulatory burden. These minor and incremental changes are all sensible and appropriate and will improve and benefit our agricultural and fisheries industries in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [5.31 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution in support of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The hardworking Minister for Primary Industries is certainly contributing to the productive capacity of New South Wales by introducing this legislation, which streamlines a number of important laws relating to primary industries in New South Wales. Other members have touched on the amendments to the Stock Medicines Act 1989 that will allow veterinary practitioners to use low-risk animal pesticide products contrary to usage instructions on the products. As the member for Murray-Darling so

eloquently pointed out, this bill could apply to politics and the use of flea collars by Opposition members on some occasions. For the Minister's assistance, the member for Murray-Darling referred in his contribution to lying down with dogs.

The amendment also ensures that unregistered stock medicines are prohibited for use on food-producing stock species, as is currently the case. However, medicines compounded by a vet or prepared by a pharmacist on instructions from a vet are not currently captured by this prohibition because compounded medicine is not classified as stock medicine. The Act clarifies this anomaly and ensures that unregistered stock medicines are prohibited for use on stock that is a member of a food-producing species. This worthwhile amendment adds clarity to laws surrounding this issue and means that compounded substances cannot be given to food-producing animal species. I notice the presence in the Chamber of the member for Cabramatta, who spoke earlier about jobs. I commend the Deputy Premier and the Minister for the recent welcome announcement of a net 36 jobs for the Orange electorate, which was warmly received by all concerned.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: A good local member.

Mr ANDREW GEE: Thank you, Minister. Of course, that announcement comes on the heels of 14 new jobs at the second linear accelerator, which the Minister for Health recently funded through the budget; 20 new jobs for the drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre at Orange, which opened recently; more than 50 new nurses for the electorate; and 100 new mental health jobs that will arrive in the electorate over the next nine months or so. I certainly thought the unionists in Orange would have been doing cartwheels at the announcement of 36 new jobs—surely they would be the first to congratulate all the Ministers involved. But that was not the story at Orange.

There were long faces all round because they were expecting far worse news that, unfortunately for them, did not materialise. It was not a great week for the commissars or apparatchiks, but perhaps the member for Cabramatta could suggest that at their next meeting they have a moment's silence to give thanks to the Deputy Premier, the Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries for delivering those jobs to Orange. They also can thank the member for Myall Lakes for being a great local member and wonderful president of the Parliamentary Lions Club. This bill contains a number of other interesting features, on which I will touch briefly. Section 256 of the Fisheries Management Act 1994 has been amended as follows:

- (2A) If a fisheries officer requires a person to answer a question under subsection (1) (c), the officer may specify one or more of the following:
- (a) that the answer be given either orally or in writing,
 - (b) that the answer be given immediately, at a specified time or within a specified period,
 - (c) that the answer be given at a specified place.

This will certainly be a welcome addition to the law because currently when a Fisheries officer makes a requirement under section 256, including a requirement to answer questions, the officer can only specify when a person must comply with a request to answer a question but not where this should happen. Obviously this provision was difficult to enforce because a Fisheries officer cannot specify the location at which a person is required to provide the requested information. Again, this energetic and hardworking Minister has made real changes to the legislation in these fields. I conclude my remarks by saying that I fully support this legislation and once again thank the Minister, and particularly the Deputy Premier, for delivering 36 new jobs to the Orange electorate. They are gratefully received and will provide an excellent economic boost for Orange.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [5.37 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. I understand from the contribution of the member for Cabramatta that the Opposition does not oppose the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The member for Camden highlighted a range of key outcomes that the bill intends to achieve, including clarification, certification and cutting of red tape. The member for Cabramatta also spoke about key points and stated that the Opposition sees the merits of the measures in the bill. The member for Myall Lakes pointed out the relevance of the proposed amendments to industries in his electorate, such as the fisheries, livestock raising and honey bee industries, and key service providers such as veterinarians. The member for Cronulla spoke about the imperatives of the bill in a most eloquent and sensible manner. I thank him very much for his valuable contribution to the debate.

The hardworking member for Orange spoke of the important changes to stock medicines regulations and other relevant points in the bill. Importantly, he highlighted new jobs within his electorate. He is a

hardworking member indeed. New South Wales has some of the world's finest primary industries, and they are an important part of our economy. Our primary industries produce a large range of products and the legislation addresses their many and varied aspects. It is essential that our primary industries legislation is effective without imposing unnecessary costs or red tape on the sector. The Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 amends five Acts to improve the efficiency of our primary industries legislation. Amendments to the Apiaries Act 1985 will simplify the regulation of beekeeping in New South Wales. They will also improve the powers of the director general to deal with the problem of nuisance bees. Other amendments will improve the Government's responsiveness in controlling animal disease and pest outbreaks.

Amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 were highlighted by the member for Orange and will improve enforcement of the Act. This will be achieved by amending certain requirements regarding the power to require information and by clarifying requirements concerning records of commercial fishing activities and fish receivers. Amendments to the Stock Foods Act 1940 will require the labelling of all stock food prior to sale. This will reduce the risk of stock being fed restricted animal material by mistake, which could lead to a most disastrous outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalitis [BSE]—also known as mad cow disease. Heaven forbid such an outbreak should ever occur. That is one of the reasons why this bill is vital for New South Wales. Amendments to the Stock Foods and Medicines Act 1940 and consequential amendments to the Pesticides Act 1999 will provide increased flexibility for veterinarians in the treatment of animals.

The amendments will remove redundant references and clarify issues relating to the use of stock medicines and veterinarian record-keeping requirements. Needless to say, there has been extensive consultation in relation to this particular requirement and it is one of the reasons why the amendment is included in the bill. The Legislation Review Committee raised two issues in its report. The first is detailed under the heading "Self-incrimination." The committee has raised a concern that the amendments to the Fisheries Management Act 1994 may unduly trespass on personal rights and liberties as the amendments may impact on any right to silence and right against self-incrimination. This concern is misconceived as the amendments increase an individual's right to silence on the grounds that the answer, or the information given, might incriminate the individual.

I will repeat that: The concern raised by the Legislation Review Committee was misconceived. The amendment will increase an individual's right to silence on the grounds that the answer, or the information given, might incriminate the individual. Currently the Fisheries Management Act 1994 removes the right to silence on the grounds of self-incrimination—in certain situations—for answers and information given under sections 258 and 258A. The amendments reinstate an individual's right to silence on the grounds of self-incrimination, not the other way around, for answers and information given under section 258. This is an increase in an individual's rights and liberties, so it will not cause concern.

The other area of concern raised is the appropriateness of matters relating to the cancellation or suspension of a beekeeper's licence being provided in regulation rather than in the principal legislation. This is highly appropriate and consistent with similar provisions in other Acts such as the Fisheries Management Act 1994 and the Road Transport Vehicle Registration Act 1997. It is therefore appropriate that such provisions are reviewed through the statutory review process where they can be amended to respond to contemporary situations if the need arises. Regulation is subject to disallowance by the Parliament. It is a transparent and appropriate process. New South Wales has a very broad and highly productive agricultural and fisheries sector. The amendments will ensure that our primary industries legislation remains relevant and effective.

It is important to highlight the level of interest expressed and contributions made in debate on this bill in the other place and in this House by a variety of speakers. We have had contributions from members representing coastal, inland and urban electorates, which reinforces how varied primary industry is within rural and metropolitan communities. These amendments will contribute to the ongoing development of industry regulation and ensure its currency and appropriateness. It will allow agriculture and fisheries industries to continue to prosper and grow. I said at the outset of this debate that there is no doubt that New South Wales has some of the world's finest primary industries, which form a significant part of our economy—a \$2 billion industry. The Government must do whatever it can to protect the country's valuable biosecurity rating.

Mr Assistant-Speaker, I know you were pleased with the announcement of the \$57 million extension to the biosecurity-focused Elizabeth Macarthur Agriculture Institute located at Camden. It will attract the leading experts on biosecurity from around the world. Under the old system there were concerns about the number of biosecurity outbreaks that could be dealt with at any one time. For example, if you had an outbreak of a plant disease such as myrtle rust and an outbreak of an animal disease such as Hendra virus or equine influenza it could not necessarily be dealt with simultaneously. The Elizabeth Macarthur Agriculture Institute will enable

multiple animal and plant disease outbreaks to be dealt with at the same time. I thank the hardworking bureaucrats who assisted with the development of this important bill and the hardworking advisers within my office including David Dawson, Tim Scott, Anna Ferguson, Alexander Drake and others. It is an important and significant bill that will allow our agriculture and fisheries industries to continue to prosper and grow. 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 Ms Katrina Hodgkinson agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Government business having concluded, the House will now consider the matter of public importance.

DIWALI HINDU FESTIVAL

Matter of Public Importance

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [5.50 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak on this matter of public importance today because the Diwali festival is of particular significance to me. At this time last year I was in India. What stands out in my mind about this particular festival and celebration is my standing on the roof of the Golden Temple, the holiest place for the Sikh community, and looking out over the lake watching an indescribable display of fireworks. The sights, colour, sounds and incense smoke haze covered the city and provided a sensory overload. But Diwali is not about the incense smoke or the fireworks, it is about the festival of the light celebration. Diwali celebrates the principles of the triumph of good over evil and the triumph of knowledge over ignorance. They are universal ideals that are not exclusive to the Hindu faith or the Indian community.

They are ideals that resonate with all of us—whether Christians or Muslims—and they are ideals that speak to all of us. Too often when we think of religion we think of what divides us, as illustrated by the conflict in the Middle East. The reality is that the things that unite us are far greater than those that divide us. The children I saw playing in Amritsar, India, celebrating Diwali, were not thinking about division; they were thinking about fun, hope and the triumph of good over evil—things that are worth celebrating. Today as I stand here in Australia at Diwali I am reminded that Australia is a great multicultural nation. We are a country that has brought together people of different backgrounds, beliefs and communities who, although different, share the same aspirations, ideals and hopes.

One of the greatest achievements of Australia as a nation is that together we have been able to build a strong multicultural country that celebrates Diwali, diversity and pluralism. Today celebrating Diwali in Australia is a reminder that we welcome people from all over the Earth and we have provided those people with the chance to get ahead, to build lives for their families and to contribute to their communities. The success of Australia's Indian community is a great testament to that. As I go around my community of Hornsby I see examples of the contribution that Indian Australians make to our community every day of the week—people such as Amarinder Bajwa, who demonstrates a leadership role in the Indian community through his stewardship of the United Indian Association; Mr Subrao, who leads the combined Indian association; and Dr Yadu Singh. These people show leadership in the Indian community and demonstrate that Indian Australians do not just value their Indian background; they value their Australian background as well.

This Thursday we will light a flame out the front of Parliament House to celebrate Diwali. We will also light a flame in all of us that holds true the values and ideals that Diwali recognises and celebrates—the triumph of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and hope. Regardless of our background, religion, race or gender, we all hold that dear. Diwali is a reminder to us of the wonderful success of multicultural Australia and that as

community leaders we all have a responsibility to ensure that it continues for many years into the future. Finally, I take this opportunity to wish all of our Indian Australian friends celebrating Diwali at this time good health, happiness and prosperity for the year ahead.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [5.55 p.m.]: It is no accident that this issue is a matter of public importance. One billion people world-wide of Hindu faith are celebrating Diwali this week, including 270,000 individuals in Australia. It is no accident that the Premier has visited India twice since the March 2011 election and that the Prime Minister also has regularly visited India. All Australians see that the future of Australia and India are inextricably linked and will continue to become more inextricably linked over the next generation, and how good is that. Any country that can produce Sachin Tendulkar, AM, is one that we need to spend more time with.

Deepavali or Diwali is the festival of light, the biggest festival in India. It is also a significant day for other religions such as Sikhism or Buddhism. As Yadu Singh says on his website, the word "Diwali" is an easy-to-pronounce form of Deepavali and the Sanskrit is the marriage of two Sanskrit words—"Deepa" meaning light and "Avali" meaning a row. This represents the row of lights forming one of Diwali's major attractions. My son, Doug, and his partner, Jess, spent a year in India and returned only recently. Doug is part of a generation of many more Australian students who will study in India and replicate what many Indian students are doing in coming to Australia. If any member in this place has never been to India, they are missing one of the great treats of their lives—it is one of the most fascinating countries that it is possible to visit and they will learn something new every day for the rest of their lives.

When I asked Doug about Diwali, he said, "It's a very auspicious day", and his partner, Jess, emphasised this. It has various meanings and these meanings vary from region to region in India. It is a great tribute that much of India's greatness comes from its diversity with so many different regions and cultures, all coming together for a week of celebration. Diwali binds India together, with different sects and different historic traditions finding meaning in their shared celebration. During Doug's time in Bangalore the sky lit up for a week, night and day, with endless fireworks, especially on the night of Diwali itself, when the night sky shone brighter than the sun. The noise from the fireworks is deafening and all across the city one can hear shouts of celebration. People come together to celebrate on the streets. That is why it is a celebration worthy of replicating in the New South Wales Parliament, which is why, since 2003, Diwali has been celebrated by lighting up the New South Wales Parliament building.

Diwali represents triumph of truth over falsehood. The darkness represents ignorance and the light signifies knowledge. Lighting the lamps during the festival symbolises the destruction of all negative forces with knowledge. This is a wonderful celebration. In Liverpool we have a very large subcontinental community. I have spoken in the past of previous celebrations at the Whitlam Centre in Liverpool. We have a very large Marathi community from Mumbai and a very large Gujarati community. In Sydney we have the Marathi Vidyalaya School at Glenwood Public School. The celebrations around south-west Sydney over this week will be extensive; indeed, each year the celebrations get bigger. Barack Obama's Diwali speech is worthwhile sharing with the House. He stated:

Diwali is a time for celebration, but it is also a time for reflection—a time when we must remember that there are always others less fortunate than ourselves. This holiday reminds us all that we should commit ourselves to helping those in need. For many, this is also a time to gather with family and to pray.

This six-day Hindu festival is now celebrated worldwide with a festival of lights. The lights are said by some to represent the way home for the lord Rama. Diwali is a celebration that is only going to get bigger in the Australian community over the next generation, and how good is this. I commend the member for Hornsby for raising this matter of public importance.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [6.00 p.m.]: In making a modest contribution to this debate I congratulate you, Mr Assistant-Speaker, on the service you give to your Indian community in Woolgoolga and I pay tribute to the fact that you are one of the few members of Parliament who have bothered to learn a second language. I understand that your ability to converse in Hindi to those of the Indian faith in your electorate has been quite remarkable and is probably a fair indication of why you continue to increase your majority at every election. I commend you for that. It is ironic that today we celebrate Diwali while at the same time the Parliament is enjoying the celebrations of Hanukkah, another celebration of light in another faith.

Despite what certain television programs may have one believe, The Hills district is a vibrant community of many cultures living in harmony. Last Friday the India Club celebrated the Diwali festival at

Castle Grand Community Centre. I attended with my colleagues the Federal member for Mitchell, and the member for Castle Hill. Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, is a five-day festival that brings together the Indian community. It is a time of great celebration among families as evil spirits are banished from family homes in preparation for a better year ahead.

This festival of lights represents the inner light according to Hindu spirituality and philosophy, which believes that there is something deeper and more meaningful beyond the human body that remains pure and eternal. Diwali represents the triumph of a variety of communities coming together, as the various regions of India celebrate Diwali in different ways and for different reasons. On a local level, the India Club in my electorate plays an important role in providing opportunities for the Indian and non-Indian communities to embrace one another in a harmonious, cooperative and peaceful environment. I pay tribute to the work of president Shubha Kumar and chairman Aksheya Kumar in establishing the India Club. It is one of the great examples of our ethnic communities seeking to bring the broader community into their lives while encouraging the broader community to bring ethnic communities into their lives. The India Club is not just a cultural body; it is also an organisation that provides outstanding economic opportunities to The Hills district and, indeed, right across Sydney.

In my electorate, the Norwest Crowne Plaza Hotel continues to be a leader in mid-sized hotels across our State under the leadership of local Indian leader Ajay Khanna. I also acknowledge the fantastic work in the wider community of Rahul Jethi, Manager of the Bank of Queensland Norwest branch; Muthu Menon of the Old Toongabbie Hindu Temple, which demonstrates the diversity of The Hills community—the temple is an old Uniting Church; and Rohit Revo, editor of the *Indian Herald*, who also lives in my electorate. Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the newly appointed Indian Consul General to Australia, Arun Kumar Goel, who is strengthening economic ties between India and New South Wales—a job also being undertaken by the Premier, who recently visited India on a trade delegation. India and New South Wales share a common history and a common bond. I thank and congratulate the India Club on its work and I wish everyone happy Diwali.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): I suggest to the member for Tweed that the language of the people in Woolgoolga is Punjabi not Hindi. I also suggest that the member for Tweed look up the meaning of the great Punjabi phrase, "sat sri akal gee".

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [6.03 p.m.]: Thank you, Mr Assistant-Speaker, for that lesson in linguistics; it is greatly appreciated by all members in the House tonight. It is a further demonstration of your commitment to multiculturalism in Australia. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Macquarie Fields, who talked about the importance of the relationship between Australia and India in this place. I hope that that relationship has bipartisan support not just in this place but in all parliaments of the Commonwealth of Australia, because it is a relationship that is going to be increasingly important to our future success as a nation. Already we share many great links with India: We share a common love of democracy; we have common heritage—we were both subjects of British rule for a period; we are English-speaking nations; and, most obviously at the moment, we have a common love for the great game of cricket.

There are many things that unite our great nations, but we must continue to work on that relationship. That is why the bipartisan political support that the member for Macquarie Fields acknowledged earlier is so important. If we are to continue to grow, to improve our productivity and to expand into new markets, India presents a wonderful opportunity for Australia to succeed. I believe that the role of the Indian diaspora will be crucial in that. I acknowledged some Indian leaders earlier in my contribution, but I also acknowledge others in my community who are blazing a path for Indians right across this State. The newly elected councillor Mr Gurdeep Singh is the first Sikh ever elected to Hornsby Shire Council; it is a wonderful achievement. I know the great work he does with Mr Pradeep Singhal and other prominent Indians in my community who work in the Northshore Sikh Association to ensure that Indian Australians see themselves not just as Indian but as Australian.

Diwali is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on that diversity, to reflect on our multiculturalism and to reflect on the fact that together we have built a wonderful society of which we can all be proud. Diwali celebrates the important values of the triumph of knowledge over ignorance, the triumph of good over evil, and of hope. We must, regardless of our religion, background, creed or culture, celebrate those universal ideals and values, and remember again that the things that unite us in Australia are far greater than the things that divide us. Everyone in this place has a role and a responsibility to defend those fundamental principles that have made this country one of the greatest countries on Earth.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CORRIMAL EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [6.07 p.m.]: This evening I acknowledge the work of Corrimal East Public School and note that 2012 marks its sixtieth anniversary. Corrimal East Public School is located in the heart of the Keira electorate. It is fortunate to have one of the largest playing fields and open spaces of all the local schools. The school was opened on 14 November 1952 by a former Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, the Hon. R. J. Heffron. The building has distinct characteristics from the fifties and the seventies as well as modern buildings that were built as part of the Building the Education Revolution. Tonight I bring to the attention of the House the work the school is doing to bring its students into the modern age through the use of technology in the classroom.

I have been fortunate to visit the school on a number of occasions. What it is doing with technology from kindergarten to year 6 is nothing short of staggering. I have seen kindergarten students navigating their way through iPads, using apps on iPads and learning in small groups through the use of iPads; and I have seen older students actively engaged in projects that the use of technology brings to life. As a former school teacher it showed me that what we must do is take the lead of schools such as Corrimal East Public School and ensure that technology is not simply an instrument of the classroom, not simply an added extra in the classroom, but that it is fundamentally integrated into the delivery of literacy and numeracy and the entire curriculum.

I have seen first-hand at Corrimal East Public School—an area that is not full of wealthy parents—the enormous commitment by staff and parents in investing in this technology to ensure that these young people are equipped with the technology and the knowledge to navigate the world of the twenty-first century. I am particularly pleased that this school, through the efforts of its principal Donna Shevlin and in particular the assistant principal David Burke—who has been one of the leaders in implementing this technology—has demonstrated that regardless of students' backgrounds, and regardless of whether it is a public school, a private school or a systemic school, a commitment by teachers to ensure that students have up-to-date access to technology goes a long way in delivering real educational outcomes.

I have seen students involved in specific projects at the school—podcasts, movies and stories they are working on—and what impresses me most is the enormous level of engagement that the use of this technology brings to students. For many students, particularly those in kindergarten, this is the first time they are exposed to this type of technology, and what better way to integrate this technology into the classroom than by using it to encourage and stimulate learning and development around literacy and numeracy.

Like all schools, this school has its challenges. Over the past 60 years it has changed, grown and modified its way of delivering education. It is now home to around 260 students and of course many staff and active parents and citizens, who have seen an enormous change in the way the school delivers high quality teaching and learning. The school now has technology embedded in programs from kindergarten to year 6. The school provides students with opportunities to engage in meaningful, stimulating learning and it is a credit to each and every one of the teachers, staff and parents at Corrimal East Public School. I congratulate them on their school's sixtieth anniversary and I look forward to working with them in the future.

100 YEARS OF SURFING CELEBRATION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [6.12 p.m.]: Many members in this House will be aware that the Port Macquarie electorate boasts some of the most pristine and iconic beaches in New South Wales. With that comes some of the best surf to ride on the North Coast. In fact, even the Deputy Premier will admit that one of the best places to catch a wave is Middlerock Beach at Lake Cathie. This fact, of course, has been known to locals for decades and last Saturday night generations of surfers came together to celebrate 100 Years of Surfing. Why was it held in Port Macquarie? Because it was in Port Macquarie in 1912 that the first surf craft was shaped by local fisherman Harry McLaren.

Born in 1897, Henry Thomas "Harry" McLaren was an oyster farmer who grew up on the banks of the Hastings River, along with his 12 siblings. His intention in shaping that first ski-like craft was to provide himself and his brother with an easy way to get around to their oyster beds in nearby Lake Innes. This creation marked the development of various craft and went on to produce our local surfing legends, including well-known international surfing identities such as Damian King, Darren O'Rafferty, Mick Campbell and Michael "Eppo" Epelstun.

While I was unable to attend the celebration on the night, I have been told about the surfing stories and memories of days gone by that were shared among the almost 200 surfers who gathered at the North Haven Bowling Club for this significant and historical event. As it was described in our local papers, "The night took locals on a journey through time back to when the surfing stoke first came to our shores and a generation of young people fell in love with the ocean like never before." One of the highlights of the evening was the announcement of the Surfers of the Century, a title that was deservedly bestowed upon Peter, Wayne and Grant of the Hudson family and Damian King.

I remember meeting Peter Hudson when I first came to Lake Cathie almost 16 years ago. He owned a local real estate business and directed my husband and me to our property purchase, which we have proudly called home ever since. It did not take long for me to realise that Peter's other important role in the community was as a surfing legend and as the safe keeper of our teenagers when they first headed down to the ocean to learn the skill of surfing. I remember my son, Ben, telling me how Peter—or the Grey Ghost as he is affectionately known—told him about the rips at Middlerock Beach and the rules to remember when he got caught in one. That was something that as a mother I was not able to educate him on. Peter's sons Wayne and Grant have followed in his footsteps and together they founded the Port Macquarie Surf School where my daughter, Meredie, and her friends tried their hand at surfing.

As many will know, Damian King is a bodyboarder. In 2004 and 2005 he achieved world titles and then sported a new craft to take out the drop knee title in 2011. Damian has also released two autobiographical films and in doing so has gone where many professional surfers would not have dared. Whilst there is no argument that Damian's skills and achievements are unparalleled and worthy of such an honour, it was acknowledged on the night that the fact that a bodyboarder had received this highest commendation as a Surfer of the Century was testament to the surfing spirit in our Hastings region. Other local legends in the top 20 Surfers of the Century included Glen Dick, Peter Hudson, George Watt, Bruce Hutcheson, Jason Garling, Andrew McMahon, Marcus Brabant, Kathy Newman, Mick Cain, Wayne Morrison, Michael O'Rafferty, Grant and Wayne Hudson, Michael "Eppo" Eppelstun, Ian Bell, Damian King and Mark Jordon.

The honour roll also acknowledged those who have given years of service to surfing: Brian Riorden, Adam Roh, Dave and Janet Smith, Alan Jeffrey and Helen Cross-Glover. I especially congratulate Helen Cross-Glover on her outstanding efforts in organising the awards night and particularly on her work in collating the history of surfing in our region since its beginnings 100 years ago. She has left our community with an important dossier of local history that we will continue to celebrate for years to come.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [6.17 p.m.]: Let us look back in time 100 years to 1912. That year might be remembered as being when the *Titanic* sank in the North Atlantic Ocean with 1,517 lives lost. It also marked the Stockholm Summer Olympic Games, as well as the founding of the African National Congress and the Girl Scout movement. It was the year a remarkable 190 kilogram meteorite exploded over Holbrook, Arizona, breaking into approximately 14,000 pieces and the same year that Arizona was admitted as the forty-eighth State of the United States of America. The year 1912 was also when Father Geoffrey Schneider was born. Father Schneider holds the record as the world's oldest teacher. At 100 years old he is still teaching at St Aloysius College, just as he did when I attended primary school there more than 35 years ago.

In my electorate of Davidson, 1912 was the year St Swithun's Church built a fairly simple wooden hall as its first church building on land sold to the congregation by a Pymble family. Prior to this the congregation had met in Pymble Community Hall as a branch of St John's Church. Interestingly, Ku-ring-gai shire had also used temporary offices in the grounds of St John's Church after it was first constituted in March 1906 and until 1911 when the first Ku-ring-gai shire building was built in Lane Cove Road, Gordon. Last Sunday it was my pleasure to represent the Davidson electorate in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 9 November 1912 opening of the first St Swithun's Church building as a place of worship. I did so with Reverend Roger Chilton, Premier Barry O'Farrell, Bishop Glenn Davies and St Swithun's parishioners. Following the ceremony I enjoyed viewing related displays and attending a celebration concert called "The Big Sing", featuring the excellent church choir led by Phillip Linquist.

The early 1900s were a time of great political and social change in Sydney. In January 1901 Sydney was no longer a colonial capital; it had become the capital of the State of New South Wales. Its population went from 481,000 in 1900 to 981,000 in 1921. Sydney and Australia began to enter the world stage. By 1912 the Australian economy was booming. Sydney experienced rapid growth, which led to a substantial increase in

subdivision applications. It was at this time that the Killara Lawn Tennis Club and Roseville Lawn Tennis Club were established in my electorate. Tennis had become a popular game by the early 1900s and Australians were keen to participate on the world stage. Before they could do this, Australia had to be represented by a national association.

The Australasian Lawn Tennis Association was formed in September 1904 for this purpose. As an aside, I know that the current president of Tennis Australia, Steve Healy, grew up playing tennis on the North Shore. This led to the first Australian Open being played at Warehouseman's Cricket Ground in Melbourne in 1905, when it was known as the Australasian Championships. It also allowed Australia to play in the Davis Cup. Between 1905 and 1919 Australia claimed six Davis Cup titles. Tennis became a popular sport in Australia and many tennis clubs were established all over Sydney for keen players. As I said, Killara Lawn Tennis Club was established in 1912 and continues to provide an excellent sporting facility. It includes six tennis courts for social and competition tennis. The club also boasts Ken Rosewall, Neale Fraser, Jack Crawford, Lew Hoad and Fred Stolle as former members.

The Roseville Lawn Tennis Club also was established in 1912. Land was bought by a group of residents who pooled their money and paid \$1,300 for approximately 1.5 hectares of land. They then sold off the perimeter to pay for the construction of tennis courts and bowling greens. It was originally called the Roseville Recreation Club. In later years the tennis club split from the bowling club and was renamed the Roseville Lawn Tennis Club. Geoff Pares, one of Rod Laver's contemporaries, was a member of the Roseville Lawn Tennis Club, while John Newcombe and Pancho Gonzales were regular visiting players. So the year 2012 sees at least three major centenaries celebrated locally to mark the establishment of both religious and recreational sporting institutions as part of the fabric of the Davidson electorate.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.22 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Davidson on highlighting the centenaries celebrated by three organisations in his electorate: St Swithuns Church, the Killara Lawn Tennis Club and the Roseville Lawn Tennis Club. It is fantastic that the younger suburbs are developing so well. On 24 November Raymond Terrace will celebrate its 175th anniversary. I do not know how old the church is, but it is pretty close to 175 years. I am sure the member for Davidson will take that news back to his constituents, many of whom have close relationships with Port Stephens and the Federal electorate of Paterson. I congratulate the member for Davidson on drawing the attention of the House to his wonderful community.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE RECEPTION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [6.23 p.m.]: Two weeks ago I was working in my office in Parliament House when I received a most interesting phone call. To my surprise, the Governor of New South Wales asked me to put together a small group of people from my electorate to attend a royal reception at the Sydney Opera House on Friday 9 November. As members would be aware, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, and Camilla, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall, spent six days in Australia as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Like many Australians, I was aware of the impending royal visit in the days leading up to the arrival of our royal visitors, but never would I have thought that I would be sharing their company.

Her Excellency the Governor wanted to ensure the reception at the Opera House comprised a diverse cross-section of the communities of New South Wales. A very important part of this State is our regions. I sincerely thank Her Excellency the Governor for giving my community the great honour and the opportunity to be part of that important occasion. Putting together the list of attendees for the day was a difficult task. I could have filled my invitation list 100 times over. In selecting the group I could not go past my mother who, growing up in Edinburgh, used to deliver the papers to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. I know how excited my mum was to be part of the event, and it was a pleasure to have her with me on the day.

My next phone call was to my old school. I wanted to extend an opportunity to the captains of the Bomaderry High School to participate. Both Joel Armstrong and Hannah Laxton accepted my invitation and they looked very sharp in their school uniforms. As Kiama's local member, I was very proud to involve my old high school. Ensuring that our local communities were represented was important. I also extended an invitation to my good friend the Mayor of the Wingecarribee shire, Councillor Juliet Arkwright. Councillor Brian Petschler, who is our new Mayor of Kiama, was next on my list. Brian has been an exceptional and dedicated public servant and is passionate about the Kiama community. I was delighted that he accepted this invitation. Councillor Kellie Marsh is an ardent monarchist who proudly celebrated the Diamond Jubilee in the Shellharbour City Council community during her time as mayor. She was certainly a "must invite".

In the Youth Parliament this year Kiama was brilliantly represented by the irrepressible Jackson Calverley. I wanted Jackson and his father, Steven, to be part of this occasion. Riley Richardson is the former vice-captain of the Kiama High School and a great advocate for local young people. I first met Riley at the Kiama High School when he raised with me the need for funding for a regional Student Representative Council forum. His energy and enthusiasm is impressive. I was delighted that he could play a part on this important occasion. I was delighted that Danielle Cetinski also could accept an invitation. Danielle is not only a great advocate for our region, particularly the farming community in her role as the Kiama Showgirl, she is also a reporter with the *Kiama Independent*. If Kiama were to have royalty, I have no doubt that Danielle would be our fairytale princess. It was only appropriate that she also was a part of our delegation.

Christine Beaven from KidzWish also was invited to take part. Chris is one of the hardest working advocates for disabled and disadvantaged children I have ever had the privilege of knowing. Her tireless advocacy was more than deserving of an invitation to meet with our royal visitors. Luke Sikora has been an active participant in our community. From his role on the Youth Advisory Committee of the Shoalhaven City Council to his establishment of a successful local business, Luke is someone I would never overlook. I was delighted he could be part of our delegation. Paul Ell, who is a former Shoalhaven City Youth Citizen of the Year, has an impressive story to tell. He was raised by his grandparents and now studies commerce/law degrees at the University of Wollongong after being named dux of the Shoalhaven High School.

James Parrish also was invited. James is currently undertaking his officer training with the Australian Army while he completes his studies in law at the University of Wollongong. James is also the undergraduate representative of the university council and serves on the UniCentre board of directors. Last, but certainly not least, is Judy Wise. Judy has been a stalwart of our local monarchist movement in Kiama and has been involved in many Kiama community organisations. I know how strongly Judy feels about our system of government and the central role our constitutional monarchy plays in the strident success of our democracy. Judy was someone I would have never missed putting on this important list.

Prior to arriving at the Opera House, I organised an afternoon tea for our delegation. This gave everyone the opportunity to meet and was certainly a very pleasant prelude to the afternoon. After the tea and scones, we made our way to the Opera House and filed up the heart of the building into the foyer for the reception. There we mingled briefly with other invitees. It was wonderful to see friends such as John Brogden and his wonderful wife, Lucy, whom I had not seen for some time. As the royal couple drew near the entrance doors, the crowd started to buzz with excitement. We watched our royal visitors meet the crowd outside, who provided a warm Sydney welcome to our very important guests.

Attached to our group was my friend the Minister for Local Government, Don Page. When our royal visitors arrived, we lined up in our delegated groups to greet them. Our regional group was to receive Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall. My job was to introduce each member of our party to the Duchess. The first person to meet me was Sir Nicholas Shehadie, with his characteristic warm smile and handshake. I had not seen him since his visit to my electorate with our Governor. His smile made me feel much at ease. I was conscious of our instructions on how to address the Duchess of Cornwall—"Ma'am" as in "ham", not "Ma'am" as in "charm". Meeting Her Royal Highness was a pleasure and a delight. She was not only engaging and spirited but possessed a quality of character that put me completely at ease.

As I introduced Her Royal Highness to our excited party, one guest after the other, I could not help but feel the most extraordinary sense of pride—pride because my electorate had been chosen, pride because of the uniqueness of the occasion, and pride that this diverse but special group of people from my community were given the opportunity to play a part. I sincerely thank our wonderful Governor for allowing a small group from my district to have the opportunity to share the company of royal visitors on that occasion. I am sure that all will remember the reception forever.

BUSHWALKERS WILDERNESS RESCUE SQUAD

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [6.28 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a very important event that took place in my electorate on 27 October 2012: the official opening of the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad premises in Learmonth Street, Rooty Hill. I thank the President of the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad, Keith Maxwell, and other members of the squad for inviting me to officially open the premises, which have been funded by the Community Building Partnership program since 2010. The project resulted from a number of unrelated events. Firstly, a number of people in my electorate expressed concern

about a disused scout hall in Learmonth Street that had become overly infested with weeds and vermin and had been used by undesirable people. The condition of the hall and its use had been causing great concern to local residents, who brought those matters to my attention.

The complaints were addressed by the local council and the police. It was believed that the scout hall would be demolished and that the land on which it was situated would be reclaimed as Crown land, while the nearby reserve would be extended. Unbeknown to the council and the police, the former Minister for Primary Industries, Emergency Services and Rural Affairs, the Hon. Steve Whan, had been requested by the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad to support the squad's representation to the then Minister for Lands and to the Department of Lands for land on which to establish the squad's headquarters. The squad needed a centre from which to coordinate its rescue services, particularly in areas such as the Blue Mountains where people frequently become lost and are confronted with various dangers.

Minister Whan then approached Minister Kelly and as a result this scout hall was offered to the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad organisation under a trust arrangement. The squad then started looking for funds. I was pleased to be able to assist the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad to obtain funding for this project through the Community Building Partnership program, a fantastic scheme of the former Labor Government which I understand is also supported by local members on the Government side. The end result is that in Learmonth Street, Rooty Hill south, the organisation has a building worth about \$400,000 or \$450,000, an impressive structure with concrete paving, training facilities and meeting rooms. It came about from money the organisation raised and two years' allocations through the Community Building Partnership program.

That means that the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad, which has been in operation since 1936 and whose volunteers had previously been working out of their own homes and storing equipment in private garages and so on, now has its central headquarters in my electorate, I am proud to say, where it will be able to assemble, train and organise events from the one facility. It has not been able to do that since it was established at the request of the police, who sought experienced bushwalkers to assist in finding people lost on treks in any part of New South Wales but particularly in the Blue Mountains—an area where the squad gets a lot of business.

Through the years, the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad has made headlines by assisting authorities, other volunteers and community people find lost bushwalkers, children and so on. Its headquarters is a great facility that as a local member I am proud to have in my electorate. I thank the president, Keith Maxwell, and other members of the organisation who asked me to officially open the facility. In doing so, they recognised the recommendations I had made to the Community Building Partnership Program to make sure this structure became a reality. As the local member for Mount Druitt, I am proud to say it is a well-received asset for the local community and for the broader bushwalking fraternity, which has been fighting for many years to have a central location where the organisation can assemble, train and hold meetings.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.32 p.m.]: I thank the member for Mount Druitt for bringing this issue before Parliament. I am sure all members know of the fantastic job the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad has done in its 76 years of operation. The land west of here can be treacherous. I have been lost a few times myself, but not to the extent of requiring rescue. I am pleased that the member for Mount Druitt commended the Treasurer for the Community Building Partnership Program and the ongoing source of funds for his electorate.

Mr Richard Amery: I said the former Government.

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN: The former Government introduced it as an incumbency fund. The numbers on the Opposition benches show that that did not quite work. This Government supports the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad. I thank the member for bringing this matter to our attention.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.33 p.m. until
Wednesday 14 November 2012 at 10.00 a.m.**
