

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 15 November 2012

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

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

## **LIQUOR AMENDMENT (KINGS CROSS PLAN OF MANAGEMENT) BILL 2012**

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

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Notices of Motions**

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

### **NSW JOBS COMMISSION BILL 2012**

#### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 16 August 2012.**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [10.09 a.m.]: I oppose the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. This bill highlights the Opposition's lack of solid policy ideas and development. The Opposition has had 18 months to produce a decent economic management plan and show New South Wales that the days of economic mismanagement and cooking the treasury books are behind them. This was their golden opportunity. The NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 represents a policy cop-out by the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite. The bill is a cop-out, an abject failure and an embarrassment to the Labor Party. The Leader of the Opposition has failed miserably to present to this House a decent policy on economic management. He has had his chance.

The NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 was to be the bill that would do it all, the magic bullet that would transform the Labor Party's reputation from one of economic mismanagement to that of good economic management and bring the party into the new era. The Opposition has failed in that regard. I examined the bill to see whether it included more than just the establishment of a new government department to look into issues affecting jobs. But the bill does no more than that. As with so many other Labor Party policies, the Opposition takes the view that there is no problem that cannot be solved by throwing bureaucrats at it. When that fails and the situation deteriorates Labor calls in the special operations force: middle management. That is what this bill represents. It establishes a \$188 million department that will not create a single job.

**Mr David Elliott:** Except for middle managers.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** Yes, except for middle managers within the department. The functions of the commission will include identifying issues affecting jobs growth and retention, identifying skills shortages in industry sectors and regional communities, making recommendations to the Premier and preparing an annual report. That is as good as it gets.

**Mr David Elliott:** What about the one million people they put out of work in 1993?

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** I will get to that issue. When we compare their miserable excuse for policy development with the track record of this Government we find that, as the hardworking Treasurer has said, in the past seven months the New South Wales unemployment rate has been below the national unemployment rate. That follows an unemployment rate during the last five years of the Labor Government that was, on average, 0.4 per cent higher than the national unemployment rate. Whilst the Opposition is creating work for

middle managers, this Government is creating jobs. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government has created 54,300 new jobs in New South Wales: 8,400 jobs were created last month. We are well on our way to delivering our target of 100,000 new jobs during this term of government.

As our great Treasurer has said, the New South Wales unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent is the second lowest of all the States in Australia. It is an outstanding achievement and stands in stark contrast to the performance of those opposite. The Government's Jobs Action Plan is providing the right environment for business to prosper, for investment to occur and for the economy to grow. Half of the businesses claiming payroll tax rebates under the plan are small businesses, the engine room of the economy. Of the new jobs receiving rebates, 80 per cent are full-time jobs. In regional areas the top 10 local government areas claiming payroll tax rebates are Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Orange, the mid-west, Bathurst, Dubbo, Hastings, Singleton, Port Stephens and Goulburn.

The majority of the top 10 metropolitan areas claiming payroll tax rebates under the Government's Jobs Action Plan outside the Sydney central business district are in western Sydney, the former Labor Party heartland. They are Campbelltown, Fairfield, Parramatta, Auburn, Liverpool, Bankstown and Blacktown. Many former Labor constituents have seen the light as a result of their knowledge of the hypocrisy that exists within those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition has presented the House with a grand plan to create jobs in New South Wales, but the public do not forget the past.

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** Sixteen years.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** As the member for Myall Lakes interjects, they remember the 16 years of mismanagement and hypocrisy. Who can forget headlines such as "Job cuts for firefighters" that occurred under the watch of the former Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, John Robertson? The article states that 200 jobs in the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service face the axe from John Robertson. The Leader of the Opposition talks a good game but his track record in government is a different matter. Before the Leader of the Opposition came to Parliament he was the anti-privatisation king. He said, "We are not having anything to do with privatisation, not on my watch. I will stop it." Yet the first action he took when he became the Minister for Corrective Services and took hold of the reins of power was to start privatising prisons.

All members would remember the privatisation of Parklea prison. The stench of hypocrisy from the Opposition is overwhelming. The unemployment rate has fallen 1.4 per cent in the western Sydney suburbs of Canterbury and Bankstown. This Government is creating jobs in western Sydney. Under this Government the unemployment rate has fallen 2.5 per cent in central western Sydney and 1.5 per cent in north-western Sydney. Unlike the Opposition, this Government is getting on with creating real jobs. The Opposition has presented a bill that will create a new \$188 million department that will be featherbedded with economic bureaucratic middle management.

*[Interruption]*

The member for Cessnock interjects about my electorate. The Deputy Premier recently announced a net gain of 36 new jobs in trade and investment and 100 new jobs in mental health over the next nine months. As well, 14 new jobs will accompany the new linear accelerator for radiotherapy services in Orange and 20 new positions are associated with the drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic and more than 50 new nurses in my electorate. I am not talking about middle managers but real jobs that will make a difference to regional communities. There are positive signs, as exhibited by sustained jobs growth over the past seven months, which indicate that the economy of New South Wales is improving.

The Government and the Treasurer are creating real jobs, rather than just talking about it and formulating piffling plans to establish new bureaucracies. The real driver for lasting jobs and prosperity in New South Wales is investment. Small businesses are taking advantage of the payroll tax rebates that the Government is offering in regional and metropolitan areas. The figures relating to western Sydney, which the Treasurer drew to the attention of the House, are telling and are the reason Labor's former constituents have deserted it in droves. Those people have seen the light. I oppose the bill.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [10.19 a.m.]: I oppose the Australian Labor Party's NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. I concur with the remarks of my colleague the eminent member for Orange. The bill puts into sharp focus the philosophical differences between the New South Wales Liberals-Nationals and Labor. While this Government encourages employment and business growth through lower taxes and the cutting of red

tape, Labor seeks to expand bureaucracy and create a \$188 million letter-and-report-writing department. The NSW Jobs Commission Bill is about giving power back to the unions, whose membership is waning fast. It is about building bureaucracy and soaking up much-needed dollars, which Labor starved this State of for 16 long years.

The proposal to set up a jobs commission demonstrates that Labor has learned nothing from its mistakes in government. Labor now proposes to establish a jobs commission. Why did it not do so when it was in government? This bill reeks of hypocrisy. This Government seeks to create jobs in the public sector and to invest in the private sector and infrastructure. We also seek to encourage investment, which will create more jobs. We are about building a skilled workforce and creating opportunities for our young people who want to attend university or learn a trade in various skills areas. The Government is looking at expanding and building infrastructure in regional New South Wales, such as the proposed trades training centre at Gunnedah.

Recently I attended the opening of the trades training centre at Tamworth High School. This facility will be shared by a number of schools across the region. The centre will provide opportunities for young people to obtain a trade or to upskill. The training provided at the facility will result in a skilled workforce and the creation of jobs. In relation to jobs creation, the Public Service Commission 2012 data for Tamworth shows that police numbers have increased by 11, nurses have increased by 54 and teachers have increased by 14 while the overall public sector numbers in the Tamworth electorate have increased by 84. A couple of hundred new jobs have been created just in the public sector.

I turn now to investment in health in the Tamworth region. The \$210 million redevelopment of Tamworth Base Hospital is about to commence, thereby creating construction jobs. I am a firm believer that if we build it people will come. Already we are seeing great interest in the workforce recruitment and retention strategies for Hunter New England Health. Advertisements were sent recently to prospective doctors, clinicians and specialists and record numbers applied on the back of brand-new facilities being built in regional New South Wales—an area that had been neglected for 16 years. In addition, the \$42 million regional cancer care centre in Tamworth, providing healthcare closer to home, has resulted in high-level specialist clinicians moving to Tamworth in order to provide the very best cancer services to people in regional New South Wales. Building infrastructure attracts people to and creates jobs in regional New South Wales.

I am talking about the creation of real jobs, not just numbers that are shuffled around, as would occur under the proposals in this bill. Since March 2011 the Government has been getting on with the job of creating economic growth and employment across the State. Since coming to office the Government has created 28,400 jobs. We have delivered the State Plan and soon will release 19 regional action plans. The Government has commenced the development of industry action plans in six industries and launched the Jobs Action Plan, which has a target of 100,000 new jobs, including 40,000 in regional New South Wales.

The Government has appointed a Small Business Commissioner and a Cross Border Commissioner. These commissioners, particularly the Small Business Commissioner, Yasmin King, are working with local chambers of commerce to examine ways to make it easier for industry to relocate to regional New South Wales, to create more jobs, and to assist local businesses to reduce red tape and bureaucracy, thereby allowing them to expand their businesses and increase opportunities to build their skilled workforce within the local industry. Labor's proposed jobs commission would duplicate many core functions that are performed by the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services.

Currently the Government is trying to reopen the intermodal freight centre in Tamworth, which was closed by Labor. Labor took rail off the books and cut rail services. This magnificent facility in Tamworth is gathering dust and is used only intermittently. The Government, through the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, is examining ways to build our transport networks in Tamworth and to reopen the freight centre. We want to get freight back on rail, which will create jobs. Our local trucking companies will become the hub and spokes for the region and truck the freight out to the regions. This will provide certainty of employment in the region and encourage investment in infrastructure, which is needed to create more jobs.

The 2012 budget commits \$9.9 million over two years for the first projects to be funded under the Resources for Regions program in Muswellbrook and Singleton. This program has been implemented on the back of the mining sector, the developing coal seam gas industry and a prosperous agricultural sector. These are real jobs in regional New South Wales and will keep the dollars ticking over in those areas. Jobs are available in

the mining sector and the developing coal seam gas industry. In relation to Whitehaven mine, which is in my electorate, nearly 250 of the 450 jobs are in Gunnedah. By encouraging investment in infrastructure we provide greater opportunities in regional towns.

For the first time in a long time there is a light at the end of the tunnel for young people in regional areas who want a trade. In regional areas we are seeing fluorescent vests, new cars, new boats, new homes and new development: we are seeing the State progress. For the first time in a long while people are saying, "Where can we go to next?" In the past they were continually being beaten down by a bloated bureaucracy that soaked up the much-needed dollars. Regional New South Wales was starved of funding under Labor. This Government is committed to a strategy to attract business and international students. A key element in the strategy is to work with regional communities to identify skills shortages in a timely fashion and inform the State-sponsored migration program. The migration program is necessary to address the growing need for employees in regional New South Wales. First and foremost, we will create local jobs for local people and then if those jobs cannot be filled we will look elsewhere.

In the Tamworth electorate the poultry industry employs more than 800 people. We are rolling out the red carpet and showing that we are open for business in regional New South Wales. Business in regional New South Wales is a viable option, courtesy of our excellent, progressive, visionary Treasurer. The poultry industry in regional New South Wales is expected to expand rapidly. Make no mistake: It will spread its wings and fly, and create brand-new jobs across New England and the north-west. This Government is getting on with the job of creating economic growth and jobs—not building bureaucracy or supporting unions that soak up much-needed dollars. I oppose the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012.

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [10.29 a.m.]: Some of the contributions this morning would be almost laughable if this issue were not so serious for the people of New South Wales. The NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, John Robertson, seeks to set up a commission that will, as one of its functions, conduct inquiries into communities and industries that have been affected by job losses—my electorate has been severely affected by this—and to make recommendations to the Government to enhance economic opportunities in these areas. Who would oppose the establishment of an independent body to review issues that are affecting unemployed people, in particular unemployed young people, and advise Government on what could be done to increase investment and opportunities in the regions?

Part 2, proposed section 5, of the bill provides that the Governor may, on the recommendation of the Premier, appoint a NSW Jobs Commissioner. Proposed section 6 provides that the commission would be answerable to and take directions from the Premier. It states that the commission is subject to the control and direction of the Premier, except in relation to the contents of any advice, report or recommendation given to the Premier or any other person or body. This morning I have listened to Government members refer to the great increase in employment opportunities that they have delivered. Let me put some facts on the table. A statement dated June 2012 says:

New figures out today confirm that unemployment is increasing in NSW under Barry O'Farrell and the number of people out of work has gone up by 4700 since last month.

Every speaker on the Government side has repeated the mantra that they are getting on with the job. The truth is that out in the real world they would be laid off for not doing anything. Government members have not done a stroke to assist in promoting this State. They could not even get the State of Origin game held here, which we were entitled to have. They let that game slip away and they should be ashamed of themselves. The Government has increased unemployment by sacking public servants and attacking those who are regarded as blue-collar workers. Where is the investment in the regions? Yesterday in this place I heard someone say that Wollongong is not a region. That is news to the people of the Illawarra. The member for Tamworth describes his electorate as the country one day and as a region the next. Yet, according to the Government, the Illawarra is not a region. The bias in this place is a joke.

Another function of the proposed NSW Jobs Commission will be to identify issues affecting jobs growth and retention, and to make recommendations to the Premier regarding such issues. Only biased individuals who do not care about the State would come into this Chamber and seek to spout their usual mantra that they are getting on with the job. The Government has not laid an inch of track or an ounce of tar on a road. The trolley block at Wollongong Hospital is worse than ever and the doctors, nurses, emergency personnel and police are upset. For the first time the paramedics are wearing fluoro yellow, not because the Government created additional jobs but to show the stress and pressure that the Government has put them under. Members opposite are a disgrace.

We need a jobs commission to drive jobs growth across the State. That is essential because Government members are incapable of driving anything, particularly in regions such as Wollongong where industries have been hit hard and the Government's response has been zero. The economy is going backwards under Barry O'Farrell. His number one task should be to create jobs and to investigate why the regions are struggling to gain employment and investment. Blue-collar and white-collar jobs are going and the Government is ensuring that public service jobs are going also. The Government is ensuring that there is no investment and is driving down the reputation not only of the regions but of the whole of New South Wales. Since his first year in office Barry O'Farrell has run down the economy. Regular, hardworking people are paying the price for electing a Coalition Government. I meet many people daily who say that they are sorry they ever voted for this Government.

**Mr Mike Baird:** Are you kidding?

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** I am not kidding about you, Mr Treasurer. I do not need to make jokes about someone who can lose \$1 billion, because everyone is already laughing at you. Instead of wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on a dud regional relocation scheme the Premier should inject that money into regional business and jobs growth via the proposal by the Leader of the Opposition to create a NSW Jobs Commission. The proposed NSW Jobs Commission would be overseen by an independent jobs commissioner and would comprise a chairperson and part-time members. Speaking as a person who comes from a region, that seems like a reasonable proposal that would assist the commission to focus on the issues that are preventing employment growth and affecting young people.

Contrary to what members opposite claim, the Illawarra is a region. We have higher than average youth unemployment in the Illawarra, and it is no laughing matter. It is not funny; it needs to be taken very seriously. Instead of worrying only about their own electorates, Government members should remember that they are here for the whole State. Every day they come to Parliament and talk about what their electorates are getting as though they are entitled to something that the rest of the State is not. That is not how members opposite should govern; they should govern for the entire State. Their bias is a disgrace and they should be ashamed of themselves.

**Mr Mike Baird:** A \$100 million investment.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** The Treasurer can keep talking but we explained yesterday about the \$100 million. The Government will privatise Port Kembla, which it said during the election it would not do. So that is another lie. Now the Government says that \$100 million from that \$500 million sale will be spent in the Illawarra—in the electorate of the member for Kiama and not in the region as a whole—and that the Princes Highway upgrade is subject to the privatisation of Port Kembla. The Government wants me to be grateful to it for giving the Illawarra \$100 million while it takes \$400 million. Since the Government has found its lost \$1 billion it really does not need to privatise the port to raise \$500 million. And how much money is the Government saving by reneging on its promise to install lifts at Unanderra railway station?

The people of the Illawarra do not find anything about this Government funny. They think this Government is a disgrace and that Government members should be ashamed of themselves, as I do. They also think that when a political party gives a promise during an election campaign, the promise should be kept after the election. Instead, Government members have come into Parliament, taken their seats and then spent every waking moment saying how great they are. Ministers brag daily about how great each Government member is, while each Government member looks after himself or herself and ignores the needs of the other people of this State. It is disgraceful, yet they call themselves a government. Get a conscience and support this bill to establish the NSW Jobs Commission. That is the least that unemployed people and others who are doing it tough in New South Wales should be able to expect from this Government. I remind Government members that they represent the entire State.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [10.39 a.m.]: I oppose the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. I am proud to be a member of a government that is improving New South Wales, improving the New South Wales economy and rebuilding the State's finances. I am pleased that the greatest Treasurer this State will ever have, who is in the Chamber, is here to drive economic growth in New South Wales by increasing the competitiveness of doing business in New South Wales, putting downwards pressure on the cost of living, and strengthening the New South Wales skills base.

I was quite amused when I read the bill. Labor had 16 long dreary years in government, and after 16 months in opposition has come up with the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. I refer to the bill as the

fractured mirrors bill because it is basically intended to look into things. It is the classic Labor mirror response: "We'll look into that. We'll get back to you." I can imagine Shrek and Princess Fiona coming up with this bill. Our friend the member for Wollongong claimed that the great benefit of this bill is that it will set up another bureaucracy, but another bureaucracy is exactly what this State does not need. She boasted that the commission will be independent, but the bill states that the commission will be subject to the control and direction of the Premier

The functions of this additional layer of bureaucracy are to conduct inquiries, identify issues, evaluate regional development—which is something Labor really needs to know about because it does not have any regional members—undertake regional impact studies, and identify skills shortages. I know there is a vast shortage of skills in the Opposition—the commission could take a look at that. The commission will conduct inquiries into matters that the Premier considers appropriate. This so-called independent body will be taking directives from the Premier. Of course, the commission will compile and develop the inevitable annual report. What I like about the Labor Opposition is its fondness for detail. The commission may delegate to the commissioner any of the functions of the commissioner other than the commissioner's power of delegation. But, wait—there's more.

The commissioner, despite not having a power of delegation, can sub-delegate more of his functions to members of staff. We will have a commission that delegates and sub-delegates. But, wait—it gets even better. The commission will be able to second staff from other agencies. The irony of the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012, which will apparently create jobs and improve things, is that the commission will not be able to employ anyone. This bureaucracy that will bleed other government departments will not be accountable. The commission's members must be remunerated—we know how important remuneration is. The bill refers to part-time members of the commission. After all, a commission that delegates and sub-delegates will need part-time members because the commissioner will be busy delegating.

Although the commissioner has delegated and sub-delegated to part-time members of the commission, the part-time members can have a deputy. The bill makes provision for the appointment of deputies of part-time members of the commission. This extra layer of bureaucracy will grow quickly because members of the commission will be flat strap. Heaven help us when a vacancy occurs, because the chain of communication will be incredible. Consistent with the attention to detail for which the Opposition is infamous, the bill provides that if a member is absent from three consecutive meetings the member will not be able to continue to serve the commission. We know how important it is for board members and directors to turn up to meetings. Boards cannot operate unless directors actually turn up.

The bill will allow members of the commission to transact business outside meetings by circulation of papers and even by telephone. The bill also refers to closed-circuit television, so the commission might even rise to having a video link. This fractured mirrors bill, which will look into matters, delegate and sub-delegate, appoint part-time members, and create a jobs commission that cannot employ anybody, will serve no purpose that is related to development of the economy and creation of employment in this great State. Even after 16 years in government, all that Labor can come up with is a bill to delegate and sub-delegate to part-time members of a commission and a commission that will produce annual reports. This bill is a disgrace. For the reasons I have stated, I oppose the bill.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [10.46 a.m.]: My contribution to debate on the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 will be brief. I support the bill, which was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition will contribute to the debate shortly. In the meantime I will make some observations about contributions to the debate by Government members. It was quite interesting that approximately five minutes into their speeches they again started to talk about 16 years and grappled with the apparently monumental task of commenting on the machinery provisions of the bill that were drafted by Parliamentary Counsel—as is the case with virtually all bills. While Government members struggled with critical reasoning in their attempts to say something about procedural matters, they completely ignored the principles and substantive provisions of the bill.

The object of the bill is to establish a NSW Jobs Commission to inquire into and advise on matters affecting jobs growth and retention, particularly in relation to regional areas. Is it not terrible that a Labor Opposition would introduce a bill with a framework suggesting that before anything is done, an assessment should be made of whether it would have an impact on jobs and a jobs commission should provide a report to Parliament on factors affecting the creation of employment? It was embarrassing listening to some Government members during the debate. For example, when the member for Tamworth referred to the previous Government

rejecting regional jobs and an assessment of regional jobs I was reminded of parallel legislation. When Labor was last in opposition it introduced a policy, possibly in a private member's bill, to establish rural impact statements for any decisions made by the Government that would affect jobs in regional areas. Page 4 of the bill states under "Functions of Commission":

... to undertake regional impact studies on any proposal to remove or relocate public sector jobs, services or operations ...

Does this Government really have a problem with that? Is the Government afraid of making an assessment of the impact on employment of a policy, legislation or change before implementation? I consider that approach to be appropriate. Another example was the speech made by the member for Orange. He always somehow manages to make a speech that has nothing to do with the business before the House. He said something that I thought was very embarrassing for the Treasurer, who was in the Chamber at the time. The member for Orange said, "It is no longer the days when we are cooking the Treasury books." How embarrassing for the Treasurer for a Government backbencher to refer to Treasury books being cooked.

I have been lectured in this place for 18 months by the Treasurer and by Government members about the state of New South Wales finances, but at no time in the past 16 years—or even in the past 100 years—has an Auditor-General found \$1 billion in the budget that the Treasurer did not find. Now, in speaking on a bill about jobs, the member for Orange says, "It is no longer the days when we are cooking the Treasury books." Perhaps when one misses \$1 billion it is only a singe. It could be called cooking the books but it is probably just incompetence. I tried to work out how you lose \$1 billion. My caucus colleagues bought me a calculator to work it out but I am not in the Treasurer's league because the calculator only adds to 10 million. Please buy me a better Christmas present this year—I want a calculator that adds to one billion dollars. How many jobs were lost through that miscalculation—or, as the Leader of the Opposition says, incompetence?

Government members spoke about jobs here and jobs there. That is surprising because only this week the *Mount Druitt Standard* and the *Mount Druitt Star* newspapers reported the closure of the education office in Mount Druitt, with the loss of 23 jobs. The member for Penrith might be interested in those reports as I understand that the office in his electorate will be either closed or wound down significantly. But I do not have the figures on that. If this bill had been in place when the Minister for Education brought his cuts to his party room he would have had to say, in front of all Government members, that he was cutting the budget by \$1.7 billion and then explain that it meant the loss of some administrative staff in Myall Lakes and possibly the loss of staff in Sutherland or teachers in my electorate.

Under this legislation an assessment would be done and the impact statement would reveal that the decision would result in the closure of regional offices of the Department of Education and Communities. Should the Leader of the Opposition or the Labor Party be condemned for wanting to ask about jobs? The answer is no. The Opposition should not be condemned and this bill should be supported. As Minister, I made decisions concerning regional jobs. Obviously all departments must accept budget cuts, but under our policy we had to put before Cabinet a rural impact statement outlining the impact of cuts to various departments. In 1995 when I came to the Agriculture portfolio I said proudly—and it is on the *Hansard* record of this place—that 10 per cent of all jobs in that department were located within 40 kilometres of the Sydney central business district. However, within a few years under our decentralisation policy—

**Mr David Elliott:** There weren't many farmers within 40 kilometres of Sydney then.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** You would not know what a farmer was if he ran over you with a four-wheel drive. As a result of that decentralisation policy the number of jobs within 40 kilometres of the Sydney GPO was reduced to 1 per cent because we put jobs in regional centres. Other Ministers and I had to justify any cuts and changes in policy by outlining how jobs would be affected in the city and how that would impact on jobs in the regions. It is not rocket science. The Government would have done better to grab this bill, make some changes to put its fingerprints on it and then introduce its own legislation. It is a common strategy of governments to take an Opposition idea, amend it and then make the proposition work. If the Government did that in this case it would mean someone would report on the impact for jobs of any government action, budget cuts or policy decision. It is a shame that members, particularly regional members, today criticised petty machinery matters in the bill and failed to address the principle of the bill. It is a principle that should be supported, and I certainly do so.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [10.54 a.m.]: I was going to say that the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012 says everything about modern Labor, but it would be wrong to talk about modern Labor. This bill tells

us about contemporary Labor, but it is not modern. The member for Macquarie Fields is a man for whom I have great respect but, sadly, he is wrong about this bill. The member for Macquarie Fields said that "we need an independent umpire—a jobs commissioner—to ensure that we have full employment; this is not a case for laissez-faire or free market economics, we need a jobs commissioner to ensure that everybody has a job". That is a throwback to the 1970s. It is as though Tom Uren and Gough Whitlam were here, telling us that we need central planning.

While members opposite want more bureaucrats, more planning and more central control, we are getting on with the job of creating employment in New South Wales. Since we came to government we have created 54,300 additional jobs. Under this Government the State has the second-lowest unemployment rate in the nation. In the last five years of the former Government our unemployment rate was, on average, 0.4 per cent higher than the national rate. While members opposite want to employ more bureaucrats, we are getting on with creating jobs in New South Wales. Members opposite have opposed at every twist and turn our attempts to take the burden off small business. They opposed our changes to workers compensation to reduce premiums in the long run, and they opposed our reform of occupational health and safety laws to bring them into line with what their Federal colleagues wanted.

Those opposite have opposed everything we have done to create jobs and now they want a central bureaucrat. We are putting people on the front line—more teachers, more police, more nurses—and those opposite want to waste money and have a jobs commissioner or, as the member for Macquarie Fields said, an "independent umpire". They do not want to take the regulatory burden off small business—the engine room for economic growth and jobs creation in New South Wales. Apparently they want an "independent umpire" who will tell people when and where they should have jobs. While Labor members want bureaucracy, we are getting on with creating jobs in New South Wales. Our Jobs Action Plan targets the creation of 100,000 new jobs in New South Wales from July 2011 to give business the incentive to employ new workers and expand their enterprises. That is 60,000 new jobs in metropolitan New South Wales and 40,000 new jobs in non-metropolitan areas through our payroll tax rebate.

This bill gives the people of New South Wales a stark philosophical choice. Government members want to employ more people on the front line: they realise that our public resources and public finances are precious and want to increase the employment of teachers, police and nurses. But Opposition members want to divert money from the front line and put it into another bureaucracy. If they are genuine about creating jobs why did it take them 16 years to pull this stunt? If they are serious about creating jobs why have they opposed every effort we have made to create jobs in New South Wales? Why did they oppose our workers compensation reforms that cut costs to business? Why did they oppose the occupational health and safety laws that cut costs to business, which is what their Federal colleagues wanted? Those opposite can talk the talk but they cannot walk the walk. They talk about bureaucrats and job commissioners but when it comes to doing something positive and creating jobs they are sadly lacking. What hypocrisy.

We oppose this bill because we want every cent of public money put into infrastructure and on the front line. We do not want to see money wasted on bureaucrats. Apparently those opposite want to spend \$188 million on a letter- and report-writing department. We want to take the regulatory burden off small and large business and get on with creating jobs in New South Wales. Those opposite also ignore the fact that programs are already in place to generate employment in regional New South Wales. There is the Regional Industries Investment Fund, the Resources for Regions Program, the Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund, and the Strategy for Business Migration to attract international students. We have these programs in place already. This proposal is just more money wasting and symptomatic of a party that opposes job creation at every turn. I urge this House to reject this stunt and let us on this side get on with the real task of creating jobs in New South Wales and letting business, the engine room of growth, also get on with doing that.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [11.00 a.m.]: I commend the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution to the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. It was rather amazing to listen to Government members talk about creating jobs when New South Wales is bleeding jobs as a result of this Government's slashing, cutting and culling. The purpose of the NSW Jobs Commission Bill is to establish a Jobs Commission to inquire into and advise on matters affecting job growth and retention, and for other purposes. The bill establishes an independent jobs commission with functions including to conduct inquiries into communities and industries affected by job losses, and to make recommendations to the Government to enhance economic opportunities in these areas; identify issues affecting jobs growth; evaluate regional development funding initiatives; undertake regional impact studies on proposals to remove or relocate public sector jobs, services or operations; and identify skills shortages in industry sectors and regional communities.



The NSW Jobs Commission will consist of a NSW Jobs Commissioner appointed by the Governor and up to five part-time members with the relevant skills, knowledge or experience appointed by the Premier. The Premier has slashed 15,000 public sector jobs across the State already—a number that continues to rise. Given his significant contribution to falling business confidence throughout the State, the NSW Jobs Commission Bill will be an enormous boon to the New South Wales jobs sector. We need to create more jobs, not destroy them. How can the Premier justify job creation by culling the workforce? Without this bill, this State will be in trouble. But there is hope. The NSW Jobs Commission would provide elite advice to the Government on how to create jobs. That is right—job creation.

The commission's advice would be central to economic policy making. Its role would be to systematically conduct inquiries into communities and industries affected by job losses. The commission would make recommendations to the Government on how to enhance economic opportunities in struggling areas of New South Wales. The commission would identify skills shortages in industry sectors and regional communities, evaluate regional development funding initiatives and undertake regional impact studies. The Jobs Commission Bill is aimed at driving jobs growth across the State. We want to match peoples' skills to new job opportunities in the marketplace, and provide a helping hand to the regions and industries hit hard by mass lay-offs. My electorate of Fairfield has seen firsthand the impact of unemployment and poverty on individuals and their families.

Clearly, those opposite do not understand the impact of job losses on families throughout New South Wales, nor do they care. Whilst the Government continues to slash public sector funding and jobs at the same time the private sector is hemorrhaging jobs across the State, the outcome will always result in unemployment. Unemployment will not be resolved without the help of a jobs commission. The actions of those opposite speak louder than their words because they are complacent. They are happy to slash funding and cull jobs, and then try to pass it off as though it will be good for all of us. This is the beginning of the O'Farrell Government's welfare State as it systematically creates poverty-stricken communities that will be completely dependent on welfare. To ensure that this bleak future the O'Farrell Government is surging towards does not come to fruition we need to implement the NSW Jobs Commission Bill 2012. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [11.04 a.m.], in reply: I thank all members of the House for their contributions to this debate. However, I am disappointed that the Government will vote against the NSW Jobs Commission Bill. I am disappointed also at some of the contributions of Government members. This bill was intended to create a NSW Jobs Commission for one reason: to create the opportunity for more jobs in New South Wales. The number one priority of any government and Premier should be to create jobs. Our State's unemployment rate is higher than it was when this Government took office: the 1,000-plus jobs required to return unemployment to its previous level have not eventuated. Worse still, this Government's contribution to jobs is to sack 15,000 public sector workers. On this Government's watch companies are going out the back door: Kell and Rigby, St Hilliers and Bonds have moved offshore; Caltex has sacked workers, and yesterday more people were sacked and jobs were lost.

This Government puts politics ahead of jobs. It is not serious about creating jobs; it continues to slash jobs and drive down employment opportunities in this State. I will highlight some of the job losses in this State. This bill provides for the benefit of regional impact statements. I refer to regional jobs and start with the closure of Grafton Jail, which resulted in the Clarence bleeding jobs. Grafton Jail provided not just employment inside its walls; it also provided opportunities for the local community. But Grafton Jail was closed against the wishes of its community. What was this Government's response? It rushed madly back to the area and said, "We are going to put jobs back into the Clarence." Those jobs have not appeared. We have heard talk about eight jobs here and three jobs there, but they do not match the jobs this Government has removed. The Department of Education and Communities closed regional offices that provide wages to families who put money back into their local economies. The Land and Property Information Service of Forests NSW is about to be privatised and jobs will be lost, and in Primary Industries agronomists are being sacked and forced out the door.

**Mr David Elliott:** You guys wrote the book on privatisation.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** I know the member for Baulkham Hills is not enjoying this because the truth hurts and cuts deep.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro):** Order! The member for Baulkham Hills will cease interjecting.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** This Government is not serious about job creation. The tragedy is that many contributions to this debate by Government members, such as that of the member for Campbelltown, would make one cringe. All the member for Campbelltown did was attack the processes contained within the bill. I would have thought that after 18 months as a member of Parliament he would now understand that processes are required to establish services, such as the establishment of a NSW Jobs Commission. The contribution of the member for Campbelltown was an embarrassment. After hearing the contribution of the member for Cronulla it was obvious why he left the bar: no-one would have paid \$5,000 to hear the type of comments he made from the bar table. The member for Cronulla kept talking about more police, but in September this year this Government cancelled the intake of 300 graduates to the police academy, which would have resulted in an additional 300 police officers on the streets next year.

The member for Cronulla also spoke about bureaucrats. This Government is paying \$500,000 to the head of the Public Service Commission, but we still do not know what he does. We cannot see the value for that \$500,000 salary, because it appears that he does nothing. I remind the member for Cronulla that he was going to fight to the last drop of blood in his body to save the jobs at Cronulla Fisheries—he should vote in support of this bill. How did that turn out? He got nothing. The member for Cronulla did not enter the Chamber to vote simply because he is regarded as a joke by his own Government. If the member for Cronulla votes against the bill he will be considered as a joke by the community of Cronulla.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 23**

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

**Noes, 60**

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

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Bill not read a second time.**

## COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

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

### FAIRFIELD CULINARY CARNIVALE

**Mr GUY ZANGARI**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the contribution made by the South American community in the Fairfield electorate.
- (2) Encourages the extensive work made by this well established cultural group in New South Wales and supports them in sharing their many traditions with the local community.
- (3) Congratulates the South American community in celebrating the Culinary Carnivale on 13 October 2012 which attracted approximately 7,000 people.

### BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

**Mr GUY ZANGARI**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the contribution made by Jenni Hutchins, Senior Manager Metro South West and West Sydney of the Benevolent Society, in supporting the Fairfield community.
- (2) Notes the important role the Benevolent Society plays in building strong families and healthy communities.
- (3) Encourages and congratulates the artists participating in the "See Me, Hear Me" Art Exhibition, held at the Fairfield City Chambers on 28 September 2012.

### ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL COMMUNITY SECTOR AWARD

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates Essential Personnel on winning the Excellence in the Community Sector Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

### ANCHOR BAY MOTEL SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates the Anchor Bay Motel on winning the Service Excellence Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

### SOUTH COAST WELDING AND FABRICATION SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates South Coast Welding & Fabrication on winning the Excellence in Small Business Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

### STRONGBUILD BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AWARD

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Strongbuild on winning the Excellence in Building and Construction Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.
- (2) Notes the outstanding contribution Strongbuild has made to the Shoalhaven and South Coast economy.
- (3) Acknowledges the strength of Strongbuild's leadership and the wonderful role it plays in raising building industry standards.

### HORIZON CREDIT UNION PROPERTY AND FINANCE AWARD

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates Horizon Credit Union on winning the Excellence in Property and Finance Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

### RAMBOR PTY LTD BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates Rambor Pty Ltd on winning both the Excellence in Resources and Manufacturing Award and the Excellence in Export Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

### ACTIVATED GROUP PTY LTD BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates the Activated Group on winning both the Excellence in Innovation Award and the Outstanding E-Business Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

**CLIFTON ACCOUNTANTS PROFESSIONAL AND COMMERCIAL AWARD**

**Mr GARETH WARD**—That this House congratulates Clifton Accountants on winning the Excellence in Professional and Commercial Award at the Origin 2012 Shoalhaven Business Excellence Awards.

**NATHANIEL STEVENS ACT OF BRAVERY**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Nathaniel Stevens on his bravery and quick thinking in removing his younger sister from the danger of a fire in the family home.
- (2) Notes that Nathaniel removed his younger sister and himself from the house and alerted neighbours to the trouble, while his mother tried to control the fire.
- (3) Notes that Nathaniel is a wonderful ambassador for his family and local community.

**STEPS 2 STARDOM CHEERLEADING AND DANCE SQUADS**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the cheerleading and dance squads that qualified for the Australian All Stars Cheerleading Federation Nationals.
- (2) Notes that this is the fourth year the group Steps 2 Stardom have qualified for this event.
- (3) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of each member of the cheerleading and the dance squads.
- (4) Wishes the squads from Steps 2 Stardom every success in the future.

**TRIBUTE TO JOHN ELLEMS**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates John Ellems on his outstanding 47 year career with NSW Ambulance Services.
- (2) Acknowledges that during John Ellems career he has been awarded numerous awards for his outstanding conduct service, and devotion to duty and long service.
- (3) Thanks John Ellems for his years of dedication and service to NSW Ambulance.
- (4) Notes that John Ellems is a wonderful ambassador for the NSW Ambulance Service, his family and the community.
- (5) Wishes John Ellems all the very best for his future and retirement.

**NEW SOUTH WALES UNDER 12 YEARS SOCCER TEAM**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the New South Wales Under 12 years soccer team on winning the Primary Schools Sports Association Soccer Carnival in Darwin.
- (2) Acknowledges co-captains Brodie Clarkson of Narellan Vale Public School, Andrew Head of Camden South Public School, Jarrod Wiley of Harrington Park Public School and Kye Soares from Eschol Park Public School on their participation in the team.
- (3) Notes that these four boys are also members of the Macarthur Rams junior representative squad.
- (4) Acknowledges that the team was coached and managed by Alex Watson.
- (5) Thanks the Macarthur Rams Club for providing training facilities for the New South Wales team.
- (6) Notes that Brodie, Andrew, Jarrod and Kye are wonderful ambassadors of their schools, teams and community.

**SPORTS SEDAN RACING CHAMPION STEVEN LACEY**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Steven Lacey on winning the New South Wales Sports Sedan Club Division 2 Championship.
- (2) Notes that this is Steven's first year racing sports sedans.
- (3) Wishes Steven every success for his future in motor sports.

**MOUNT ANNAN WANDERERS**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the Mount Annan Wanderers walking group.
- (2) Notes that the Mount Annan Wanderers encourage healthy lifestyles and friendships, meeting every Friday for a 6 kilometre walk around the Australian Botanical Gardens Mount Annan.
- (3) Notes the importance of groups such as the Wanderers in keeping people physically and socially active within the local community.
- (4) Notes that the Mount Annan Wanderers have a beautiful facility available to them in the Australian Botanical Gardens, with some 416 hectares to explore.
- (5) Wishes the group every success for its continued participation and growth.

**WAKEBOARDER AARON GUNN**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Aaron Gunn on becoming a Liquid Force team member for the Australian cable wakeboarding season.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and commitment to training that Aaron has put in to receive this invitation.
- (3) Acknowledges cable wakeboarding is a family oriented sport.
- (4) Wishes Aaron well for the upcoming season.

**PANTENE BEAUTIFUL LENGTHS CAMPAIGN AND LORELAI HODGES**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lorelai Hodges on donating her 22 centimetre ponytail to the Pantene Beautiful Lengths campaign.
- (2) Notes that these human hair donations are made into wigs for patients undergoing cancer treatment.
- (3) Acknowledges that Lorelai is a wonderful ambassador for her family and community.

**JORJA BARRETT NEW SOUTH WALES PSSA SOFTBALL TEAM SELECTION**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jorja Barrett on being the first student from St Clare Catholic School to be selected to represent New South Wales in the Primary School Sports Association (PSSA) squad.
- (2) Notes that Jorja was selected to pitch for the New South Wales PSSA Softball squad.
- (3) Wishes Jorja and the NSW PSSA Softball squad every success for the PSSA Australian Championships to be held in Canberra.
- (4) Notes that Jorja is a wonderful ambassador for her school, team and community.

**AUSTRALIAN TRANSPLANT GAMES GOLD MEDALLIST TRISH KRAMER**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Trish Kramer on winning a gold medal at the 2012 Transplant Games held in Newcastle.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Kramer won her gold medal in the scrabble competition at the games and notes the assistance she received from her support person Wendy Anderson.
- (3) Further notes that Mrs Kramer received a new heart 18 months ago in a transplant operation at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

**FOOTBALLER DANIEL MORTIMER**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Daniel Mortimer, of Orange, on leading the Newtown rugby league team to victory over Balmain Ryde-Eastwood in the grand final of the 2012 NSW Cup.
- (2) Notes that Daniel Mortimer is a member of Orange's Mortimer family whose members have participated in the National Rugby League at both State and national levels.
- (3) Wishes Daniel Mortimer every success as he endeavours to play rugby league at the highest level.

**GERMAN OPERA SCHOLARSHIP FINALIST AMY CORKERY**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates former Kinross Wolaroi School student Amy Corkery on being one of six finalists for the Opera Foundation Australia's German Opera Scholarship.
- (2) Notes that the scholarship gives a student the opportunity to join Germany's Cologne Opera Ensemble for 12 months.
- (3) Wishes Amy Corkery every success for her future career as an opera singer.

**FOOTBALLER JACK WIGHTON**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Orange rugby league rising star Jack Wighton on being chosen to play five-eighth for the Junior Kangaroos.
- (2) Notes that Jack Wighton has gained selection despite a toe injury that caused him to sit on the sidelines for a considerable part of the 2012 season.
- (3) Wishes Jack Wighton every success in playing for the National Rugby League club Canberra in the 2013 season and beyond.

**GOT JACK'S BACK FUNDRAISING EVENT**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the Got Jack's Back fundraiser held in Old Bar which raised \$63,000 for Old Bar resident Jack Scanes who is currently undergoing chemotherapy at the John Hunter Hospital and requires a bone marrow transplant.
- (2) Notes that more than 450 people attended Club Old Bar for the fundraising event, which included a silent auction and a head shave.
- (3) Congratulates the organisers for raising awareness of the importance of organ and tissue donations.
- (4) Congratulates Jack's parents, Gary and Debbie and Jack's girlfriend, Amy, who have supported Jack through his treatments.
- (5) Notes that a bone marrow donor has been identified on the International Organ and Tissue Register who is travelling from Germany for the transplant.
- (6) Encourages all New South Wales adults to register as an organ and tissue donor through Medicare.

**MANNING PRIMARY SCHOOL SPORTS ASSOCIATION CARNIVAL**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the following students who competed at the Manning Primary Schools Sports Association carnival.
  - (a) Emi Ruprecht—shot-put, high jump, long jump, PP5 relay;
  - (b) Nicholas Gilbert—long jump, high jump, shot-put, discus, 100 metres, 200 metres, PP5 relay;
  - (c) Daroo Morris—100 metres, 200 metres, PP5 relay;
  - (d) Kortney Dorries—high jump, long jump, 100 metres, 200 metres, PP5 relay, junior girls relay;
  - (e) Tylah O'Connor—junior girls relay;
  - (f) Amberlee Clark—junior girls relay; and
  - (g) Ebony Woodfield—junior girls relay.
- (2) Congratulates Mitchells Island Public School students Daroo Morris and Nicholas Gilbert on their selection to represent the Hunter Region at the Primary Schools Sports Association State athletics carnival.
- (3) Notes that Daroo Morris will compete in the 100 metres and 200 metres and Nicholas Gilbert will compete in the 100 metres, the shot-put and the discus.
- (4) Notes that Daroo Morris and Nicholas Gilbert will combine with Emi Ruprecht and Kortney Dorries to contest the Nigel Bagley Small Schools Relay, which was won by Mitchells Island Public School in 2010.
- (5) Congratulates Mitchells Island Public School for having State representatives each year in athletics from 2008 to 2012 and in swimming from 2010 to 2012.

**CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students of the Chatham High School Higher School Certificate class of 2012 on their donation of a statue of the school's emblem, a griffin, to stand guard over the school.
- (2) Notes that Nigel Ferguson from Edstein Creative Stone made the statue.
- (3) Notes that these students will sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations in October and November 2012.
- (4) Congratulates the students on their achievements and wishes them well for their future studies and careers.
- (5) Congratulates the principal, Mr Horvast, and his staff for their dedication and skills in teaching these students for the past six years.

**TOMORROW'S LEADER AWARD RECIPIENT LISA CANTWELL**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lisa Cantwell, acting Nurse Unit Manager at Manning Rural Referral Hospital, on receiving the 2012 Tomorrow's Leader Award at the Hunter/New England Local District Health Staff Achievement Awards.
- (2) Acknowledges that the nursing unit at Manning Hospital is delighted by Lisa's win and that Lisa's leadership qualities and professionalism have brought cohesion and stability to the unit.
- (3) Recognises that Lisa is seen as a role model for nursing staff at the hospital as she delivers personalised care to all patients and enables those working with her to do the same.
- (4) Notes that Lisa received the award on behalf of the staff at Manning Hospital and acknowledged the work of its nurses, support officers, ward clerks, medical staff and allied health personnel.

**BEATRICE LARKEY 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House congratulates Beatrice Larkey of Tuncurry, born on 1st November 1912, on celebrating her 100th birthday.

**TAREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students of the Taree Christian College Higher School Certificate class of 2012 on their achievements and wishes them well for their future studies and careers.
- (2) Notes that these students will sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations in October and November 2012.
- (3) Congratulates the College's teachers Martine Chate and Amy Guiver and College Principal, Mr Ken Greenwood and his staff for the dedication and skills in teaching these students for the past six years.

**ST CLARE'S HIGH SCHOOL HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students of the St Claire's High School Higher School Certificate class of 2012 on their achievements and wishes them well for their future studies and careers.
- (2) Notes that these students will sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations in October and November 2012.
- (3) Congratulates their teachers Jennifer Watkins, Julianne Rowsell, Paul Smyth, Damien Bellante, senior student coordinator Ian Evans, assistant principal Philip Gibney, and principal Jim Dempsey for the dedication and skills in teaching these students in their senior school years.

**MANNING VALLEY ANGLICAN COLLEGE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students of Manning Valley Anglican College Higher School Certificate class of 2012 on their achievements and wishes them well for their future studies and careers.
- (2) Notes that these students will sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations in October and November 2012.
- (3) Congratulates their teachers and school principal, Glenn Turner and head of secondary, Sue Whiteman and stage 6 coordinator, Neil Dawes on the dedication and skills in teaching these students in their senior school years.

**TAREE HIGH SCHOOL HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the students of Taree High School's Higher School Certificate class of 2012 on their achievements and wishes them well for their future studies and careers.
- (2) Notes that these students will sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations in October and November 2012.
- (3) Congratulates Taree High School's teachers, in particular year advisor Judy Hall, and relieving principal Alison Alliston, for their dedication and skills in teaching senior school students.

**TRIBUTE TO SUZAN HOURANI**

**Mr TONY ISSA**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Suzan Hourani for her outstanding service to the Lebanese community as a radio show host for the past 20 years.
- (2) Notes that Suzan Hourani has played a significant role as a master of ceremonies for large scale community events aimed at building a harmonious and healthy community.
- (3) Commends Suzan Hourani's contribution to Lebanese theatre in Sydney and for using this medium to raise many important issues that affect youth and families.

**KUNITARO GREEN TEA COMPANY**

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN**—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the pioneering of the company Kunitaro in the production of green tea in New South Wales, including the development of a green tea plantation at Mangrove Mountain on the Central Coast, the adaption of Japanese green tea technology to the New South Wales environment and in successfully producing export quality tea.
- (2) Congratulates Kunitaro on the opening of its new processing venture on 19 October 2012 which was attended by the Consul General of Japan, Dr Masahiro Kohara.

**NEW LAMBTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FETE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that New Lambton Public School hosted its annual school fete on 15 September 2012, raising \$21,000 to improve school facilities.
- (2) Recognises the efforts made to support the fete and raise funds by the Parents and Citizens Association, school principal Mrs Taylor, fete co-ordinator Julianne Turner, the entire school community and the families of children who attend the school.

**MATTARA DANCESPORT BALLROOM COMPETITION**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Mattara Dancesport Ballroom Competition was held on 30 September 2012, at Cardiff Panthers.
- (2) Notes that the competition is one of the biggest events on Newcastle's ballroom dancing calendar.
- (3) Commends the event's organiser Maxine Johnson, who is the owner and principal of Maxi-Jazz Ballroom Dance studio, for her dedication and commitment to the event.
- (4) Extends its best wishes to Maxine and her team of talented dancers.

**AUSTRALIAN TRANSPLANT GAMES MEDALLIST IAN PATTEN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the 13th Australian Transplant Games took place at Lambton Pool on 2 October 2012.
- (2) Congratulates Ian Patten, aged 79, on his 12th championship win.
- (3) Recognises that Ian is the oldest competitor at the games and has won more than 50 medals over the years at the Australian Masters Games as well as in national and world transplant competitions.
- (4) Extends its best wishes to Ian in his future swimming competitions.



**NEW LAMBTON PUBLIC SCHOOL NETBALL TEAM**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates New Lambton Public School on its second consecutive win at the New South Wales Public Schools Sports Association knockout netball competition.
- (2) Commends the school's team, comprising of Jasmine Sheng, Kate Hughes, Courtney Burling, Emma Bramble, Caitlin Bray, Monica Vrtkovski, Nicole Crossley and Sinita Lee for its hard work and competitiveness.
- (3) Thanks coach Carolyn Goverd for steering the team to victory.
- (4) Extends its best wishes to the team in future netball competitions.

**NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES FOOTBALL AWARDS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

Congratulates all award winners at the Northern New South Wales Football Association annual awards night including:

- (a) Joel Cockbain—Rookie Referee of the Year,
- (b) Tim McGilchrist—Referee of the Year,
- (c) Con Gounis (Hamilton Olympic Football Club)—Bill Turner Award,
- (d) John Wainwright (Tionee Soccer Club)—Volunteer of the Year,
- (e) Matthew Kenny (Lambton Jaffas FC)—NEWFM1st Division Leading Goal scorer (20 goals),
- (f) Lambton Jaffas Football Club—NEWFM1st Division Club Championship,
- (g) Adamstown Rosebud Football Club—NEWFM1st Division Club of the Year,
- (h) Kate Hensman (Lake Macquarie City Football Club)—Herald Women's Premier League Leading Goal scorer (23 goals),
- (i) Tracey Baker (Lake Macquarie City Football Club)—Herald Women's Premier League Player of the Year,
- (j) Mereweather United Football Club—Herald Women's Premier League Club of the Year,
- (k) Hamilton Olympic Football Club—NBN State League Club Championship,
- (l) Kate Bradbery (Newcastle Jets Youth)—NBN State League Leading Goal scorer (18 goals),
- (m) Weston Workers Football Club—NBN State League Club of the Year Award,
- (n) Blake Green (Newcastle Jets Youth)—BJS Insurance Rookie of the Year,
- (o) Chris Bowling (Broadmeadow Magic)—Bill Mahoney Goalkeeper of the Year,
- (p) Mark Wilson (Charlestown City Blues Football Club)—NBN State League Coach of the Year,
- (q) Scott Pettit (Broadmeadow Magic Football Club)—NBN State League Player of the Year.

**SHIPLEY AND SMITH FAMILY AND GO4FUN PROGRAM**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Monique Shipley and David Smith as well as their children, Ivy Horan and Domonick Bruckner-Smith for completing the Go4Fun 10-week program.
- (2) Notes the family participated in the program's education sessions and physical activities, which helped family members to lose weight and increase their energy levels.
- (3) Applauds eight-year-old Ivy on obtaining a healthy weight through participating in the program.
- (4) Wishes the family all the best in their future endeavours.

**BALD AND BEAUTIFUL FOUNDATION**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Les Jones, director of the Bald and Beautiful Foundation, on his wonderful and inspiring voluntary work in the Newcastle community.

- (2) Notes that the Bald and Beautiful Foundation hosts a day of fun, pampering and wellbeing for adults with cancer, in May each year in Newcastle.
- (3) Thanks the Rotary Club of Newcastle Sunrise for championing the event and for providing planning and ongoing financial support.

#### **LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL SAVE SIGHT CAMPAIGN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the vital importance of volunteers in the Hunter.
- (2) Commends the Lions Club for its international Save Sight Campaign, which has raised over \$415 million since its inception.
- (3) Notes that the Lions Club has nearly 1.4 million members worldwide.
- (4) Extends its best wishes to incoming president of the Lions Club International, Barry Palmer, who will fill the role for a year from July 2013.

#### **PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST GERRY DYKMAN**

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN**—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Gerry Dykman of Raymond Terrace has made to the community through his volunteer work.
- (2) Acknowledges Gerry Dykman's involvement with the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens over the past 10 years.
- (3) Thanks Gerry Dykman and congratulates him for being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

#### **PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST JOHN ESTENS**

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN**—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that John Estens, of Tea Gardens, has made to the community through his volunteer work.
- (2) Acknowledges John Estens' involvement with the Tea Gardens-Hawks Nest Surf Life Saving Club over many years.
- (3) Thanks John Estens and congratulates him for being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

#### **PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST ROSS DEBENHAM**

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN**—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Ross Debenham, from Soldiers Point, has made to his community through his volunteer work.
- (2) Acknowledges Ross Debenham's ongoing commitment to the Port Stephens Unit of Marine Rescue NSW.
- (3) Thanks Ross Debenham and congratulates him for being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

#### **NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE SECONDARY SCHOOLS CADET PROGRAM**

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the 13 recipients of graduation certificates from the Rural Fire Service, who successfully completed the NSW Rural Fire Service Secondary School Cadet Program.
- (2) Notes that all 13 graduates are year 10 and 12 students at the Woy Woy Campus of Brisbane Water Secondary College.
- (3) Thanks the College for initiating this innovative program in 2012.
- (4) Acknowledges the 20 Rural Fire Service volunteers and staff from the Gosford area, under the direction of Inspector Talone Higgins, who assisted with the delivery of the program.

#### **OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN WILLIAM WESSLINK**

**Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates William (Russ) Wesslink on being promoted to Officer of the Order of St John.
- (2) Acknowledges Russ' 36 years of service to the Clarence Valley as a volunteer with the St John Ambulance Service.

**RSL FIFTY YEARS MEMBERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT BRUCE DUNN**

**Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bruce Dunn on receiving an award for his 50 years of membership in the Returned Services League.
- (2) Acknowledges Bruce Dunn's contribution during the Second World War.
- (3) Wishes Mr Dunn many more years of being able to attend ANZAC Day services.

**AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GOANNA PULLING COMPETITION**

**Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organising committee of the 2012 Australian National Goanna Pulling Competition held at Wooli, consisting of president Bruce Bird, secretary Debby Thompson and treasurer Kellie Blacksell.
- (2) Acknowledges that crowd numbers at the event increased from last year with over 1,800 people attending the event.
- (3) Acknowledges that funds raised from the gold coin donation on entry will greatly assist the work of the State Emergency Service in the community.

**EAST MAITLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL DEBATING TEAM**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the East Maitland Public School debating team on qualifying for the State final of the Premier's Debating Challenge.
- (2) Notes the team comprises Year 6 pupils Zoe Linnane, Toby Burgess, Fay Highet and Lilly Taylor.
- (3) Notes the co-ordinator of the team is Cathy Bray.
- (4) Wishes the team all the best for the State final to be held between 29 and 30 October 2012.

**HIDDEN TREASURES HONOUR ROLL MAITLAND ELECTORATE NOMINEES**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the six nominees from the Maitland electorate for the 2012 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll which recognises the volunteer work of women in regional and rural New South Wales.
- (2) Notes that Virginia Anderson of Balickera was nominated for her contribution to the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.
- (3) Notes that Gail Johnston from Woodberry was nominated for her contribution to a range of organisations including Maitland Rotary Club, Women's Network Hunter, Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles and Friends of Our Library.
- (4) Notes that Margaret Sivyler, OAM, of Maitland was nominated for her contribution to the arts, Mai-wel Group, Hunter River Agricultural & Horticultural Association and the Maitland Citizen of the Year Award.
- (5) Notes that Valmai Sullivan of Largs was nominated for her contribution to Maitland Seniors, Beresfield Senior Citizens, Women's Network Hunter and the Morpeth on Hunter Proboscis Club.
- (6) Notes that Jennie Wilkinson from Bolwarra was nominated for her contribution to The Blood Bank, Australian Breastfeeding Association, various school Parents and Citizens Associations and the Women's Network Hunter.
- (7) Notes that Vicki Woods of Largs was nominated for her contribution to various community organisations in Largs, Hunter branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Hunter Kidney Foundation, Hunter Institute of Medical Research, Women's Network Hunter and Hunter Tourism.
- (8) Thanks each of the nominees for their time and efforts to help the community.
- (9) Wishes each of the nominees all the best with their future endeavours.

**COLIN AND NOELINE BOYCE FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Colin and Noeline Boyce, of Horseshoe Bend, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on 6 October 2012.
- (2) Congratulates Colin and Noeline Boyce and wishes them health and happiness for the future.

**JOHN AND MARGARET MARSELOS SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that John and Margaret Marselos, of East Maitland, celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 11 October 2012.
- (2) Congratulates John and Margaret Marselos and wishes them health and happiness for the future.

**HAROLD AND HOPE MORTON SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Harold and Hope Morton, of Metford, celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 11 October 2012.
- (2) Congratulates Harold and Hope Morton and wishes them health and happiness for the future.

**JOHN AND PATRICIA ROGERS SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that John and Patricia Rogers, of Bolwarra Heights, celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 4 October 2012.
- (2) Congratulates John and Patricia Rogers and wishes them health and happiness for the future.

**PROVINCIAL MEDIA AWARD RECIPIENT GARY HARLEY**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Hunter Valley racing journalist and sporting commentator, Gary Harley, received the Provincial Media Award at the 2012 New South Wales Country and Provincial Racing Awards.
- (2) Congratulates Gary Harley on the award which recognises his efforts during the 2011 and 2012 racing season.
- (3) Wishes Gary Harley all the best in his future endeavours.

**NATIONAL PRIMARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT JARRAD FOLPP**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jarrad Folpp, of Woodberry Public School, on receiving the 2012 National Primary Teacher of the Year Award at the National Rugby League's One Community Awards.
- (2) Notes that Jarrad Folpp received his award for creating opportunities for development in his young students, co-ordinating gala days and running programs such as the Backyard League Gold Program, as well as training and coaching all of the school's rugby league and league tag teams.
- (3) Wishes Jarrad Folpp success in his future teaching and coaching endeavours.

**NSW CARERS AWARD RECIPIENT NITA WALKOM**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Nita Walkom, from the Maitland electorate, on receiving the 2012 New South Wales Carers Award.
- (2) Notes that Nita Walkom received this award for caring for her husband, Glen, since he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2009.
- (3) Wishes Nita Walkom all the best in her future endeavours.

**VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENT JEAN MARY McPHEE**

**Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Jean Mary McPhee, of Strathfield, who throughout her life has completed countless hours of volunteer work, particularly for the NSW Police Force within the Flemington local area command.
- (2) Congratulates Jean Mary McPhee on receiving the Inner West Senior Highly Recommended Volunteer of the Year Award, as well as the many other volunteers from around the Strathfield electorate for their work.

**LYNN VARVEL COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET**—That this House:

- (1) Thanks Lynn Varvel for her nine and a half years of service to Inala, a Hills District based organisation that provides individualised services for people with disabilities.
- (2) Wish Lynn all the very best on her well-deserved holiday and for her future career.

**BRAZILIAN JUJITSU CHAMPION DANIEL MITCHELL**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 15-year-old Daniel Mitchell, a Gilroy College student, for achieving victory in the light heavyweight division at the 2012 Brazilian Jujitsu National Championships held in Melbourne.
- (2) Wishes Daniel all the best for the future as he considers competing in mixed martial arts and in the Ultimate Fighting Championships.

**TENNIS PLAYERS JORDAN, CAMERON AND BLAKE SMITH**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET**—That this House:

- (1) Wishes Jordan, Cameron and Blake Smith, of Castle Hill, good luck as they compete in the first round of the new Asia Pacific Tennis League in Sydney.
- (2) Wishes all three of the brothers all the best in their future careers.

**ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates St Gabriel's School, which supports students in Castle Hill with hearing impairments and other special needs, on its ninetieth birthday celebrations.
- (2) Recognises the valuable contribution that St Gabriel's makes to the community in Castle Hill by improving the lives of children.

**ASTON CLASSICAL MUSIC GROUP**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Cherrybrook residents, Hannah Oblikov and Patrick Abrams, of the classical music group Aston, who are currently performing in Mexico.
- (2) Wishes Aston the very best for the future as its classical music covers of contemporary songs takes the world by storm.

**ORANGE ELECTORATE CARER OF THE YEAR TRACEY TOWNSEND**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tracey Townsend, of Orange, on receiving the Carer of the Year Award for the Orange electorate.
- (2) Thanks Tracey for her important work and acknowledges the important role that carers like Tracey perform.

**TRIBUTE TO DAVID JOHN BEAUMONT**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of David John Beaumont, who devoted much of his life to the sport of table tennis, especially in the town of Gulgong.
- (2) Notes that David Beaumont helped make Gulgong a major table tennis centre in New South Wales.
- (3) Notes that David Beaumont coached many young Gulgong children to State and National table tennis titles including his daughter Michelle, who was a dual medallist in the sport at the 2001 Youth Olympics in Sydney.
- (4) Offers condolences to David Beaumont's family.

**CYCLIST AYDEN TOOVEY**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mudgee cyclist Ayden Toovey for winning the Junior Tour of Southland, held in Invercargill, New Zealand.
- (2) Notes that Ayden's win was achieved in dismal, wet and windy conditions and his teaming with Jordan Payne of Mudgee led to a final stage win and the overall win for Ayden.
- (3) Wishes Ayden every success in the sport of cycling.

**MONIQUE FAUL FIRESTARS SOFTBALL TEAM SELECTION**

**Mr ANDREW GEE**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Orange softball player, Monique Faul, on gaining selection to play in the Gilley's Shield for the New South Wales open women's softball team, the Firestars.
- (2) Notes that Monique was a pitcher for the Firestars when it won the Gilley's Shield in the 2011-12 season.
- (3) Wishes Monique a successful campaign for the 2012-13 season and for the finals to be played in Sydney from 2 to 6 January 2013.

**ALBURY-WODONGA CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE MAX LUFF**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Max Luff, founder and chairman of Border Express, for being admitted to the Albury-Wodonga Chambers of Commerce Hall of Fame.
- (2) Recognises Max's dedication and outstanding contribution to the transport industry over the last 60 years.

**THURGOONA PUBLIC SCHOOL 150TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House congratulates Thurgoona Public School on celebrating its 150th anniversary.

**MURRAY REGION SENIOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR JOY MCGOWAN**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Joy McGowan, of Albury, on receiving the Murray region's Senior Volunteer of the Year Award.
- (2) Recognises Joy's dedication and outstanding contribution to the community for over 26 years as a volunteer with Age Concern.

**MURRAY REGION VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR CINDY HUTTON**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Cindy Hutton of Corowa on receiving the Murray region's Volunteer of the Year Award.
- (2) Recognises Cindy's dedication and outstanding contribution as chairwoman of the Corowa Community Cancer Network, working closely with the Cancer Council NSW to raise funds through the Relay for Life event in Corowa.

**MURRAY REGION YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR TYLER NIXON**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tyler Nixon of Corowa on receiving the Murray region's Youth Volunteer of the Year Award.
- (2) Recognises Tyler's dedication and outstanding contribution to the community as a St John Ambulance volunteer.

**NORMAN AND LINDA GRAETZ SEVENTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House congratulates Norman and Linda Graetz, formerly of Walla Walla, on celebrating seventy years of marriage and wishes them continuing good health.

**RETIREMENT OF INSPECTOR RICHARD HARVEY**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Inspector Richard Harvey's 26 year contribution to the NSW Police Force.
- (2) Congratulates Richard on his dedication and contribution to the local community and wishes him all the best in his retirement.

**RETIREMENT OF SENIOR CONSTABLE GEORGE KROOGLIK**

**Mr GREG APLIN**—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Senior Constable George Krooglik's 35 year contribution to the NSW Police Force.
- (2) Congratulates George on his dedication and contribution to the community and wishes him all the best in his retirement.

**BASKETBALL NSW**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Basketball NSW held its annual awards dinner on 20 October 2012.
- (2) Commends Paul Beale, chairman, and Daniel Martinez, chief executive officer, of Basketball NSW for their efforts in promoting the game of basketball in New South Wales, throughout Australia and internationally.
- (3) Congratulates all recipients of a Basketball NSW 2012 award.
- (4) Wishes all players, officials, coaches, referees, volunteers and all others involved a very successful 2012-13 basketball season.

**AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society held its Temple's thirty-first anniversary dinner on 16 September 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the newly elected seventeenth executive and management committee.
- (3) Commends immediate past president, James Chan, for his work in promoting harmony, peace and understanding to the greater community of New South Wales.
- (4) Wishes newly elected president, Vincent Kong, every success as he leads the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and continues to enhance multiculturalism in New South Wales.

**AUSTRALIAN FUZHOU ASSOCIATION**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Australian Fuzhou Association held a celebration ceremony for the announcement of the election of its eighth president election announcement on 21 October 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the Association on its excellent work in promoting relations between New South Wales and China.
- (3) Commends President, Weijie Chen, and all members of the Association for their work in strengthening cultural and economic ties that contribute to the development of New South Wales.

**UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE INDIGENOUS GRADUATES**

**Ms SONIA HORNER**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that almost half of the Indigenous doctors working in Australia graduated from the University of Newcastle.
- (2) Acknowledges that the university produced the largest number of Indigenous health workers.
- (3) Commends the University of Newcastle for its lead the in provision of higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST KEVIN GREEN**

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN**—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Kevin Green, from Hawks Nest, has made to the community through his volunteer work.
- (2) Acknowledges Kevin Green's involvement with the Hawks Nest Tea Gardens Progress Association, the Tea Gardens Community Technology Centre, the Riverside festival and with environmental groups.
- (3) Thanks Kevin Green for his volunteering efforts in his community and congratulates him on being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

**PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST JO FALLOWS**

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN**—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Jo Fallows, of Medowie, has made to the community through her volunteer work.
- (2) Acknowledges in particular her involvement with the Wirreanda Public School.
- (3) Thanks Jo Fallows for her volunteering efforts in the community and congratulates her on being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

**PORT STEPHENS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS FINALIST PETER FITZSIMONS**

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN**—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution that Peter Fitzsimons, from Anna Bay, has made to the community through his volunteer work.
- (2) Acknowledges his involvement with the auxiliary section of the Port Stephens unit of Marine Rescue NSW.
- (3) Thanks Peter Fitzsimons for his volunteering efforts in the community and congratulates him on being a finalist in the 2012 Port Stephens Volunteer of the Year Awards.

**SURF LIFE SAVING VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Surf Life Saving volunteers patrol season commenced on 22 September 2012.
- (2) Commends the invaluable work undertaken by thousands of Surf Life Saving volunteers across New South Wales each summer.
- (3) Wishes all Surf Life Saving volunteers a safe surf season.

**NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the twenty-fourth annual Police Remembrance Day was held on 29 September 2012.
- (2) Remembers those police officers who lost their lives whilst performing their duties.

**HARMONY WALK**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the inaugural Harmony Walk was held on 21 October 2012.
- (2) Notes that the Harmony Walk is an initiative of the Moving Forward Together Foundation to promote an inclusive and tolerant society and to end vilification and violence between ethnic, national and religious groups.
- (3) Notes the support given to the Harmony Walk by SBS, Randwick Council, the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales and B'nai Brith.
- (4) Congratulates Ernie Friedlander, OAM, on organising the successful inaugural Harmony Walk.

**RANDWICK CITY COUNCIL RETIRING COUNCILLORS**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that on 8 September 2012, several Randwick City Council councillors finished their term, including Cr Alan White, Cr Bradley Hughes, Cr Margaret Woodsmith, Cr Paul Tracey, Cr John Procopiadis, and Cr Charles Matthews.
- (2) Commends the councillors for their service and contribution to the Randwick community.

**WAVERLEY COUNCIL RETIRING COUNCILLORS**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that on 8 September 2012, several Waverley Council councillors finished their term, including Cr Kerryn Sloan, Cr Mora Main, and Cr Prue Cancian.
- (2) Commends the councillors for their service and contribution to the Waverley community.

**PROJECT BLUEPRINT**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Project Blueprint was launched in the Randwick Council area on 9 October 2012.
- (2) Notes that the project received funding and support from Surf Life Saving NSW and from Australian Coastsafe.
- (3) Commends the work of Project Blueprint to identify high-risk black spots in ten local government areas across the State, to develop public awareness of coastal safety and to reduce coastal drowning deaths.



**HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that New South Wales Year 12 students began their Higher School Certificate exams on 15 October 2012.
- (2) Wishes all students undertaking Higher School Certificate exams the best of luck for their studies and future success.

**RANDWICK BOYS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Randwick Boys High School recently appointed its school captains, prefects and house captains for 2013.
- (2) Wishes these students the best of luck in their leadership roles and continued success in the future.

**SCULPTURE BY THE SEA**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH**—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the annual Sculptures by the Sea exhibition at Bondi Beach began on 18 October 2012 and will run through to 4 November 2012.
- (2) Congratulates the winners of this year's exhibition and all those artists whose work is on display.

**Question put and resolved in the affirmative.****Community recognition notices agreed to.****GLENDALE TO SPEERS POINT CYCLEWAY**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY** (Wallsend) [11.24 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that the Lake Macquarie City Council \$50 million plan for lake cycleways opens the way to building the important Glendale to Speers Point cycleway; and
- (2) urges the Government to fund this worthy project.

Many significant projects require collaboration between all spheres of government. This was the case with the Wallsend to Glendale cycleway, which officially opened in June after much lobbying and years of negotiations between local and State governments. Without this level of teamwork the cycleway would not have been finalised. It is fantastic the cycleway has been opened, although it is imperative the cycleway network is to be exactly that—a network. We cannot have bits and pieces of incomplete pathways within our electorates if we are to encourage bicycle use among our constituents. A grand yet achievable plan would be to develop a regional network between Lake Macquarie and Newcastle city that will move commuters off our heavily congested roads and on to shared pathways. The recent completion of Wallsend to Glendale cycleway suggests that this is a very viable route that would provide a regional link between the city and the lake. I am speaking of extending the aforementioned pathway to Speers Point.

Without doubt extension of the existing cycleway will improve the connectivity and accessibility of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. The cycleway would be exceptionally feasible, logical and practical. Benefits associated with the proposed cycleway range from improving the health and wellbeing of local constituents to relieving traffic congestion in the area. The environmental benefits are also outstanding, given that it has been determined by the council that cycling just 10 kilometres to and from work can save 1,500 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Constructing this cycleway to develop a regional network, in conjunction with the right informative practices, will lead to decreased traffic congestion, fewer unfit people visiting our under-resourced hospitals, and an increased quality of life for those who undertake regular exercise and can commute faster and more economically than by vehicle. This is important as the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway would give people the opportunity to cycle to work or to the nearest transport interchange.

Having less pressure on our roads, hospitals and general practitioners should be a key factor in encouraging the O'Farrell Government to designate funds to this worthy project. The Glendale to Speers Point cycleway is part of the Lake Macquarie City Council Cycling Strategy 2021, which was placed on public exhibition from December 2011 to February 2012. I thank my colleague the member for Lake Macquarie, who certainly has been instrumental in his time as mayor and continues to be instrumental as the member for Lake

Macquarie in promoting the cycleway strategy. Cockle Creek 1, 2, 3 and 4 were the preferred routes identified for the planned cycleway. The installation of these paths along Cockle Creek triggered an overwhelming number of responses that both opposed and supported the proposal. As a result, a particular off-road route initially set to pass through the Waratah Golf Club will be amended due to its probable impact on the environment, related high costs and its effect on the golf course.

Discussions have been ongoing between Lake Macquarie City Council and Waratah Golf Club to determine the viability of using a section of the old tramway link. I spoke to Peter McMurray, the transportation asset planning coordinator for Lake Macquarie City Council, who said that work on the cycleway would commence from Speers Point, with construction of the Glendale end of the cycleway occurring in a few years time. This delay is due to limited funds, so thus far we have only been able to have informal discussions with the golf club, which has indicated it is quite happy to negotiate a preferred route. That is terrific. Mr McMurray did suggest discussions would heighten with the golf club if council has access to more finances to fund the project. This is why I am now standing here lobbying the State Government for funding for this worthy project.

From initial estimates it appears that the cost of Cockle Creek routes 1, 2, 3 and 4 will range between \$1.1 million and \$1.36 million. As capable as Lake Macquarie City Council is, no-one would expect it to bear the entire cost of the cycleway. As this project spreads across numerous electorates and affects our State's health and transportation systems, the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway would be a perfect recipient of State funding. The many benefits of the cycleway for the constituents not just of my electorate but also of the Lower Hunter mean we must commence plans to bring this project to fruition. It is a logical step to give serious consideration to the cycleway now that the Wallsend to Glendale shared pathway has been finalised.

The Glendale to Speers Point cycleway is the missing link between the city and the lake and will further encourage people to use the greener method of transport that is cycling. We need to link these separated cycleways and encourage commuters to move off the road and onto paths. This will benefit individuals, communities and the services that are under notable pressure. I urge the O'Farrell Government to give a commitment to the promotion of healthy lifestyles by supporting a project that will deliver so many positives to the region. A small investment will definitely reap many benefits for these communities.

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [11.30 a.m.]: As somebody who grew up in the mighty Hunter it is my pleasure to speak on this topic. The glorious years of the Maitland Pumpkin Pickers defeating the Cessnock Goannas still live in my memory. The Government is committed to encouraging the increased use of cycling and walking through good projects based on sound planning and thorough consultation. Transport for NSW is working with councils to complete local cycleways as part of an integrated transport system. The Glendale to Speers Point cycleway is identified as a priority in the Lake Macquarie City Council cycle plan. I am pleased to advise the House that the New South Wales Government has provided \$100,000 as a contribution towards planning the cycleway in 2012-13.

Lake Macquarie City Council identified the need for an updated cycle plan and commenced the planning process last year. Like many Australian cities, Lake Macquarie is facing increasing problems and costs related to traffic congestion and accessibility. The Lake Macquarie City Council Cycling Strategy 2021 was adopted by council earlier this year and identifies priorities for improving the cycle network within the council area, along with behavioural change programs and ways to increase cycle use generally. The strategy aims to make cycling an easy, safe and attractive transport choice. In the strategy the council identifies priorities for improving the cycleway network. These include on-road facilities on the Pacific Highway and Bowman Street, Swansea; Lake Road and Main Road, Glendale; and Macquarie Street, Morisset.

As I mentioned, during 2012-13 the Government has allocated \$100,000 to investigate links southward of the Fernleigh Track from Belmont to Marks Point. This follows on from \$20,000 that was provided in 2011-12 for initial planning for the extension of the Fernleigh Track and \$200,000 provided to council for the extension of the Swansea cycleway. Additionally, in 2012-13 the Government has allocated a further \$100,000 to investigate the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway, which is an extension of the Wallsend to Glendale cycleway to Speers Point. The Wallsend to Glendale cycleway was officially opened earlier this year and provides a three kilometre off-road cycle and pedestrian path along a disused tramway corridor between the Newcastle Link Road and Glendale TAFE. The council's planned Glendale to Speers Point cycleway would include on- and off-road cycle facilities and a future bridge over the railway line at Cockle Creek. The council has identified four stages for the cycleway, at a total cost of \$2 million.

The Government is committed to working with all councils in the development and implementation of local bicycle networks and will carefully consider Lake Macquarie City Council's recommendation for both

on-road and off-road facilities such as the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway. Lake Macquarie City Council's cycling strategy was based on a commendable level of community involvement. I am confident that it reflects the needs of the community extremely well. The Lake Macquarie cycling strategy notes the wideranging benefits of greater cycle use and places an emphasis on increasing cycling. The council notes in the strategy that promoting safe and confident cycling helps address the problems of congestion, road safety and energy consumption. It also emphasises that cycling provides great health, social, financial and environmental benefits to the wider community.

As well as identifying priorities for on-road and off-road cycle facilities, I acknowledge the other good work that Lake Macquarie City Council has done in developing the Lake Macquarie City Council Cycling Strategy 2021. The Government is getting on with the job of delivering important cycling infrastructure in partnership with local councils. I commend my parliamentary colleagues who represent electorates in the Hunter Valley, particularly the Government members, for the wonderful job they are doing for their constituents. For many years the Hunter Valley was neglected and taken for granted. Members opposite thought that the Hunter Valley would continue voting for a Labor government, year in and year out. The members who were washed away at the last election—

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

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I believe the member is being relevant to the leave of the motion.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** Government members are committed to improving transportation networks across their electorates, including cycleway networks in the Hunter Valley. This commitment arises from a new mandate given by the people of the Hunter Valley, who were neglected for so long. The powerbrokers in Sussex Street thought that the Hunter Valley would keep voting for a Labor government. They thought their support would never end, but it has ended with a vibrant crop of new members who are committed to improving lives in the mighty Hunter Valley, a great engine room of the New South Wales economy. I again commend the members who represent electorates in the Hunter Valley for their good work.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.37 a.m.]:** I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion before the House, which notes that Lake Macquarie City Council's \$50 million plan for lake cycleways opens the way to building the important Glendale to Speers Point cycleway and urges the Government to fund this worthy project. The Lake Macquarie region is one of the most beautiful and magnificent parts of this great State. It is much better to see the lake via cycleways than on roads in air-conditioned cars with the windows up. Lake Macquarie City Council must be congratulated on the steps it has taken already to open up the lake to pedestrian and cycle access. The Glendale to Speers Point cycleway could be the next link in that chain.

I also commend Lake Macquarie City Council for its extensive and detailed cycleway planning on existing cycleways and those it would like to build in the future. While Glendale and Speers Point are not in the electorate of Cessnock, one end of Glendale is only a good 3-iron shot away. That area includes Cameron Park, Edgeworth, Barnsley, West Wallsend and Seahampton. Thousands of families in the Cessnock electorate live close to Glendale and Speers Point and some of those families are socio-economically challenged. In that regard cycleways provide important opportunities for entertainment and for families to engage with their children. Cycleways are also a solution to encouraging healthy lifestyles.

It is also important to note that the Lake Macquarie local government area is a mining-affected region. This year \$1.264 billion worth of royalties will come out of the Hunter. The Government's Resources for Regions program is to be commended, but I struggle with the fact that less than half a per cent of those royalties will be returned to the region. I prefer the Western Australian model, which currently returns 30 per cent of the royalties. Based on that model, the Hunter would be entitled to around \$400 million this year, next year and the year after. With that type of money we could certainly fund some cycleways, and cycling is a valuable activity we want our communities to be involved in. Designated cycleways increase safety for their users. All members would be aware of someone in their electorate who was killed on a road while riding their bike.

It must be one of the world's most dangerous activities when cyclists are forced to use roads where they are not particularly respected by drivers of cars, trucks and other vehicles. They are forced to ride on the shoulders of roads, with cars whizzing past at 50 or 100 kilometres an hour only centimetres away from their handlebars. It is a blight on our society that we do not recognise, value and respect the space of cyclists. Unfortunately, too frequently, particularly in the Hunter, we read headlines about another cyclist who has died

on the road. It is commendable to nominate shared pathways where cyclists share the road, but we also should have designated sites and cycleways for cyclists, and potentially pedestrians, away from cars, trucks and the like. I commend Lake Macquarie City Council for preparing a detailed and well-constructed plan that puts it in a favourable position to apply for grant funding, as outlined by the member for Orange. I wish the council every success in achieving further funds for cycleways.

**Mr GARRY EDWARDS** (Swansea) [11.41 a.m.]: I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the attention of the House. I note the comments of my colleague the member for Orange, who alluded to the fact that he is a native of the Hunter and referred to the Pumpkin Pickers. Maybe if the Blue and Golds had availed themselves of the Fernleigh Track more often in recent times they would have been up the top of the ladder with those Pumpkin Pickers. I look across the Chamber and see my friend and colleague the member for Lake Macquarie and the former mayor of Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge that during his many years as mayor he was the driving force behind many of the cycleways that Lake Macquarie enjoys today.

The Government is committed to making it easier for people to ride a bike as part of their normal day-to-day travel or regular exercise regime. The recently released draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan sets out the Government's high-level cycling strategy. The draft master plan proposes a new New South Wales Cycling Investment Strategy that will set project priorities, guide future funding, target the areas of greatest need and match appropriate cycleway design solutions to different user requirements.

Following finalisation of the master plan later this year, a cycling mode plan will be developed that will detail the scope of the New South Wales Cycling Investment Strategy and specify the most urgent projects. It is important that cycle planning will focus on effective partnerships with councils; we need an integrated approach to planning cycleways. The cycling mode plan will also identify opportunities to grow the use of cycling in combination with public transport and initiatives to complement cycleway construction, including community-based programs to develop the cycling skills and confidence of adults and young people.

In the 2012-13 budget the New South Wales Government allocated \$27.49 million to cycling. Of that funding, \$8.86 million will be allocated to deliver approximately 100 local cycleway projects in partnership with more than 70 local councils across New South Wales. Other cycling projects underway in 2012-13 include the design and development of the Nepean River Green Bridge between Penrith and Emu Plains; the completion of regional cycleways between Wentworthville, my old home town, and Sydney Olympic Park via Parramatta and between Prospect and Blacktown; continuing design and development work for the North Shore Cycleway between Naremburn and North Sydney; and the construction of the Tracker Riley cycleway connection to Dubbo zoo.

I am pleased to note that following a thorough community consultation process, Lake Macquarie City Council has adopted its new cycling strategy, which I spoke about earlier this year. The strategy aims to make cycling an easy, safe and attractive transport choice. Within the strategy, council identifies priorities for improving the cycleway network. These include on-road facilities on the Pacific Highway and Bowman Street, Swansea; Lake Road and Main Road, Glendale; and Macquarie Street, Morisset. These areas are in my electorate and in the electorate of the member for Lake Macquarie. The priorities for off-road facilities have been identified as Railway Parade, Belmont, near the southern end of the Fernleigh Track; Fishery Point Road, Bonnells Bay; and Northlakes Avenue to Main Road, Cameron Park.

During 2012-13 the New South Wales Government has allocated \$100,000 to investigate links southward from the Fernleigh Track from Belmont to Marks Point. This follows \$20,000 provided in 2011-12 for initial planning for an extension of the Fernleigh Track and \$200,000 provided to council for an extension of the Swansea cycleway. Additionally, in 2012-13 the New South Wales Government has allocated a further \$100,000 to investigate the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway, which is an extension of the Wallsend to Glendale cycleway to Speers Point.

The Wallsend to Glendale cycleway was officially opened earlier this year and provides a three kilometre off-road cycle and pedestrian path along a disused tramway corridor between the Newcastle Link Road and Glendale TAFE. The council's planned Glendale to Speers Point cycleway would include on- and off-road cycle facilities and a future bridge over the railway line at Cockle Creek. I acknowledge the good work of Lake Macquarie City Council in developing the Lake Macquarie City Council Cycling Strategy and I acknowledge the ongoing commitment of this Government to the council's cycling program.

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [11.45 a.m.]: I am very happy to support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. Issues such as this are generally non-partisan and I acknowledge the support of the

former Government and the ongoing support of this Government for cycleways funding in New South Wales. I appreciate the comments that have been made about Lake Macquarie City Council. In my time as mayor of the council I was very proud of the response to the community's need and demand for cycleways. The cycleway projects have been delivered to a very high standard. However, a number of glaring omissions from the cycleway network need to be completed, and the cycleway from Glendale to Speers Point is one of those.

The Glendale to Speers Point cycleway originates from Wallsend and goes through to Glendale TAFE. It was a former tramway corridor and it is logical to extend that cycleway to the lake and join it with the shared pathway that runs from Eleebana through to Booragul to the art gallery. Eleebana, which is in the electorate of the member for Charlestown, is the start of that section and has one of the most magnificent lakeside cycleway and shared pathway facilities one would ever see. It has become a drawcard for tourism in its own right. The other end of that cycleway goes from Speers Point back to Wallsend, and I understand that the council has commenced or is near to commencing construction of a 300 metre section of that cycleway. That section will go up to Creek Reserve Road near Walters Park. As other members have been putting in a plug for their local football teams, I acknowledge the Lake Macquarie rah-rahs. Walters Park is the home playing field of the Lake Macquarie Roos, and I congratulate the club on its best year ever. I imagine in future people riding their bikes all the way from Newcastle to Walters Park to cheer on the Lake Macquarie Roos.

The Glendale to Speers Point cycleway will be a very important part of the wider Newcastle-Hunter cycleway network. If negotiations with the Waratah Golf Club are successful, the cycleway will follow part of the tramway. I pause to reflect upon how many trams must have been running in the area in the past. Thank God some of the tramways land was reserved because the tramways again are valuable to the community. If Lake Macquarie City Council is able to acquire a small part of a surrendered tramway, cyclists and walkers will be able to use a very enjoyable land corridor. Discussions will be held with the State Rail Authority to create a pass beneath the Great Northern rail line and bring the cycleway back to the Cockle Creek foreshore reserve and through to Speers Point.

The motion discusses only part of the cycleway network. In this debate members have spoken about the link from Fernleigh Track to Adamstown and ultimately to Swansea, which shows that this motion is not just about Lake Macquarie but about connecting communities within the region. It is a wise investment that the State Government should continue to make, and I have no doubt that that aspiration will be supported. I thank everybody in advance for that support.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [11.49 a.m.]: My contribution to debate on the motion will be brief. I support the motion. It is important to acknowledge that throughout New South Wales the use of bicycles is increasing. That is why an understanding of and development commitments to active transport—cycling, walking and so on—are very important. I understand that the Government is in the process of developing an integrated active transport policy, on which the Government should be congratulated and supported. Active transport facilities should be an integral feature of this long-term transport plan for New South Wales.

The draft plan refers in some detail to cycling, which is welcome, as well as the long-term cycling investment program. The Government should commit funds to that program so that projects like the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway are able to proceed. There are compelling reasons for the provision of cycleways throughout New South Wales. My electorate has an active transport corridor, a greenway, which the Government so far has not agreed to support. The greenway has great merit and deserves to be funded. I understand that the Government is examining the possibility of prioritising cycleways through an integrated approach to transport planning in New South Wales.

Many members know about the Premier's Council for Active Living, which has a fantastic record of promoting walking and reducing the use of vehicles, particularly for short distances. The council's advocacy supports the motion moved by the member for Wallsend, which refers to funding cycleways in our communities. The weight of business and other factors lean towards the provision of tollways and more roads, but cycleways provide great opportunities not only for recreation but also for commuting, particularly in Sydney. Importantly, cycleways and greenways assist in improving connectivity between other forms of transport, such as light rail, as well as communities. I take this opportunity to support this motion and acknowledge the contributions to the debate by members of all political parties.

Many members of this House are former local government representatives. Local government is getting the job done. Many former local government representatives who become State members of Parliament realise just how efficient local government is. Local government is often criticised but, in fact, it should be

acknowledged for its great support for and investment in our local communities by advocating for improved roads and improved public transport. I commend the motion to the House and, on behalf of The Greens, I offer my very strong support for it.

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [11.53 a.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Orange, Cessnock, Swansea, Lake Macquarie and Balmain for their worthy contributions to the debate. At the outset, I confess my disappointment in the comments made by the member for Orange. Despite having grown up in the Lake Macquarie district, he spent his allotted speaking time denigrating the Labor Party instead of confining his remarks to the motion. It is a positive motion that directs no animosity at anybody. It is always disappointing when members denigrate rather than address the motion.

However, I am pleased the member for Orange referred to the Wallsend to Glendale cycleway. I remind him that my predecessor, John Mills, worked extremely hard with the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle city councils to obtain funding for that cycleway. The State Government of the day provided half the funding for that cycleway. He should keep that in mind when funding for the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway is discussed in the future. I am also pleased that he congratulated Government members who are committed to improving transportation. He referred to an allocation of \$100,000 to Lake Macquarie City Council for planning. The Opposition hopes that much more than \$100,000 will be committed to this worthy project, despite some of the project being built in a Labor electorate. When I look at the list of names of places that have received State government funding for cycleways, unfortunately it shows a plethora of non-Labor electorates. I hope that the Government will address that situation.

The member for Cessnock said that the fantastic thing about cycleways is that they are available for all people, rich and poor. I certainly support that sentiment. He referred to \$1.264 billion in royalties that the State Government receives from mining in the Hunter and that less than 0.5 per cent of that revenue is returned to the region. Imagine if more of that money was returned to the Hunter region: We could build the Glendale interchange and the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway, and we could help out the member for Lake Macquarie with funding for a hospital too. We could do lots of good things.

I commend the member for Lake Macquarie for his speech. As the member for Swansea stated, the member for Lake Macquarie was a driving force behind the construction of Lake Macquarie cycleways. That is a great legacy for a former mayor to leave to his community. The member for Swansea also referred to the Government's commitment to spending money on cycleways, and the Opposition hopes he will support funding for cycleways in Labor electorates as well. The member for Lake Macquarie made the very important point that the Glendale to Speers Point cycleway is not just a cycleway but, rather, is about connecting communities throughout the region, particularly Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and part of Cessnock.

I thank the member for Balmain for his contribution to the debate. I know that he takes a great interest in cycleways. He is correct in saying that there are compelling reasons for funding cycleway projects throughout New South Wales, and I urge the Government to ensure that such projects are funded. In conclusion, I state that the purpose of the motion was to urge the Government to fund this worthy project. I hope that this project is considered for funding not in 2024 or 2030 but sooner rather than later. Now that Lake Macquarie City Council has completed all the hard work of planning, I hope funding will be provided by the State Government so that the council can complete this worthy cycleway and get people off our roads and onto cycleways.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **POLICE DEATH AND DISABILITY SCHEME**

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [11.58 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the thousands of police men and women who rallied outside Parliament House on 22 November 2011 in protest against the Government's plans regarding death and disabilities entitlements;
- (2) condemns the Government for its legislation to reduce the entitlements of injured and disabled police; and
- (3) calls on the Government to return to good faith negotiations with the Police Association.

Today I congratulate the State's police men and women, particularly those who serve in the Illawarra, on the outstanding job they do protecting the community, day in and day out, more often than not in extremely trying and stressful circumstances. I recently attended a Lake Illawarra Local Area Command awards and medals presentation held in Warilla and noted a comment made by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. He said that people do not join the Police Force for medals and awards; they join to serve and protect. How true. Yet that Minister represents the very Government that has ripped hard-fought and hard-won entitlements from those brave men and women without a second thought for them or their families.

On 22 November 2011 I, along with my Labor colleagues, was proud to stand beside members of the Police Force and various emergency services personnel to protest against the O'Farrell Coalition Government's plans to drastically reduce death and disability entitlements. More than 5,000 police officers rallied outside Parliament House that day—the largest-ever demonstration by police officers against any government in living memory—many from my local area commands of Lake Illawarra and Wollongong. As I have said many times in this place, from my perspective the local area commands of Lake Illawarra and Wollongong are the best in the country, let alone the State of New South Wales. There is no doubt that the message police sent to the Premier that day was not to turn his back on injured and disabled officers—and rightly so because they put their lives on the line, day in and day out. It is a shame that a number of former police officers in the New South Wales Government had scant regard for those hard-won entitlements. It is disappointing they did not take a more supportive position.

With the dumping of extremely important entitlements such as death and disability benefits, officers know their livelihoods are on the line and that if they get hurt on duty this Government does not have their backs or their interests at heart. It is extremely sad. In all my time in this place I have never seen a demonstration by police like the one that occurred in November 2011. Because the police are often straight down the line when it comes to politics, I was taken aback to see our State's Police Force demonstrating to protect officers' rights. The potential for a police officer to be disabled is far greater than for other employees. Police put their lives in danger every day to protect the community. They often end up with broken arms and legs, stitches, bruises and psychological trauma. Those officers' families deserve to know they will be looked after, and police need to know that should something happen to them their families will be looked after and treated with respect.

Under these heartless changes by the O'Farrell Government, a 44-year-old senior constable with a permanent disability will have his entitlements cut from \$766,000 to \$147,600. This will have to sustain that officer and his family for the rest of his working life. This is outrageous—it was outrageous then and it is outrageous now. To add insult to injury, the Government rammed through the legislation in the upper House in the middle of the night. I repeat: This Government cannot be trusted. Prior to the election members of the Government told the police, emergency services personnel, public servants, unions and the like that they had nothing to fear. Yet five minutes after attaining government they started attacking workers' industrial rights and workers compensation entitlements, including police death and disability payments. In one night the Government slashed those precious entitlements and put the interests of private insurance companies ahead of those of our hardworking police men and women.

The bill was rushed through the New South Wales Parliament without conducting good faith negotiations with the police, who would be directly affected by the changes. I call on this devious Government to reverse this outrageous decision and reinstate the death and disability entitlements safety net for our dedicated and hardworking police as a matter of urgency. I call on Government members to stop just talking about how good our police are and to back up their comments with resources and entitlements. New South Wales would not be the wonderful State it is—and certainly my area would not be as magnificent—without the actions of the wonderful men and women of the NSW Police Force and the other emergency services personnel who keep our communities safe. I congratulate them.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.05 p.m.]: This is an important debate. The Government opposes the motion. The wording of the motion moved by the member for Wollongong displays her ignorance of the police death and disability scheme. For the benefit of those opposite, the Liberal-Nationals Government initiated negotiations with the New South Wales Police Association months before the issue came to the notice of the Opposition, which is attempting to play politics with the financial viability of this scheme. The Liberal-Nationals Government continued to negotiate with the Police Association while the legislation was being debated in the other House. The Minister never walked away from the negotiating table. We made concessions and improvements to death and disability benefits through those negotiations, including enhancement of the transitional arrangements. We continued to negotiate and consult with the association after the legislation was passed and the underpinning regulation was being made.

This motion is proof that the former Labor Government is embarrassed by its own inaction. The former Labor Government knew that the police death and disability scheme was unsustainable but failed to take any action—it was afraid of the union movement's response. This Government—the Liberal-Nationals Coalition—took the hard decision to reform the scheme to make it sustainable and to continue to provide support to officers. The new benefits have been structured, on the advice of the insurance industry, to provide a balance between long-term support for the most injured officers and economic incentives to return to work. Officers are returning to work. As Parliament was informed earlier this month, the NSW Police Force has advised me that in the 12 months to October this year the number of officers covered by the new scheme and returning to work has increased by 24 per cent.

Under the previous Labor Government between 30 and 40 of the 170-odd officers in the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command—I am sure everyone supports the hardworking men and women of the NSW Police Force—were on long-term sick leave. That number has been reduced to 15. I speak to police officers on a regular basis. I do not know what those opposite do, but I regularly spend a 12-hour night shift on a Friday or a Saturday night with either our general duties police or our highway patrol officers. I talk to the officers on the front line. I do not sit at a table in a cafe somewhere having a nice cappuccino and working out strategies. I go out with them at 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock in the morning. On Friday the member for Vacluse and I will spend four to five hours with officers of the Kings Cross Local Area Command. This is how we know what the real workers are doing.

While the scheme is in its early days, it is producing positive outcomes in that officers are returning to employment rather than waiting for the Government to hand them a cheque and push them out the door. Under the new commercial insurance arrangements police officers are eligible for 100 per cent of salary up to nine months after injury followed by income protection at 75 per cent for a further five years. Lump-sum payments are available if officers are totally and permanently disabled. Death benefits remain unchanged from the former scheme. Importantly, the new scheme supports officers while they recover and return to work. It does not just provide a lump sum and leave officers to make their own way, usually into unemployment. The former scheme's design actually encouraged officers to leave work due to their injuries instead of supporting their rehabilitation and return to employment. The procedure is all about self-awareness. As I said earlier, officers previously left the force with a big cheque and no other support, which was a disgrace.

Members will recall that we are supporting these reforms with \$15 million over three years and \$14 million to be spent over the next two financial years to enhance injury management practices that support officers returning to work. Rather than condemn the Government, those opposite should thank it for having the backbone to address the mess they left behind. They knew about that mess for a number of years and, like many other things in this State, did nothing about it. New South Wales now has a death and disability scheme that supports our injured officers through appropriate benefits and incentives for those who can return to work. As I said earlier, this Government opposes the motion. This Government is moving forward in supporting the hardworking men and women of the NSW Police Force with appropriate resources. Currently, New South Wales has more police than ever. I commend the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher, for his initiative, foresight and ongoing support. It is a pity those opposite do not support our fine, hardworking men and women in the NSW Police Force. I oppose the motion.

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [12.12 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the motion and thank the member for Wollongong for bringing this issue to the attention of the House. I cannot recall ever seeing the types of protests we witnessed from the men and women of the NSW Police Force after the Government foreshadowed changes to the police death and disability scheme. Tens of thousands of police men and women—not 2,000 or 3,000—who usually take a conservative view of protests joined the rally. The officers may have policed other protests but they were certainly not familiar with protesting themselves outside the New South Wales Parliament. For the first time in many decades New South Wales police men and women took the opportunity to say: Enough is enough. When the Coalition came to government each of the 17 crime categories was either stable or falling—it was a similar situation with the triple-A credit rating it inherited. Government members cannot just wipe away the past 16 years and say, "Oh, all that was bad—but, by the way, we're now going to fix it."

**Mr David Elliott:** You made a mess for 16 years.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I am sorry, but those opposite commenced their term in government with every single crime statistic falling or stable. And they thanked the police by sticking the knife in the moment they took office. No-one on this side of the House argued that there was no scope for reform or improvement, but the O'Farrell Government selectively picked off groups of workers and police—even picking off senior police to work against constables on the ground. That is not the way to do things. But the Government got it wrong because tens of thousands of people in blue uniforms who had never protested before did so out the front of this



place. They sent a clear signal about the Government's lack of understanding of police work. The member for Tweed thinks he is Robinson Crusoe in working closely with police on the front line. All Labor members have worked with front-line police.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** I guess you were in the back of a police car, right?

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Some Government members probably have been in handcuffs, but we will not worry about that—certainly not my good friend the member for Port Macquarie. This policy goes to the heart of what this Government is about: attacking front-line workers. I thank the member for Wollongong for bringing this matter to our attention. I thank her also for her advocacy on behalf of the Wollongong Local Area Command, which I share with her in the Illawarra region.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [12.16 p.m.]: I support my colleague the member for Tweed, who is 100 per cent for the Tweed and for the police, in opposing this motion. Interestingly, during debate on this motion those opposite said the system was broken. It is funny but the figures indicate otherwise: 24 per cent more officers are returning to work. That is a remarkable achievement. The police death and disability insurance scheme was established by the previous Labor Government in 2005 and was intended to provide compensation to police officers employed after April 1988 who were compelled to leave the force due to injury. We know that the scheme quickly became unsustainable, financially and operationally. The unintended consequences encouraged officers to take sick leave and then leave the force rather than be rehabilitated and return to work. I saw firsthand the human cost, with officers who otherwise would have returned to work encouraged to leave by the system.

We all know that the system was spiralling out of control and was projected to run at about 50 per cent of the NSW Police Force's salary budget. Such a scheme could not be sustained. As the member for Tweed noted, the Opposition, which was then in government, knew that the scheme was heading for disaster, knew that it was not serving the interests of injured police and knew that it was not returning officers to work, yet still did nothing. Of course, over the years the Auditor-General reported on this outcome but no action was taken. Michael Gallacher, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, has taken appropriate action to fix this mess and implement a new scheme that looks after officers.

There are programs in the new scheme that provide extra funding to allow for statewide training on leadership and injury management and prevention. The process of allocating injured officers to front-line commands to ensure they have meaningful and productive work is being developed and improved. There is a trial of new guidelines for the deployment of injured officers, including the redesign of existing job duties and deployment models. There are additional human resources and injury management advisors to help commanders support officers returning to work.

As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has stated, this Government is committed to providing the best possible death and disability benefits for police officers. The Government negotiated and consulted with the Police Association in the design of the scheme. It should be noted that the association is an integral part of the cost and fairness committee established under this legislation to review benefits. Without the positive steps taken by this Government the cost of the death and disability scheme would have continued to escalate and ultimately it would have failed officers. The fact that there has been a 24 per cent increase in injured officers returning to work indicates that this scheme is positive and working in support of officers. That is why the motion is misguided and opposed by this Government.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [12.20 p.m.]: I support the three-part motion moved by the member for Wollongong. First, it congratulates the thousands of police men and women who rallied outside the Parliament on 22 November 2011. I note that the member for Wollongong gave notice of this motion the day after that rally. It is now almost a year old. There has been debate concerning legislation and votes since the motion was tabled, but I think the first part of the motion is as relevant today as it was then. The second part of the motion condemns the Government for legislating a reduction in entitlements for injured and disabled police, which is also relevant today. The third part of the motion calls on the Government to return to good faith negotiations with the Police Association.

In supporting this motion I will comment on the contribution by the member for Tweed. The member said it is about playing politics. It seems that the thousands of police who rallied outside Parliament House were all playing politics—they had a day off so they chose to play politics in front of State Parliament. Addressing the third part of the motion, the member for the Tweed said, "We continued to negotiate with the police after the legislation was passed." Some people say I take a hard line on law and order but even I do not believe you can conduct an appeal after the sentence has been carried out. Did the Government table the legislation in

Parliament as an exposure draft and allow for good faith negotiations? Of course it did not. It passed the legislation through Parliament, with the support of the crossbenchers in the upper House, and when it got what it wanted then said it would negotiate. That does not put the police in a good negotiating position.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You were not listening.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** That is what you said: "We negotiated after the legislation was passed." If you do not believe yourself, go and read *Hansard*. The member for Campbelltown referred to the fact that the former Government introduced the death and disability scheme in 2005. Yes, it did, and we are not ashamed of that. In 1984 the former Labor Government introduced interest on police superannuation contributions. That is a tick for the former Labor Government. In the late 1980s the former Labor Government introduced the same entitlements to workers compensation for police. And, yes, the former Labor Government did bring in death and disability benefits because it recognised the difficult role that the police have. Contrast that with the lip service paid by Government members, who run around having cups of coffee with police in the middle of the night. The scheme recognised that police need the coverage of death and disability benefits. Some Government members who contributed to the debate claimed the scheme was unsustainable. When the Government introduced the bill last year it attempted to gain some credibility by saying that State finances were bad and the scheme was unsustainable. That statement comes from the same Government that incorrectly balanced the last budget to the tune of \$1 billion.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** How much?

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** One billion dollars—there are so many noughts that my calculator cannot deal with it. How can we believe a Government that says in one breath the police death and disability scheme is unsustainable and in the next breath that it lost \$1 billion dollars during its budget calculations? On issues of money the Government has no credibility. This motion was tabled a year ago next week and every part of it remains relevant today. I support the motion.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 65 and the statements by the member for Mount Druitt. I clarify that in my contribution to the debate I referred to the regulation.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I accept the point of order. Standing Order 65 provides that a member, having concluded a speech, may be briefly heard again to explain a material part of their speech that has been misquoted or misunderstood. That is exactly what the member did. I granted leave under Standing Order 65 and I ruled that he was in order.

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [12.24 p.m.], in reply: I acknowledge the contributions to debate on this motion by members representing the electorates of Tweed, Keira, Campbelltown and Mount Druitt. The member for Tweed has sought to clarify his contribution. As the member for Keira said, the member for Tweed is not Robinson Crusoe when it comes to accompanying police on night shifts. It is something that, to my knowledge, all my colleagues have done. I do not know about Government members, but my colleagues meet regularly with police, accompany officers on shifts and experience what they experience when performing their duties. That is something that committed members of Parliament do to maintain good relations with police in their electorates.

The member for Tweed referred to reducing entitlements under the police death and disability scheme as an economic incentive to return to work. That is code for: "We will force people back to work regardless of whether they are fit to return". It is also code for: "You will not get enough time to recover from an injury you sustained while putting life and limb at risk protecting your community, your family's suffering while you undertake rehabilitation will not be considered, and the pressure is on for you to return to work or you and your family will be disadvantaged financially". That is what that comment means. This is the Government that also applied the legislation to protected employees. Those employees, who had been protected as opposed to being made redundant or laid off, were soon taken care of when the current Government came to office.

I do not hold out much hope that the good men and women of the police service will be recognised for their great work. The member for Keira defended the rights, entitlements and the hard work of police men and women. He defended their right to be properly recompensed when they are injured in the workplace—although it will not make up for a loss of limb, threats to life or post traumatic stress suffered by police officers. Government members defended the legislation with spurious arguments. The contribution from the member for Campbelltown, as a former police officer, was as weak today as it was when the police rallied outside Parliament a year ago.

The member for Campbelltown continued to refer to the figure of 24 per cent return to work and did not mention the fact that those who are unable to return to work and need protection are no longer going to be protected. The member for Mount Druitt eloquently exposed the arguments and attitudes of the member for Campbelltown. He rightly said that I gave notice of this motion in November 2011 and it has taken a year for the matter to be brought on. The paragraphs in the motion are still relevant because this Government continues to axe public service jobs and continues to have disregard for the good men and women of the NSW Police Force and their families.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 23**

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

**Noes, 58**

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

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**OWNER-DRIVER WAGES AND CONDITIONS**

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [12.40 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Government for plans to change the Industrial Relations Commission;
- (2) notes that the plans to streamline the commission threaten the protection of private sector owner-drivers' wages and conditions;

- (3) acknowledges that owner-drivers are vulnerable to exploitation as they typically report to a single principal who has significant leverage over their livelihood; and
- (4) calls on the Government to maintain chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act to ensure that owner-drivers retain their protections.

Yet again I must defend the workers of New South Wales because the Government ignores them, takes advantage of them and cuts their entitlements. The Government also seeks to gut the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission. It is no wonder private sector owner-drivers such as couriers and truck drivers who rely on the commission's special powers to resolve industrial disputes and protect their wages and conditions are concerned. I met with local owner-drivers and Transport Workers Union officials in my electorate of Wollongong who outlined their very real fears about the Premier's industrial relations crusade. The Industrial Relations Commission is where truck drivers, couriers and other types of owner-drivers go to resolve disputes or determine contracts, such as payment of a fair hourly rate and access to other award-style conditions.

Without the commission, at the stroke of a pen these hard workers can have their conditions slashed without any discussion and without any umpire to hear their case. This attack on workers is not reform: It is an extraordinary consolidation of power to one person. Power that has been balanced between governments, workers and our courts for close to a century belongs to one Minister now, and that ends a system that all Australians understand to be fair and necessary—they know that neither side should ever have all the power. The O'Farrell Government released an issues paper last year to guide its plan to streamline the State's tribunals. However, the paper failed to acknowledge the special jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission over private sector owner-drivers under chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act.

**Mr Andrew Gee:** You're losing us.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** You're not hard to lose, are you? Talk about lead with your chin. There is no doubt in my mind or in the minds of the owner-drivers to whom I have spoken that a strong, independent Industrial Relations Commission is needed to safeguard the rights of independent contractors in the transport industry. In 2000 the Carr Labor Government placed New South Wales at the forefront of owner-driver protection in Australia. Premier Barry O'Farrell and his slashers have disregarded that. Protecting chapter 6 needs to be high on the agenda when the Government is considering any changes to tribunals. Everyone in New South Wales should be scared of these new laws: These plans and a whole lot of other plans were hidden deliberately because Premier Barry O'Farrell knew that this policy would cost him hundreds of thousands of votes.

I do not want to be repetitive, but it is necessary to refer to the commitments, promises and voodoo word concocting that occurred during the election campaign when voters were told that no-one had anything to fear from a Coalition Government. The reality is that within 12 months of members opposite forming government everyone had something to fear—unless they were wealthy, privileged or an insurance company. Everyone had to be worried and scared, which is the exact opposite of what people were promised in the run-up to the election. Mr Acting-Speaker, Mr Lee Evans, might recall that. Since coming to power the Government has attacked every blue-collar and white-collar sector, and removed the independent umpire. Why would the Government need to remove the independent umpire if it was negotiating and acting in good faith? We now have the additional problem that the Minister for Industrial Relations is the New South Wales Treasurer.

Some might think that a Treasurer who had a billion and a half dollars of the Treasury portfolio removed from him and given to the Minister for Finance and Services in the other place might not be the best person to look after the interests of working people and the broader spectrum of industrial relations. However, I suppose having removed most of his Treasury portfolio, the Government had to give him something to do. Unfortunately for workers in New South Wales, he was given the Industrial Relations portfolio. Those opposite were not prepared to let anything cost them votes, even if it meant telling untruths during the election campaign. What other plans has Premier Barry O'Farrell not shared with the people of New South Wales? Recently we have seen a lot of them come to the fore and we know there will be a whole host more. I say to the workers of Wollongong, the Illawarra and New South Wales: The Labor Party supports you and will continue to fight the O'Farrell Government over its never-ending attack on the hardworking people who are the lifeblood of our community. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.47 p.m.]: I am more than happy to lead for the Government in opposing this motion. I must immediately dispel the untruth that has been perpetrated by the mover of this motion and state from the outset that there is no plan whatsoever to change the

Industrial Relations Commission. On 26 October this year the O'Farrell Government announced that a range of tribunals will be consolidated into a single New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal. However, the Industrial Relations Commission was not included in that consolidation. We are comfortable with the Industrial Relations Commission operating in a stand-alone fashion at this time. As far as chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 is concerned, the O'Farrell Government has no plans to change these provisions. On 8 November the Treasurer reaffirmed this to the Transport Workers Union when he met with it on the issue. We can therefore put to bed the total fabrication by the member for Wollongong.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government supports the concerns of owner-drivers—as it does all workers across New South Wales—and all industrial stakeholders. Therefore this motion is irrelevant and should be opposed. What should be acknowledged are the positive reforms that the O'Farrell Government has undertaken that will improve the conditions for all owner-drivers across New South Wales. For example, I am sure every member of this House over many decades has been approached by constituents who have been fined incorrectly for a wide variety of reasons. Those people who take the opportunity to proceed to court to have a judge rule that the fine should not stand had their fines quashed. However those people whom a judge had ruled had done nothing wrong in the course of their driving still accumulated points on their licence. It was this Government, following the election in March 2011, that removed this ridiculous anomaly.

The long list of road upgrades, which form part of our record infrastructure program of \$70 billion, will provide a major improvement for all owner-drivers as well as drivers right across New South Wales who had to contend with unsafe and inferior roads for 16 years under the former Labor Government. For example, the Berry bypass will be completed by 2017. It will provide a huge benefit for the people of the Illawarra—an area the mover of this motion purports to represent. The road in that area has claimed many, many lives. I have used the road on countless occasions when visiting that very happy hunting ground the Shoalhaven City Turf Club at Nowra, where I have taken numerous racehorses to contest wonderful feature events such as the Eddie Latimer Memorial Plate, which I was very proud to win many years ago with that good horse Marky's Gold. I then backed up a short time later to win the Boxing Day Cup at the Shoalhaven City Turf Club with that same horse.

The point I make is that I have had to use that very road, which will be replaced. On occasion—hand on heart—I have been fined when travelling on that stretch of road. The Berry bypass will not only improve safety for all the people in that area but for all the people in the Illawarra. Yesterday, after 16 years of neglect under the former Labor Government, the member for Keira berated the Government for providing money for roads in the Illawarra, such as the Berry bypass. Labor members should be thanking us for doing what their party in government had neglected to do for 16 years. It must cause them extreme embarrassment when people in their communities tell them that the O'Farrell Government is providing the infrastructure they expected Labor to provide when it was in government for 16 years but failed to do deliver.

Another positive initiative by this Government was the review of speed limits. Ironically—and this will interest you, Mr Acting-Speaker—the review of the speed limit on the Princes Highway at Heathcote received more submissions than any other area across New South Wales. A host of people raised their very significant concerns about this area. I wonder how many of the hardworking people of the Illawarra and Wollongong were affected by the speed limit on the Princes Highway at that particular point. Since that review, 37 different speed zones across New South Wales have been removed or changed. My area has also been the beneficiary of the removal of those unnecessary speed zones, which resulted in many hardworking people being booked, not only in the Illawarra and in Wollongong but right across New South Wales. That was another initiative implemented not only for the benefit of the owner-drivers that we are discussing in this motion but also for the benefit of all the people of New South Wales. Today the Premier officially opened a major logistical warehouse facility at Erskine Park. He was joined by Dr Thomas Lieb, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Schenker AG. This particular site will provide an additional 80 jobs for New South Wales.

Yesterday the Treasurer stated in this House that over the past 18 months this Government has provided an additional 55,000 jobs for New South Wales. The Treasurer specifically noted that 80 per cent of those jobs were full-time positions. Schenker, which is operating in this new distribution centre at Erskine Park in the heart of Western Sydney, will benefit from the \$55 million that this Government has provided for the upgrade of the Erskine Park Link Road; it will improve the motorways and get traffic off the local roads. It is further evidence of our support not only for businesses, not only for job creation but also for the many, many owner-drivers and businesses, which the member for Wollongong alleges we do not support, when it is obvious that we do. This motion is completely irrelevant. There will be no changes to the Industrial Relations Commission. I call on all members of this House to acknowledge the positive actions that our Government has taken and to oppose this ridiculous motion.

**Ms CHERIE BURTON** (Kogarah) [12.54 p.m.]: The first part of the contribution of the member for Hawkesbury made a little bit of sense. For the first time he sounded as though he knew what he was talking about, but he very soon went off the rails to talk about horseracing and all sorts of rubbish. How can those on the other side of the House be trusted? The member for Hawkesbury says they are not going to do this and they are not going to do that. During the election campaign they said they were not going to do many things, but as soon as they got hold of the Treasury bench they did those very things. This morning the Leader of Opposition and I visited three schools in my electorate and handed out petitions. I asked the parents of the students in those schools what they think of the Government and its funding cuts.

Many parents—particularly those from Catholic and independent schools—said that the O'Farrell Government had lied to them; it said it was not going to slash funding but it did. Government members come into this place week after week and say that Labor did nothing for 16 years. I point out that Labor was re-elected for 16 years and that the Liberals and The Nationals were rejected by the community for 16 years. That is an embarrassing legacy for those on the other side of the House. When the Coalition came to government it started setting up committees—it is reviewing this and reviewing that, but it is doing nothing. We debated the graffiti and the library bills for six months. There is no legislation before the House; it is an absolute disgrace. What was the Coalition doing for 16 years in opposition? No wonder the community continued to reject those opposite; they were doing nothing.

Let us talk about roads. Sea Cliff Bridge, Alford's Point Bridge, the Bangor bypass, the M5 East—just to name a few—were all built under the former Labor Government and they are all toll free, unlike the M5 to nowhere that was built by that lot over there and has a toll. For 11 years of Labor's 16 years in government we suffered under the Howard regime, which gave us not a cent. It gouged the budgets of New South Wales and it starved us of vital funding for infrastructure, yet the Coalition in opposition said nothing. They did not even make a phone call to their Federal mates and say, "Hand over the money. Give us the money that you are supposed to give us". They said, "Roads are a State issue. You should fund your own roads". Now the Coalition has changed its tune and suddenly roads are the Federal Government's responsibility.

Members on the other side have no credibility in this House. They cannot stand in this House and say that workers' conditions and wages are not under threat, that the Industrial Relations Commission is not under threat and that section 6 of the Industrial Relations Act is not under threat, because nobody believes them. In 2015 they will be judged very harshly. They come into this place and tell us how good they are, how they are getting on with the job and what a good government it is, but we have the slowest on-time running for trains in four years, a massive trolley block and the longest elective surgery waiting list ever—all under this Government. It is an absolute disgrace and the people out there know it. Government members can come into the House and tell us how good they are as much as they like, but the people out there know better—and it was demonstrated this morning when I visited those schools. They will punish the Government, and rightly so, in 2015.

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [12.58 p.m.]: This is a very disappointing motion because it perpetuates this ongoing furphy that the Industrial Relations Commission is going to be abolished. This motion does the member for Wollongong no credit at all. One can understand why, with motions like this, the member for Bankstown has the member for Wollongong in the old political crosshairs, in the old gun sights. The sun is setting on the member for Wollongong and it is because of junk motions like this one. As the member for Hawkesbury said, there is no plan to change the Industrial Relations Commission. As the member for Hawkesbury also pointed out, the O'Farrell Government announced that a range of tribunals will be consolidated into a single New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

As the member for Hawkesbury stated, the Industrial Relations Commission will not be one of the bodies that will be consolidated. He also pointed out, and rightly so, that the Government has no plans to change the provisions of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996. That was reaffirmed in relation to this issue by the Treasurer when he met with the Transport Workers Union on 8 November 2012. As the member for Hawkesbury said, this Government supports the concerns of owner-drivers and all industrial stakeholders. This motion is therefore irrelevant and an absolute furphy that is being perpetrated by Opposition members.

I have some advice for Opposition members and for their union controllers. If Opposition members like the Industrial Relations Commission so much and if they want the protections afforded by it, they should stop their unions from arrantly flouting the orders made by the Industrial Relations Commission. The Opposition's union controllers do that all the time. In October this year the Industrial Relations Commission ordered the Public Service Union not to proceed with a strike, but the union flouted that order. In June this year the Teachers Federation was fined \$6,000 for an illegal strike in September last year.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. I have been waiting some time for the member for Orange to address the motion. Nothing he has said so far relates to the motion.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I thank the member for Wollongong for her point of order. Time for debate is running out quickly.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** The member for Wollongong can take my advice back to her union controllers. The Teachers Federation was at it again in June 2012 with yet another illegal strike. It does it all the time.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The member for Orange is not only flouting your earlier ruling but also is a joke.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I thank the member for Wollongong for her point of order. Unfortunately, she is wasting the time allotted to debate this motion. The member for Orange has the call.

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** Obviously the truth is a bitter pill to swallow for Opposition members. They need to go back to their union controllers and tell them that if they want the Industrial Relations Commission to continue to function, they should stop ignoring and flouting the commission's orders and behave within the law.

**Pursuant to sessional order debate interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

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

##### **Report: Interim Report on the Eighth General Meeting with the Valuer-General**

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

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [1.02 p.m.]: I refer to report No. 1/55, dated October 2012, entitled "Interim Report on the Eighth General Meeting with the Valuer-General" of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General that was tabled in this House on 25 October 2012. As chair of the committee, I think it is important in this take-note debate to understand the role of the Valuer-General in New South Wales. The role of the Valuer-General is to provide independent statutory valuations to underpin the land tax regime and council rating systems that operate in New South Wales. The Valuer-General is also responsible for providing valuations of people's homes that are compulsorily acquired by the Government.

The role of the Valuer-General has a significant impact on the financial wellbeing of millions of people across this State. The role of the committee is to oversight the Office of the Valuer-General to ensure that the New South Wales public can have confidence in their valuation system, confidence in the taxes they pay, and confidence in the compensation they receive, should their homes be compulsorily acquired. The committee has a very important function. Through the course of the committee's deliberations, a number of concerns came to our attention.

We saw huge volatility in valuations that have been made. For example, the Camden golf course received a valuation of \$68.5 million that was reduced to \$6 million. The Opera House car park's valuation changed from \$28.5 million to \$8.9 million. These are not small variations: they are huge and gross misstatements that affect people's lives, that will affect the taxes people pay, and that will affect the financial wellbeing of people. The committee has seen a situation in which the independence of the Office of the Valuer-General has been undermined. We know that functions that previously were performed by the Valuer-General are now being performed by a government department.

The reason we have an independent Valuer-General in New South Wales is so that the valuations are independent of the Government's taxes. The Government levies taxes based on independent valuations. If the Government is levying taxes based on its own valuations it would completely destroy the credibility of the entire tax system. What we have seen is a government department—the Land and Property Information [LPI] division—doing valuations and appointing contract valuers to do valuations, and then it is auditing the valuations. The Valuer-General has a small role in the valuation process, so rightly there are questions about the valuations and the independence of his office.

The committee has also seen issues around procedural fairness. We know that people who have their homes compulsorily acquired are not even being afforded the opportunity to respond to adverse factors that valuers consider. I have received advice from senior counsel which states that the Valuer-General is obligated to provide that opportunity. But, most recently in relation to the report that the House is being asked to take note of

today, the committee has seen issues around probity. We have seen a situation in which questions about the probity of the appointment process relating to firms that are contracted to do valuation work on behalf of the Valuer-General of New South Wales are being asked.

Most notably, one firm, Quotable Value Australia, has won the lion's share of government contract work in New South Wales. It is the same firm at which the current Valuer-General, Philip Western, was not only an employee before he became the New South Wales Valuer-General, but also a senior official. The committee needs to get to the bottom of those concerns. With regard to the probity issue, the committee asked for information that would satisfy it in relation to the concerns that it expressed relating to probity. We asked for the tender evaluation minutes. The tender evaluation minutes received by the committee had every line item redacted from them, including the Valuer-General's own name, despite his testimony before the committee that he sat on the tender evaluation committee.

How can the public of New South Wales be expected to have confidence that there has been a fair and proper process in the awarding of tenders and in the awarding of large swathes of government contract work, if there is not transparency of the process? Today I call on the Valuer-General, when he appears before the committee on Monday, to restore the confidence that has been brought into question not just by the committee but also by people across New South Wales. I call on him to take that opportunity to be open, accountable and transparent with the committee by, for example, answering the committee's questions. In March the committee asked for details of a number of compulsory acquisitions that occurred throughout the year and it still has not received that information. The committee asked for information about valuation reports involving government, and the committee is still waiting for answers.

On Monday the Valuer-General will have an opportunity not to hide or continue to cover up mistakes that may or may not have occurred in the past. On Monday the Valuer-General will have an opportunity to be forthright with the committee, to be open to the public, and to ensure that the people in this State can rightly have confidence in their valuation system. We want a system that is transparent, fair and accurate, and it is time that the Valuer-General did the same.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [1.08 p.m.]: I join the member for Hornsby, chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General, in commenting on the Interim Report on the Eighth General Meeting with the Valuer-General", report 1/55, dated October 2012. I concur, support and endorse the foreword by the chair and support the findings and recommendations in that report. The member for Hornsby summarised the committee's concerns. In essence, those concerns are as follows: There is incorrect information, information that has been hard to get, information that we have been refused, and some quality assurance problems relating to the valuation process in New South Wales.

I do not want to sound unnecessary alarm bells in relation to the valuation process. In about 90 per cent or 95 per cent of cases we have every reason to have confidence in the process and that most people are receiving fair and reasonable valuations. However, when things do go wrong there is no quality assurance process. No-one can explain why things went wrong and what steps have been taken to resolve those problems and to ensure that they do not occur in the future, which is the stage that the committee has reached. The committee is trying to get to the bottom of these problems, to establish how they occurred and to better understand what can be done to ensure that they do not occur in the future.

These things have an effect on local government areas and on this State's budget. Committee members are trying to get their heads around the information with which they have been supplied. The member for Hornsby made an impassioned and forthright plea to the Valuer-General, who is to appear before the committee on Monday, to help us to resolve these problems. We must work in partnership with the Valuer-General to resolve these issues. If mistakes have been made—and we all make mistakes—we can fix them and ensure that we have a better and more robust process in the future. The committee presented its incredibly important interim report to this House and to the people of New South Wales as it has genuine concerns. Over the next few years the committee will continue to meet to try to find better solutions. The committee stands united in searching for the truth.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS** (Port Macquarie) [1.12 p.m.]: I join my colleagues the member for Hornsby and the member for Cessnock in making a short contribution to the take-note debate of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General Interim Report on the Eighth General Meeting with the Valuer-General. Like my colleagues I am aware of the potential repercussions of these findings. Members of Parliament equally are aware of their responsibilities in performing their committee functions, including reporting to the House those matters that require attention. It is with some disappointment and dismay that we are discussing matters to do with the Valuer-General in light of the findings and recommendations in this report.



I have no doubt that these findings will be frustrating and discouraging for the people of New South Wales who put their trust and confidence in the Office of the Valuer-General to perform its duties professionally and in a transparent manner.

The member for Hornsby and the member for Cessnock highlighted the unacceptable inaccuracies and obvious errors in material that was submitted to the committee, so I do not intend to cover them further. This committee is determined to ensure there is an appropriate level of performance. Committee members are looking forward to working with the Valuer-General and his office to ensure that that happens. Members were utterly disappointed in the Valuer-General's blatant lack of respect for the committee. Putting aside the erroneous material, the fact that the Valuer-General failed to advise the committee upon realising the mistakes and saw it as tolerable to inform a journalist rather than the committee simply is unacceptable. I refer members to page 7 of the interim report which details events that occurred with regard to the admission by the Valuer-General that the information provided to the committee was incorrect. The report states:

On the morning of 2 April the Sydney Morning Herald published an article in which it quoted the Valuer-General as indicating that the figures he provided to the Committee were incorrect.

The article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* states:

Mr Western says the figures, supplied by him to a parliamentary committee, are wrong and that Quotable Value's share of the work is \$13.6 million or 16.6 per cent. He says the next largest market share for the period is Crown Valuation Services with \$9.3 million, or 11.3 per cent.

Not surprisingly, committee members were taken aback on reading that revelation by the Valuer-General and in response resolved to meet with the Valuer-General to discuss previous evidence that he gave under oath. Excerpts of the transcript from the hearing are provided in the interim report, but worthy of note is the response by the Valuer-General when asked by the chair why he had informed a journalist about the error before advising the committee. His response to that question was, "I did not see it as important."

As a result of the seven findings listed in the interim report the committee made four recommendations that I trust the Valuer-General will act on as a matter of urgency. I am sure I speak for my committee colleagues when I say that we want a prompt response from the Office of the Valuer-General. That response must be forthcoming before the end of the year so that the confidence of the public is restored. I acknowledge the efforts of the member for Hornsby and the countless hours he put into the work of this joint parliamentary committee. I thank staff for their cooperation and hard work in assisting the committee in this matter.

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [1.16 p.m.]: I am not a member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General but I would like to contribute to the take-note debate on its interim report and emphasise the importance of this committee. Recently Perilya's appeal against the valuation of a mining site in Broken Hill was dealt with in the Land and Environment Court. As a consequence of that ruling and in recognition of the fact that the valuation was out by some 400 per cent, the liability of the Broken Hill City Council, which collected these rates in the past, now stands at \$6 million. I believe that Perilya has every intention of seeking restitution. The council collected the rates in good faith in accordance with the valuation and rating system and that money has been expended as part of council's revenue—a clear example of why we must be more careful about the way in which we rate properties in New South Wales. It is a huge concern not only for the mining company which is reluctant to take that action but also for local government which will have to find \$6 million. I commend the work of this committee and look forward to the committee addressing some of the inadequate evaluations that have occurred around this State.

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

**Report noted.**

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 28/55**

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

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [1.18 p.m.]: As chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I take this opportunity to comment on the recent Legislation Review Digest tabled on 13 November 2012. This is the twenty-eighth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. Following the sizable twenty-seventh digest, this twenty-eighth digest represents a substantial amount of work by the committee. The committee reviewed the 13 bills that were tabled in the last sitting week and also reported on two regulations—that is, 26 bills and four significant regulations in the past two weeks.

The 13 bills dealt with in the twenty-eighth digest covered a vast array of subject matter, from bail conditions and biofuels to planning issues and private car parks. As required by sections 8A and 9 of the Legislation Review Act, the Legislation Review Committee identified issues in the bills and regulations. The committee made substantive comments about a number of bills, which I shall outline briefly.

The Bail Amendment (Enforcement Conditions) Bill received a comment regarding the presumption of innocence. The Biofuels Further Amendment Bill attracted comments about excessive punishment and exemptions. Comment was made about employment in respect of the Cancer Institute New South Wales Amendment Bill. The committee commented on issues relating to arbitrary detention, consent to medical procedures and physical integrity arising out of the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Amendment (Rehabilitation of Persons with Severe Substance Dependence) Bill. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill gave rise to a number of issues, including matters relating to intellectual property, confidentiality, presumption of innocence and ill-defined powers. The Forestry Bill gave rise to comment about property, employment and compensation matters. The committee commented on retrospective provisions in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Register of Disclosures by Members) Bill and the Road Transport (General) Amendment (Private Car Parks) Bill. The committee also commented on compensation and Henry VIII clauses in the Liquor Amendment (Kings Cross Plan of Management) Bill.

The committee draws attention to issues about summarily considering indictable offences, and setting property-related issues, excessive punishment concerns, freedom of speech implications and royalties in the regulations as outlined in the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Royalties and Penalties) Bill. A number of the bills will commence by proclamation, including the Biofuels Further Amendment Bill, the Cancer Institute New South Wales Amendment Bill, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill, the Forestry Bill, the Liquor Amendment (Kings Cross Plan of Management) Bill and the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Royalties and Penalties) Bill. The committee reported also on the Crime Commission Regulation 2012 and the Water Management (General) Amendment (Lachlan Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources Water Sharing Plan) Regulation 2012.

Further information regarding all the bills tabled in the last sitting week is available in the digest, and I commend it to all members. I thank all committee members, namely, the member for Swansea, the member for Rockdale, the member for Bankstown, the member for Parramatta and our colleagues in the other place, Mr Moselmane, Dr Phelps and Mr Shoebridge, who considered the bills and issues relevant to the committee as required by the Legislation Review Act during committee deliberations. I particularly thank the hard-working committee staff who prepared the draft in the short break between the two sitting weeks. I commend the digest to the House.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [1.22 p.m.]: I make a contribution to the take-note debate on the Legislation Review Digest No. 20 of 2012—report No. 28 of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. I acknowledge my fellow committee members: the members representing the electorates of Myall Lakes, Parramatta, Rockdale and Swansea, and our colleagues in the other place, Mr Shoebridge, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I also acknowledge the always hardworking committee staff and note that next week they will have to prepare a second digest in two weeks due to back-to-back sitting weeks. I am sure they will do their usual excellent work. I was unable to attend this week's meeting as it was held in the morning.

However, I understand the committee considered no fewer than 12 bills during the course of a five-minute action-packed meeting. I note that Mr Shoebridge also was unable to attend this week's meeting. Given our absence, Government member Dr Phelps thought nobody would notice if Government members voted to get rid of one of those pesky adverse findings. The draft digest commented on the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Further Amendment Bill 2012 and the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Amendment (Redistributions) Bill 2012. The draft digest noted that these bills might pose issues relating to voting equality, insofar as assisting the Government to gerrymander country electorates to its political advantage. The draft digest states:

The Committee notes that allowing a projected margin of allowance of 10 per cent may provide for the redistribution of electorates where the weight afforded to each vote across different electorates may appear to adversely affect the right to equal democratic franchise.

A perusal the current digest before the House will reveal that this entire section has mysteriously vanished and been replaced with the following, rather innocuous sentence:

The Committee makes no comment on the bill in respect of issues set out in s8A of the Legislation Review Act 1987.

The only independent advice the O'Farrell Government values is the kind that it can control. As I mentioned previously, this week's digest considered 12 bills. The committee noted that the Bail Amendment (Enforcement Conditions) Bill 2012 may raise issues with the presumption of innocence as it imposed further burdens on bail applicants contrary to that presumption. However, the committee noted that the changes to conditions would

largely benefit bail applicants as they would increase the circumstances where bail could be granted, and as such made no adverse comment. The committee reviewed Reverend Nile's private member's bill the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Amendment (Rehabilitation of Persons with Severe Substance Dependence) Bill 2012 and noted that it raises issues regarding personal rights and liberties as it proposes to detain people against their will and force them to undertake a medical procedure without consent.

However, the committee made no further comment as it noted the proposed independent oversight of the process. I look forward to hearing the Government's position on this bill. I understand that the medical procedure in question is controversial and experimental, has been linked to several deaths and is opposed by the vast majority of the medical profession. The committee reviewed the Road Transport (General) Amendment (Private Car Parks) Bill 2012, on which I spoke at length yesterday during debate on the second reading of that bill. The committee noted that elements of the bill were retrospective insofar as they related to certain preliminary discovery applications. However, the committee made no further comment due to the purpose of the bill, a purpose which was supported by both sides in this place. Once again, I commend the committee staff for their great work and I look forward to being able to attend next week's lunchtime meeting. I commend the digest to the House.

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

**Report noted.**

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

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Marie Andrews, the former member for Gosford.

### **MR DANIEL CLARKE, NATIONAL CHILDREN'S AMBASSADOR FOR THE AUSTRALIAN ORANGUTAN PROJECT**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Speaker's Gallery Mr Daniel Clarke, the national children's ambassador for the Australian Orangutan Project and 2012 Pride of Australia medallist for the Environment and People's Choice. He is the guest of the member for Pittwater. He is a very special young man. Daniel Clarke suffers from cerebral palsy but it has not stopped him from striving to fulfil his dream of saving the natural habitat of the orangutan of Borneo. His little brother, William, has joined Daniel on the crusade in relation to which they have already raised \$600,000. They are on their way to a goal of \$1 million. They have written their own book, *Tears in the Jungle*, which is being used as a study resource in many New South Wales schools. They have lobbied politicians and appeared on many television programs. They are working towards making an address to the United Nations. On behalf of all members I wish Daniel and his brother, William, all the very best.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2012**

**Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.**

**Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as an order of the day for a later hour.**

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Notices of Motions**

**Private Members' Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.**

### **QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.24 p.m.]*

### **ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that 44 security officers at the Art Gallery of New South Wales protect nearly \$1 billion worth of precious Australian and international artworks that belong to the people of this State, why is he outsourcing these jobs to the private sector and compromising the security of the collection?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** It is clear from the repeated statements of the Director of the Art Gallery, Michael Brand, that no security is being compromised by his actions to ensure that in delivering services through the Art Gallery of New South Wales he gets the best possible deal for the taxpayers of the State. That is what I would expect public sector leaders to do. Members opposite might expect those who run public sector agencies to pay over tote odds; to take taxpayers for a ride when it comes to running services. We expect services to be provided at a level that is cost effective to taxpayers and, as Mr Brand has said, he does not believe the actions he has taken to make this decision will compromise security. I do not think I need to go into the history of security at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I do not think I need to go into that history, when someone literally took a painting off the wall, put it under their arm and walked out the front door. I do not want to refer to that. What I want to refer to is Mr Brand's determination to ensure that not only does he provide the best deal for taxpayers in delivering security services for the Art Gallery of New South Wales but also he runs an art gallery of which this city can be proud. There is no doubt that he has pulled off a coup with the opening tomorrow night of the Francis Bacon exhibition. Francis Bacon was one of the most impressive artists of the twentieth century. But speaking of security, speaking of guarantees, speaking of taxpayer dollars and efficiency, Madam Speaker, have you noticed what has come from the Independent Commission Against Corruption this week? It is rare in life that a \$225,000 investment returns \$60 million. It is even rarer that it returns on the basis of mining leases provided by government.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: There are no prizes for guessing my point of order, which relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about 44 security officers from the Art Gallery being outsourced. The Premier has moved well and truly away from the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is making a point about efficiencies and is still being relevant to the question. I am watching though and listening, and I take the point raised by the member.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** If that is an invitation to move a substantive motion, I am sorely tempted. The point I am trying to make is that at a time when State finances are tight, thanks in no small part to the Federal Government's ripping \$5.2 billion in GST revenue away from New South Wales, those sorts of decisions by the former Labor State Government have cost taxpayers dollars. Those decisions together with decisions to overspend in the way in which it managed public services resulted in the disappearance of \$20 billion received under Labor over 16 years over and above what was expected. We now have a couple of ideas where to look to find that money.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: I suggest you start looking for it down behind this couch—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is not a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. When the Leader of the Opposition stands to take a point of order he should elucidate why he is doing so.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I could not help but notice from today's report that former Treasurer Roozendaal has gone on holidays. They are still accepting his vote upstairs of course, but I suspect I have worked out where he has gone. I could not help over lunch looking at the online cars guide in the *Sydney Morning Herald*—it beats reading the political pages—which revealed that most Hondas, especially the CRVs sold into Australia, almost 100,000, are built in Bangkok.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: Madam Speaker—

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Looking for Eric? I suggest you try Bangkok.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier's time for speaking has expired.

#### KINGS CROSS MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** My question is addressed to the Premier. What are the latest developments in the Government's efforts to clean up Kings Cross?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Vacluse for her question and for her interest in this important matter, which was brought into sharp relief by the death of Thomas Kelly in July. The Government is determined to do what it can to ensure that such an event is not repeated. Yesterday legislation was passed by this Parliament to help achieve our goal of trying to minimise the risks faced by people young

and old who simply want to head off to Kings Cross to have a good night out. The Liquor Amendment (Kings Cross Plan of Management) Bill 2012 implements the first stage of the Government's response to the death of Thomas Kelly and will be in place in time for the summer holidays, next month.

The response includes conditions that will be imposed on licensed premises in the newly defined and larger Kings Cross precinct. The larger precinct brings into it more licensed premises and subjects them to tough new restrictions. We have proposed a raft of changes, including making it easier for drug dogs to patrol the Cross, placing restrictions on the types of drinks that can be sold in the early hours, the expansion of closed-circuit television, and the eventual introduction of Newcastle-style linked identification scanners for people visiting licensed premises. Other measures coming into force include the extension of the freeze on the approval of new liquor licences until December 2015, excluding small bar venues in the expanded Kings Cross precinct; the banning of colour-wearing outlaw motorcycle gang members from entering licensed premises; the maintenance of incident registers; a ban on glass containers after midnight; and the provision of responsible service of alcohol marshals in venues after midnight on weekends.

Some of the measures we have put in place are already showing good results. Operation Rushmore, which sees police working in combination with other government agencies, conducted a blitz in the Cross over the October long weekend. On that first weekend 35 people were arrested, 34 charges were laid, 290 infringement notices were issued and more than 1,355 random breath tests were conducted. Operation Rushmore 2 was held last weekend from Friday until Sunday. More than 180 police were deployed every night over that period. It resulted in 41 arrests, 33 charges being laid, 199 people being searched, 2,567 breath tests administered and 298 infringements issued. As part of this operation inspectors from the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing also detected licensing infringements in a number of venues for which action will be taken.

Speaking of holidays and nightspots, one wonders whether a great farm stay holiday across New South Wales might be taken up by Eddie Obeid when he finishes at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. If he goes to the Kangaroo Valley, he can meet some of his old right-wing mates. I am sure the member for Toongabbie will pop over for the weekend to share a few recollections. Whatever people may say about the member for Toongabbie, never let it be said that he was fooled by the crooks in the Labor Party. He sacked Ian Macdonald, but it took Kristina Keneally to reappoint him. Speaking of the former Premier, I note that in Sweden there is a perfect hotel that she would like. It is an invisible hotel—there is nothing for anyone to look at except her.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** She is not even here and you can't help yourself.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Is that right? Has she gone? The member for Marrickville has enlightened me that she has left. But of course I know that because the next leader, Mr Hoenig, has arrived. The Government has also sought to improve late-night transport in the Cross. We are now delivering 32 new route 999 bus services every weekend to and from the area. That is nearly 200 additional bus services that have helped people make the connection between Kings Cross and the central business district, where they can get trains and buses home after a night out. The N100 express NightRide has offered an additional 16 late-night weekend services every weekend and has now carried around 1,000 people out of the Cross to connect with other transport services.

Patronage at the new secure taxi ranks is strong and shows late-night customers are choosing to use that option. The 12-month prepaid taxi trial in Kings Cross is now up and running—the first of its kind in Sydney. It has been trialled on the Central Coast, where it is going well. I note that it is now standard practice across the board for all cabs in Melbourne between 10.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m. and that is something worth thinking about. The Government is determined to ensure that the tragic death of Thomas Kelly leads to action from not just the State Government but also the City of Sydney to minimise the chances of such an incident happening again.

### **SURF RESCUE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Why did the Minister fail to take action eight months ago when I first raised the issue of the Ambulance Service of NSW not communicating with Surf Life Saving NSW or the police to ensure that surf lifesavers are told immediately when someone is drowning so as to prevent avoidable deaths such as that which occurred on Sunday at Little Bay?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** This matter was canvassed extensively yesterday. When the January death was raised by the member for Maroubra through a question on the notice paper in March my response was

absolutely accurate. At the time the Ambulance Service acted according to the protocol, which was in fact introduced by the Labor Government in 2008. Police were notified, and the police are responsible for bringing out the rescue teams. That is as it was and as it is.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that it is disorderly to argue with the Minister. I will not tolerate a repeat of yesterday's performance.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am pleased to update the House on what has happened since this matter was raised yesterday when I indicated that I had asked the head of the Ambulance Service to toughen up the procedures in relation to police being called when a rescue was needed.

**Ms Linda Burney:** What does that actually mean?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Just listen.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members who continue to argue across the table will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** If members ask a question, I would have thought they would want to hear the answer. As I did yesterday, may I first extend my sympathy to the families and friends of the fisherman who died on Sunday after being washed off rocks at Little Bay. The Government is taking his death and the issues it has raised seriously. As I said yesterday, I instructed the Ambulance Service to immediately strengthen its protocols. I was pleased to learn that overnight that is exactly what happened. The head of the Ambulance Service collaborated with the chair of the State Rescue Board and, as a result, directed that any incident involving a person in the water will be immediately designated a rescue. The NSW Police Force will be notified by the Ambulance Service immediately after a 000 call is received.

The Leader of the Opposition asked why I did not do this earlier. My question is: Why did he not? The Labor Government brought in these protocols in 2008 since which time this sort of thing happened on numerous occasions and the former Labor Government did nothing. This very fast collaborative response from the Ambulance Service and the State Rescue Board was confirmed at a meeting I convened this morning and attended with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services after we had a conversation last night. Senior emergency services and ambulance personnel also attended. As a result, the new tougher protocol has been confirmed. We also announced that Mr Phil Koperberg, the chair of the State Emergency Management Committee, has been asked to oversight the implementation of the strengthening of this response between the different emergency service organisations. It is anticipated that his report will be finished on 30 November.

As per the State Rescue Policy, police will decide the most appropriate rescue response while the Ambulance Service will also dispatch paramedics to the scene. That is absolutely appropriate. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has today written to the New South Wales Coroner to respectfully request that the Coroner conduct an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the tragic incident last Sunday. As was indicated yesterday, a report into this matter is already being prepared for the Coroner by police; however, the Government believes it is important that the Coroner consider whether a formal inquiry into the circumstances would be appropriate. I support that move.

It is therefore inappropriate to discuss further details of this case. However, the Government will continue to work hard to improve rescue services in our community. The bottom line is that people want to know that if a life is at risk help will be there as fast as possible, and this is what the new protocol is designed to do. It was certainly not the protocol put in place by the former Labor Government. Overnight we have strengthened fast and immediate responses involving the most senior people in the Ambulance Service and also in the Police Emergency Services State Rescue Board. I am pleased with the response—it is very reactive and it toughens up the protocol. It means that if a call comes through 000, which is a Telstra line, and it is sent off to the Ambulance Service, the Ambulance Service determines that a person is in the water and it immediately triggers a response that goes to the police. It is then the responsibility of the police to call in the rescue teams.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr ANDREW ROHAN:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women. How is the Government proposing to improve the lives of vulnerable children by having parents take greater responsibility for their care?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I thank the member for Smithfield for his question. I know he believes that we need to work differently to better assist vulnerable people. As the member for Smithfield knows, the people of New South Wales and this Government inherited a child protection system which removed too many children and young people. New South Wales was the State with the highest rate of removal of children and young people in the country. Notwithstanding that, the human and economic impact of child neglect and abuse is horribly wrong and completely unsustainable. In many cases, abused and neglected children grow up with poor outcomes and high levels of criminal activity, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction and poor education attainment levels. They are also at high risk of homelessness and incarceration.

Intergenerational disadvantage is growing. Too many disadvantaged children are becoming parents with disadvantaged families of their own. Only real reform can improve services and lives to break the cycle of disadvantage. That is why in the coming weeks I will release a comprehensive child protection reform discussion paper proposing legislative reforms for feedback from the community and our non-government partners. The consultative period will extend to March 2013. We cannot improve services and lives in New South Wales without real and, at times, bold reform. We cannot do the same old, same old. All parents need to understand how important their role is and the great value our community places on what they do.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Stop cutting the budget.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The member for Canterbury repeats another lie, which she continues to make. There have been no cuts to community services. Parents also need to understand that there are consequences when they compromise their parenting and let their children down and put them at risk of harm.

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The member for Canterbury, the former failed Minister, presided over the highest rate of removal of children and young people in Australia. She presided over a rate of removal that continued to increase over a decade.

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The member for Canterbury has been waiting for this moment to be reminded of the legacy that she left: the highest rate of removals, only one in five children being seen by caseworkers and an out-of-home care agency—the Department of Community Services—that was not even accredited to provide the care. Such accreditation was expected of everybody but her own department. That is the shameful legacy of the former failed Minister. Every time the member for Canterbury asks a question in this place—of course, she has not yet because she does not want to face that moment—she will be reminded of those failures. We are having to introduce reforms to address those failures.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** What about when you were last in government?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** My goodness, we are now going back in history. The O'Farrell Government is committed to strengthening parental capacity and also accountability to reduce the number of children and young people at risk and entering care. We will be discussing a number of proposals in the discussion paper, including the creation of new parenting capacity orders where, for the first time, vulnerable parents will be required by the court to attend parent capacity courses or other treatments or therapies to improve their parenting. Members opposite must not continue to display their ignorance of a system they created.

**Mrs Barbara Perry:** That is offensive.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Auburn that it is disorderly to argue with the Minister.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** If the discussion paper is acceptable—

**Mrs Barbara Perry:** No-one out there thinks you are doing the right thing.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I can tell you what the community outside thinks. They think that you had 16 years, you created a mess, you left a shameful legacy, you now lie about your record, you lie about the cuts and until you learn to tell the truth you are not fit for government.

### PARENTING SUPPORT SERVICES

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. In light of the Minister's announcement regarding responsible parenting and the need to help parents help themselves, why is the Minister planning to cut funding to support services such as the CatholicCare Parentline and the Triple P—Positive Parenting Program?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** This is the moment the member for Canterbury, the former failed Minister, has been dreading: she has had to ask a question. She has had to return to the scene of her sins—there are other terms I could use but I will stick with "sins"—which very quickly takes us back to her failures. Let me remind members of those failures. She was a Minister who was happier working with union bosses and imposing restrictive work practices—

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. This is a very important issue. A serious question has been asked.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I grant a little bit of latitude at the beginning of a question and even throughout a question. If a Minister strays too far from the answer I will always call that Minister back to the leave of the question. I encourage the Minister to be mindful of the leave of the question.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** It is relevant that a Minister, a former failed Minister, who presided over this sort of record relating to the most vulnerable children in our State should commence her very first question in opposition on this issue with a lie.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: The Minister is now seeking to debate the question rather than answer it. I ask you to draw her back to answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no standing order that covers the member's point of order. I use my discretion to determine whether a Minister is debating the question, and at the moment the Minister is answering the question.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Let us look at the lies. The first lie is that we have cut \$500 million from the budget. That is absolute rubbish.

**Ms Linda Burney:** That is what was said in the budget estimates.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The member for Canterbury, despite her years in government, was never shown how to read a budget paper.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I will not countenance members arguing across the Chamber. The member for Canterbury has asked a question and it is unfortunate if she does not like the answer. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The movement in the FACS budget resulted from moving almost \$500 million of the Home and Community Care program from the State to the Federal budget. That explains the first lie. The second lie is that the Government has not authorised cuts to the Triple P—Positive Parenting Program. There have been no cuts to that program, and I would have hoped that the member for Canterbury would know that.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is being absolutely relevant to the question asked. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Linda Burney:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! As I said, the Minister is being entirely relevant to the question asked. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. There is no point of order. I place the member for Canterbury on three calls to order. Pursuant to Sessional Order 249A, the member for Canterbury will leave the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 2.50 p.m.]*



**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Think up another lie. We will catch your next lie next week.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I reiterate that the Minister is specifically answering the question.

**Mr Michael Daley:** My first point of order relates to Standing Order 73. Previous Speakers have ruled that the word "lie" is unparliamentary language. My second point of order relates to the intemperate language of the Minister which has reached the stage at which we can only conclude—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order relates to personal imputations.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Comments directed by Opposition members to the Minister across the Chamber have been completely intemperate. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The fact is that the member for Canterbury cannot read budget papers. The \$54 million to which she referred resulted from movement of that service group in the budget papers between statutory child protection and early intervention services groups. There is no cut. That is another lie. But what can we expect when we consider the press statement that was released today? The track-changing did not quite work. Labor members are a bit sloppy about press releases, just as they were sloppy in government. When Labor members were in government they could not get it right; now, in opposition, all they can do is produce a pathetic press release. [*Time expired.*]

#### ELECTRICITY ASSETS SALE

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS:** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government helping to secure key infrastructure for the people of New South Wales through its progress of its electricity transaction?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for Rockdale for his question and for his interest in the responsible financial management of this State.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Another day, another mess left behind by Labor that the O'Farrell Government is fixing up. The O'Farrell Government is progressing with significant reform of the electricity sector—reform that Labor failed to undertake. The scoping study has now given the green light to progress our electricity transactions and there are many benefits for the State on the back of that. It will assist in addressing Labor's infrastructure backlog—another mess left behind by Labor because infrastructure was not built—with up to \$3 billion in proceeds of the transaction being released for this State. That will assist in protecting the State's triple-A credit rating and clean up the mess that Labor left behind as a result of a lack of competition in the electricity industry. It will introduce more competition. Yet again the O'Farrell is delivering on its election commitments. Day in and day out the O'Farrell Government delivers on its election promises.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I congratulate the member for Sydney on his inaugural speech last night. As he is a newly elected member of this House, he has not heard Government members referring to Labor's poor record in government. So it behoves me to tell him about it. We all knew that the gentrader deal was a dud. Why did we think it was a dud? Many people at the time said it was. Tony Maher, who is a former Eraring director and former member of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union whom some Labor members may know, said:

It was always a dud deal—I think it's a disgrace ... [they stand] condemned for basically pulling a rort. It looks smelly, it is smelly, it's a shocker.

Other directors said that the price was "scandalously low" and the deal was "uncommercial". Others said, "I have never before seen a more poorly handled transaction" and, interestingly enough, they said it reflected a

"frightening disregard for the protection of taxpayers". They were describing the gentrader transaction that Labor undertook. However, what exactly was the State left with? We knew that the gentrader sale proceeds amounted to approximately \$1.5 billion, which the Auditor-General described as less than half their value. But Labor members forgot to tell us about the hidden costs because they were desperate to save their political future in any way, shape or form they could. The former Labor Cabinet, particularly its former Treasurer, had to get this deal finalised and did not tell other Labor members about the hidden costs.

The former Labor Government received \$1.5 billion but what did it do in relation to the underlying Cobbora transaction? It gave back \$1.5 billion. It was a case of \$1.5 billion incoming and \$1.5 billion outgoing. What did the State receive for those assets? The State received absolutely nothing for those assets. The former Labor Government gave away those assets, and Labor members know it. Labor members regularly get on their high horse in this House about financial management, but Labor gave away electricity generation assets. There has never been a more disastrous public policy than that in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation on both sides of the Chamber.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There was no business case. I call on all Labor members to hang their heads in shame. What did each of them do to stop that transaction? The Leader of the Opposition spent a lot of time outside Parliament arguing against those types of transactions, but what happened when he was in a Cabinet meeting when this deal, which would give away State assets for no return, was presented to Cabinet? One would have thought he would have said something. One would have thought he would have jumped up and down.

**Mr John Robertson:** You don't know.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We heard nothing. Labor members regularly come prancing into this House on their high horses and speak about financial management, and that is absolutely outrageous. But the clincher, which is an absolute disgrace, is that although we know the former Treasurer signed off on the deal, who do members think was the second signatory? It was someone who day in, day out takes the high moral ground in relation to financial management. The second signatory was none other than the member for Maroubra. Labor members should not attempt to prosecute financial management. This Government will fix up Labor's mess and build the infrastructure that this State needs.

#### MEMBER FOR MENAI

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. Given that the member for Menai pleaded guilty to failing to lodge an electoral return and was sentenced to a 15 month good behaviour bond, when will he investigate the appropriateness of her continuing to hold the positions of Acting-Speaker and Deputy Chair of the Committee on Children and Young People?

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: The question asked by the Leader of the Opposition is out of order. Very strict restrictions apply to questions that can be directed to a chair of a committee. Hopefully the Leader of the Opposition is aware that the assertions relate to a period prior to the member for Menai being elected to this House. Therefore, there is absolutely no basis to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is in order for a member to ask the chair of a committee a question. Does the point of order relate to the validity of asking a question of a committee chair?

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** The question that has been asked relates to a period when the member for Menai was not even a member.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Madam Speaker, I am asking you to rule the question out of order, but I assume that the chair of the committee would indicate that the bottom line is that there is no reason to respond to a question relating to an issue that occurred prior to the member being elected to Parliament.

**Mr John Robertson:** To the point of order: Under Standing Order 127 it is clear that a member being the chair of a committee may be asked questions relating to the affairs of the committee.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member is correct, and I have so ruled. The issue I am now discussing with the Clerk is whether a question can be asked about the activities of a person before that person became a member of this place.

**Mr Michael Daley:** To the point of order: It would be our submission that this question is in order. The investigation by the Electoral Commission took place whilst the member in question was a member of the Legislative Assembly.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am advised by the Clerk, and I will take her advice, that it is not within the committee's terms of reference to deal with this matter, therefore it is outside the purview of the committee. The question is out of order.

## TEACHERS SALARIES

**Mr BART BASSETT:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. What is the latest on the teachers' salaries negotiations and the staffing agreement recently signed with the New South Wales Teachers Federation?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I appreciate being asked a question about education from a Government member. The Opposition seems to have given up.

**Ms Carmel Tebbutt:** We never get an answer.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** If you ask me a good question I will give you a good answer. I can announce to the House today that the Department of Education and Communities and the New South Wales Teachers Federation have come to an agreement on a new award to commence from 1 January 2013 for one year. Teachers' salaries will increase by 2.5 per cent, consistent with the New South Wales Government's public sector wages policy. This 2.5 per cent salary increase is greater than the Sydney consumer price index over the year to September 2012. This is a great outcome for the 61,700 public school teachers in this State. I would also like to note the constructive role of the union in these negotiations. That a new salaries award can be agreed upon by consensus without industrial unrest is welcomed by all parents, teachers and students in New South Wales.

The salary range for a classroom teacher will now start at \$59,706 for a first year teacher and increase to \$89,050 per annum for a classroom teacher at the top of the salary scale. The new salary rate for a primary principal 1 in the biggest primary schools will be \$143,127 per annum. The new salary rate for the equivalent high school principal in the biggest high schools will be \$153,050 per annum. New South Wales has a world-class education system, and we cannot have a world-class education system without a world-class teaching service. We remain committed to supporting teachers by way of competitive salaries.

I take this opportunity to remind the House about the staffing agreement that was recently signed by the New South Wales Teachers Federation which will be in place until 2016. Under the staffing agreement we have locked in class sizes; the class size policy will not change. The school will be able to fill at least every second vacancy by local school choice once incentive transfer applications and Aboriginal employment applications have been placed. Incentive transfers not only remain but have been given greater priority. That is a great result for western New South Wales. Nominated, compassionate and service transfers remain. There are increased opportunities for the appointment of outstanding graduates and permanent teachers will retain tenure. To help schools better meet the needs of students and plan their workforce requirements, the staffing agreement also includes procedures for filling a permanent position on a temporary basis.

To reiterate, we have increased teachers' salaries and we have maintained class sizes. The New South Wales Government is making plenty of other investments in education. We have allocated funds for 200 additional teachers in support of our literacy and numeracy action plan across New South Wales. They are on the front line, and that is precisely where the taxpayers want their dollars spent. An additional \$60 million will support students with disabilities through the Every Student Every School scheme. We are spending almost \$100 million redeveloping 19 special schools, including multimillion dollar projects at Kurrambee School in Mulgoa and at the Hunter River Community School in Maitland. A couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of travelling to Gunnedah. The Government is building nine new schools, including Bass School for Specific Purposes and Oran Park Public School. We have purchased the site of the former Hope Christian School at

Camden. There will be new schools at Canada Bay; at Lake Cathie, in the great electorate of Port Macquarie; at the Ponds High School in the north-west; the Ponds School for Specific Purposes; Wangee Park School and Wentworth Point Public School.

The Government has freed up \$10 million in capital funding, which will be made available to the Connected Communities schools—some of the tougher schools in some of the most disadvantaged communities in New South Wales. I acknowledge the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for convening the Aboriginal task force, and I am pleased to be able to contribute to that task force as the Minister for Education. The Government has saved \$8.7 million by renegotiating a new fee structure for the delivery of major capital works projects. That \$8.7 million would have gone in the pockets of people outside schools but will now go into bricks and mortar. This is about properly managing taxpayers' dollars. That \$8.7 million would not have been available had the Labor Party been re-elected. That money is now available for schools.

What are we doing with it? It is going towards a multimillion dollar redevelopment of the Collarenebri Central School in the great electorate of Barwon in the north-west of New South Wales. It is also being put towards the upgrades of science laboratories at Merriwa Central School in the electorate of Upper Hunter; Brisbane Water Secondary College in Gosford; Bomaderry High School in Kiama; Walcha Central School in the electorate of The Nationals stooge from Northern Tablelands; Port Macquarie High School and The Forest High School. [*Time expired.*]

### SYDNEY ELECTORATE EDUCATION

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education. What action will the Minister take to ensure that education needs in the Sydney electorate are met now and in the future, including the reopening of Cleveland Street high school and the expansion of primary school capacity in Ultimo, Pyrmont and elsewhere?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I welcome the question from the new member for Sydney and congratulate him again on his inaugural speech last night. I took the opportunity yesterday to meet with the new member for Sydney and his predecessor, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, to discuss this matter and, more broadly, education provision in the inner city of Sydney. We had a constructive discussion about how the community, council and the department can work together to better provide education in Sydney. I give credit to the member for Sydney that his first question relates to education. The option presented to the Ultimo Public School Parents and Citizens Association by the Department of Education and Communities some time ago was to consider how best to cater for the expected increase in enrolments at the school in future years. The department made it clear that the development would not proceed if the school community opposed it.

Community consultation is vital and part of the normal process when considering possible changes to school sites. The department did precisely the right thing. Several months ago it spoke to the parents and citizens association about capacity issues, and provided some options about rezoning, purchasing other land and demountable accommodation. The school's parents and citizens association asked the department to return with other options, one of which was redeveloping the site. The department should consult with parents and citizens associations and communities, which is precisely what it did. Of course, different views are held about what should occur. Media reports a few days later indicated that the Ultimo Public School Parents and Citizens Association did not want to pursue the option the department proposed. The Premier and I have said that if the community does not want it, it will not go ahead—end of story. The department will continue to work with the Ultimo Public School Parents and Citizens Association to explore further options for managing increasing school enrolments, including any of those options raised by the school community.

Yesterday's meeting achieved some direct outcomes. The regional director, Dr Phil Lambert, who attended the meeting, will chair a working group comprising departmental officials, officers from the City of Sydney and members of the Ultimo Parents and Citizens Association. The terms of reference are to be determined, but options will be worked on collaboratively to develop solutions for Ultimo Public School and the broader inner city issues. Officials from the City of Sydney and the department will begin holding regular meetings regarding the provision of early childhood services, and primary and secondary education, and ways for the two organisations to work together cooperatively to find solutions in the best interests for inner-city students. In answer to the second part of the member's question, the department has no plans to change the function of Cleveland Street Intensive English High School—an option raised previously, including by the member. The school provides an amazing service and will continue to do so. However, having said that, the working group will consider alternative solutions.

I certainly hope that by working closely with council the department will find new and innovative ways of delivering education for the people of Sydney. In answering a question on this subject a couple of weeks ago I discussed the unfortunate fact that many schools in the inner city were closed. The member for Marrickville was the responsible Minister when Forest House School was closed. She was also the Minister when Redfern Public School, Alexandria Public School, Waterloo Public School, Maroubra High School and Vacluse High School were closed. She was the responsible Minister and did not say a single word about those closures. Had those schools not been closed, our job would have been easier in dealing with some of the inner-city capacity issues. The Leader of the Opposition has his 40 schools in 40 days concept, which I would love to go into detail about, but as time is running out I hope the opportunity will arise before the end of next week. [*Time expired.*]

### AVIAN INFLUENZA

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business. What action has the Government taken in response to the detection of a suspected case of avian influenza in New South Wales?

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question and his interest in all biosecurity matters. The State Government takes seriously the threat of disease to our animal and plant industries, and certainly does so in this situation. I am advised that the Department of Primary Industries is investigating a suspected case of avian influenza detected in a commercial poultry flock of 50,000 free-range layer hens in a facility in the lower Hunter Valley. Tests at the New South Wales Government's Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute have confirmed that the suspected virus is definitely not the H5N1 strain that has gained worldwide attention, nor is it closely related to that strain.

Further tests are being undertaken at the Australian Animal Health Laboratories in Geelong to confirm the exact H7 strain of the virus. We expect to receive the results of those tests this afternoon. It is important that the House notes two things. First, the Food Authority and NSW Health have been consulted and have advised that there are no food safety issues. Poultry and eggs are safe to eat. Secondly, Australia previously had a small number of outbreaks of avian influenza viruses, including H7 types, that were eradicated quickly and successfully. The only outbreak in New South Wales was in Tamworth in 1997 which was dealt with quickly and effectively.

At this stage the department is awaiting final confirmation testing of the subtype from the CSIRO Animal Health Laboratories in Geelong. However, the New South Wales Chief Veterinary Officer has directed a swift response ahead of those results being received. In these cases our authorities plan for the worst result, and we hope for the absolute best result. I am advised that staff are on standby at State Disease Control Headquarters at Orange and at the property. I can inform the House that the property is under tight lockdown and is being monitored by the department's highly trained emergency first response team. Initial tracing and surveillance is being undertaken from the quarantined property to confirm that the virus has not spread. The Chief Veterinary Officer has no evidence so far to suggest that it has spread and is quietly confident that the disease is contained. Nothing is moving in or out of the property, and the owners are cooperating fully with our officers.

It is important to be clear that Australia has had five previous outbreaks of H7 strain avian influenza in poultry and that all outbreaks were quickly controlled and successfully eradicated. Australia has never had the H5N1 virus identified in poultry or humans. The New South Wales Chief Veterinary Officer has informed the Commonwealth Government, our interstate colleagues, the NSW Food Authority and NSW Health. A meeting of the national Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Disease has supported the State's approach to managing the suspect case. A decision on whether to cull the birds will be made once confirmation testing is received and the exact strain of avian influenza is identified by the CSIRO. The NSW Food Authority advises of no reported cases of humans becoming infected from eating food from animals affected by bird flu. New South Wales eggs and poultry meat are safe to eat.

Nevertheless, we take the opportunity to repeat that it is prudent for consumers to take the normal food safety precautions, such as avoiding eating raw eggs and not eating cracked or dirty eggs. I note the excellent work of the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute—which is located in the electorate of the member for Wollondilly, Jai Rowell—and Department of Primary Industries staff in responding quickly to this issue. They were on top of this from the moment they received the expression of concern from the farm involved. I commend the staff for working so closely with their State counterparts, the Federal Government and industry. The Department of Primary Industries will make media statements as appropriate to keep the community informed.

**GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL CENTRE**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Given the comments of the Deputy Premier on 31 October that there were "all sorts of things the Government could spend the extra \$1 billion on" and that Grafton jail was "in the mix", when will Grafton jail be restored to full operational capacity?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** As the Treasurer explained earlier this week, there is no lazy \$1 billion sitting on a shelf somewhere.

**Mr Michael Daley:** How would he know?

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The only lazy things in this House are those opposite. A few weeks ago I used a terrible word to describe the Leader of the Opposition. It was an expression I picked up from my kids when they were much younger. However, while reading the paper on the weekend I realised that I also got that expression from the new chair called a La-Z-Boy. Obviously, it was designed for the Leader of the Opposition. We know that an \$800 million fiddle by the Federal Government to pay in one financial year allocated road grants that are not meant to be spent until the next financial year does not give the State Government \$800 million. If the State Government did spend that money those opposite would be the first to criticise it.

The basis of the question is a nonsense. The Government will continue to allocate dollars to front-line services as it can afford to do so. As the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women said, she is getting on with the job of protecting the most vulnerable in the community despite the lies told by those opposite. The Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research is moving money from the back office—the middle managers that the member for Maroubra so loves—to the front line to provide the extra hospital admissions, elective surgeries and presentations at emergency departments. The Minister for Education is ensuring that savings benefit schools. After 17 years in this place I cannot remember a Minister for Education saying in the House that he or she had reached agreement with teachers over wages without there being a week-long stoppage. Those opposite, who are run by the union movement, could never do that.

**Mr John Robertson:** Morris Iemma did it.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Not without strike action he did not.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition will stop arguing and shouting.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** What needs to be understood is that the deal done by the Minister for Education is a deal that fits within the wages policy and represents value for money.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. The deal done by the education Minister is a long way from Grafton jail. The question was about Grafton jail and when it will be reopened.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has been relevant to the question asked. The Premier has the call.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Government allocates dollars on the basis of not only the services that need it but also value for money for taxpayers. The deal done with teachers is within the State Government's wages policy, it provides value for money for the teachers receiving a wage increase and it provides value for money for taxpayers—which is very different from deals done with public sector unions by those opposite, when increases were paid above the 2.5 per cent cap. More money was paid under claims that there be productivity increases. What did the Coalition discover when it came to office? It found that those union deals, signed with the likes of the member for Marrickville and the member for Blacktown, were never delivered. If the State Government had kept that cosy deal going with public sector union bosses it would have cost \$2 billion. This State Government expects people to deliver on their agreements. Time and again the union bosses took the cash but did not give taxpayers or users of front-line services value for money. It is a remarkable day when the member for Liverpool asks a question—Rumpole rarely gets off the bench, the golden thread that runs through his life goes all the way back to Russia.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: If the Premier wishes to launch a substantive attack he has to do so by way of substantive motion. The Premier has moved a long way from the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It was not a substantive attack on the member for Liverpool and therefore he should not take offence.

**Question time concluded at 3.25 p.m.**

**VARIATIONS OF PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2012-2013**

**Mr Mike Baird** tabled, pursuant to section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the variations of the payments estimates and appropriations for 2012-13 flowing from the transfer of functions between Transport for NSW and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Report**

**Mr Jai Rowell**, as Chair, tabled the report entitled, "Inquiry into administrative funding for minor parties", dated November 2012.

**Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Jai Rowell.**

**PETITIONS**

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

**Thompson Square, Windsor**

Petition opposing an application to replace Hawkesbury River Bridge at Windsor and upgrade adjacent intersections and approaches on the grounds it will have an irreversible, detrimental and unacceptable impact on the heritage, visual aspect and socio-economic nature of the historic Thompson Square precinct and will not solve long-term traffic issues, received from **Mr Ryan Park**.

**TAFE Arts Education**

Petition requesting that the value of TAFE arts education to New South Wales be recognised and that funding of TAFE arts education continue at viable levels, received from **Ms Carmel Tebbutt**.

**Discussions on petitions set down as orders of the day for a future day.**

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

**Education Funding**

Petition calling on the Government to stop cuts to education, TAFE and school funding, received from **Mr Richard Amery**.

**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**.

**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**.

**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**.

**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**.

**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**.

**STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. 2) 2012****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in the message of 14 November 2012*

No. 1 Page 13, schedule 1.14, line 1 to 22. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 Pages 15 and 16, schedule 1.18, line 9 on page 15 to line 20 on page 16. Omit all words on those lines.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.26 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Greg Smith: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Government notes that some amendments were moved to the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) 2012 in the Legislative Council—one by The Greens and the other by the Shooters and Fishers Party.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [3.27 p.m.]: The Opposition agrees to the amendments. They withdraw two aspects of the bill and it is entirely reasonable to support them.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Legislative Council amendments agreed to.**

**Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (CONDUCT) BILL 2012****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in the message of 14 November 2012*

No. 1 Page 11, schedule 1 [12]. Insert after line 10:

440O Self-incrimination

- (1) This section applies where, under section 440H, the Director-General directs a natural person to provide any information or produce any document for the purposes of an investigation.
- (2) A person is not excused from complying with the direction on the ground that the information or document might incriminate the person or make the person liable to a penalty.



- (3) If the information or document tends to incriminate the person and the person objects to providing the information or producing the document at the time, the fact of the direction or the information or document itself (if produced) may not be used in any criminal proceedings against the person (except in proceedings for an offence relating to the failure to produce a document or information or the production of a document or information that is false or misleading).
- (4) Despite any such objection, the information or document may be used in connection with an investigation and the taking of disciplinary action against the person under this Division and is admissible in proceedings under this Act relating to misconduct.

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

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

The Local Government Amendment (Conduct) Bill 2012 was amended in the Legislative Council in regard to inserted new section 440O in relation to self-incrimination issues. The Government is in agreement with this.

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY** (Auburn) [3.29 p.m.]: The Opposition agrees to the amendment. I note that there was extensive debate on the amendment in the upper House. Our positions are quite clear and on the record in the upper House, and I refer members to them.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Legislative Council amendment agreed to.**

**Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2012**

### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

##### *Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 15 November 2012*

- No. 1 Page 3, schedule 1 [3], line 33. Omit "instrument, or". Insert instead "instrument".
- No. 2 Page 4, schedule 1 [3], lines 1-4. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 3 Page 4, schedule 1 [5], lines 23 and 24. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 4 Page 4, schedule 1 [5], lines 33 and 34. Omit "alternative solutions to deal with that aspect of the development". Insert instead "reasonable alternative solutions that achieve the objects of those standards for dealing with that aspect of the development".
- No. 5 Page 4, schedule 1 [5], line 36. Omit "application, and". Insert instead "application".
- No. 6 Page 4, schedule 1 [5], lines 37 and 38. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 7 Page 4, schedule 1 [5]. Insert after line 38:

In this subsection, *standards* include performance criteria.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.30 p.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

I acknowledge that the Opposition, The Greens and the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, raised certain concerns about the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2012. As a result, there have been extensive negotiations and discussions with the various parties and the Government moved a number of amendments in the upper House. I urge the House to agree to the amendments.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Legislative Council amendments agreed to.**

**Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.**

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

**Mr CHRIS HARTCHER** (Terrigal—Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast) [3.31 p.m.]: I move:

That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death on 9 October 2012 of the Hon. George Paciullo, a former Minister of the Crown.

In moving this motion I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of members of the Hon. George Paciullo's family, his son, Murray, and his daughter-in-law, Michelle. I had the honour to meet Murray at the funeral of the Hon. George Paciullo that I attended to represent the Premier and the New South Wales Government. I formally place on record the condolences of the Government and of the Premier. The funeral service at All Saints Catholic Church at Liverpool was a magnificent tribute to a man who gave a lifetime of service to the people of Liverpool and of New South Wales. The formal entry on the Hon. George Paciullo in the encyclopaedia reads that he was the Labor member for Liverpool in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1971 to 1989, and served as a Minister from 1984 to 1988. He was born in Sydney to market gardener Sisto Paciullo and his wife, Immacolata, who had come to Australia from Calabria during the Great Depression. He attended public schools at Liverpool and Homebush and was employed as a survey draftsman with the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service upon his graduation in 1951.

The Hon. George Paciullo performed national service in 1952 and subsequently served in the Citizen Military Forces for three years. In 1958 he joined the Australian Labor Party and the following year was elected to Liverpool City Council. On 3 November 1964 he married Janette Blinman with whom he had a son named Murray. He continued as both a draftsman and a councillor until 1971. In 1971 he was elected to the State seat of Liverpool to replace Jack Mannix, who had retired. Under Labor, when Neville Wran became Premier in 1976 he was appointed Minister for Roads and then to the portfolio of Industry and Small Business, followed by Consumer Affairs and Aboriginal Affairs.

In 1986 when the Hon. Neville Wran resigned and the Hon. Barrie Unsworth became Premier, the Hon. George Paciullo became Minister for Police and Emergency Services. After the defeat of the Unsworth Government in 1988 he stood for election as Leader of the Australian Labor Party but was unsuccessful. He subsequently resigned his seat and ceased to be a member of Parliament but continued his life of public service by becoming mayor of Liverpool. Members are well aware of the extraordinary achievement of the Hon. George Paciullo in bringing about random breath testing in the State. I had not intended to address that issue because so many people have done so but in his statement of resignation from the House, which he gave on 30 January 1989, he made reference to it so I believe it is important to place it on the record now. In his resignation statement he said:

What has given me so much satisfaction is to know that already at least 2,000 people have had their lives spared in this State because of my determination, against immense opposition, to introduce Random Breath Testing and that for the first time over the past two decades, crime rates dropped significantly in NSW ... during my two years as Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

He took great pride in that achievement and singled it out in his retirement statement. Of course, he was more than Minister for Police and Emergency Services, he was more than a Minister of the Crown, he was more than a servant of the community; he was an excellent example of the success of the Australian immigration scheme and an excellent example of the determination of an individual to rise in the community and to serve the community. It is those attributes that do him the greatest credit. His achievements stand on the public record, but his personal achievements and determination, coming from a poor family background that was not English speaking, to rise through the Australian political and civic system to become a leading citizen in this State are what serve him in great stead. In his inaugural speech to this House—in those days it was called a maiden speech—the first issue he raised was sport. His passion for sport was borne out by his success as a tennis player—he was a champion tennis player—and also by his championing of sports and sporting facilities for young people. In the second paragraph of his inaugural speech he stated:

I was most disappointed that in outlining the Government's legislation for the coming session His Excellency made no reference to any plans to meet the sport and recreation needs of the people of the State.

This was despite its decision to create a Minister for Sport. He continued:

Urgent action is needed in this neglected area of our activities to halt a rapidly deteriorating situation, which I shall touch on later.

His inaugural speech addressed the traditional issues of paying tribute to his predecessor, the Hon. Jack Mannix, and talking about the importance of his electorate. He referred to health, education and transport issues in his electorate but then returned to what was clearly a passionate subject for him: the provision of sporting facilities for young people. He made the point that people who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s in Australia would remember there used to be an abundance of tennis courts in the community. However, those tennis courts gradually disappeared with the emergence of subdivisions and because of rising land values. People found it more profitable to develop the land. This eroded what had been an important Australian legacy because young people from all backgrounds could learn to play tennis—a sport he was passionate about. What had made Australia such a great tennis nation in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was that the sport of tennis was made accessible to all sections of the community. That is no longer the case. The Hon. George Paciullo was passionate about his sport but he was even more passionate about his community and service to his community.

I will tell the House some stories about the former member for Liverpool. These stories were supplied to me by Lisa Carty, who was one of his earliest press secretaries and who now works for the Premier. They were not told at George's funeral, but they are characteristic of the man. George was the first person to wear a beige safari suit into the Legislative Assembly. The Speaker at the time, the Hon. Lawrie Kelly, told him that wearing safari suits was unparliamentary and that he should leave the Chamber to change into a proper lounge suit. George replied that safari suits were perfect for the Australian summer, it was common sense and they were very popular. Nonetheless, he was ejected from the Chamber. In the afternoon newspapers the incident received extensive coverage, as the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* were wont to do.

Although it is known as the "stripper story", the next story is not as risqué as it sounds but it speaks volumes about the era in which it occurred. At the time of George's birthday in 1987 he was the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and his staff decided to take him to an outdoor cafe to celebrate. George was sitting at the table, drinking coffee and talking to his staff when suddenly a young female in a police uniform appeared. She was carrying sound recording equipment, but George did not notice that. Being a good police Minister, George leapt to his feet to shake her hand, ask her what station she was from and to tell her what a great job the New South Wales police were doing. The young lady was rather surprised by this welcome from the person whom she had come to greet for his birthday. George sat down somewhat nonplussed by her reaction. He became even more confused when she turned on her tape deck and started to remove her police uniform to the sound of the music.

A shocked crowd formed at Australia Square as people watched a young police woman stripping off her clothing to the sound of the appropriate music in front of the Minister for Police. When the staff began to laugh uproariously George suddenly realised he was the subject of the prank and joined in with the laughter. George had the advantage that there were no mobile phones and no Twitter for anyone to record his initial discomfiture, but it passed into the legacy of his office and George approached each subsequent birthday with some trepidation as he wondered what was in store for him. I say to George's family that the people of New South Wales are indebted to him for his contribution. His legacy lives on in the sense that many thousands of people are now alive who would not be alive but for him. They do not know it because none of us knows who would have been the victim of the road accidents he prevented through his innovative legislation. They are the people who carry on his legacy. The House and the Government of New South Wales pay tribute to George Paciullo.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.43 p.m.]: It is with sadness that I speak to this condolence motion on the recent passing of George Paciullo at the age of 78. George Paciullo served in this place as the member for Liverpool from 1971 to 1988. I did not have the good fortune to meet George, but the name "George Paciullo" was well known to us youngsters who grew up in the Labor Party. His service to his country was distinguished and aptly recognised by the Medal of the Order of Australia and the Centenary Medal. Just as cherished for George was his entry to life membership of the Australian Labor Party in 2002. George was a Labor man and he lived a Labor life.

George was born in Sydney in 1934. As the member for Terrigal said, he was the son of Italian parents who came to Australia in the wake of the Great Depression. I am sure it was not easy being an Italian migrant in the 1930s, but the Paciullos saw a new horizon in Australia and a chance to work hard and make a contribution to their new country. I marvel at how many great people Australia has benefitted from because their families made that same decision to migrate from their home and come to Australia to take up the opportunities that are here for anyone who desires to access them. Today politicians are often criticised for their narrow life experience before entering the profession, but George Paciullo was different. As the son of recently arrived migrants from Calabria, Italy, he was always destined to see this country through unique eyes.

After attending public schools in Liverpool and Homebush, he signed up for three years national service in the Citizen Military Forces. He also pursued a career as a survey draftsman, working with the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service. In 1959 George was elected to Liverpool City Council, having joined the great Australian Labor Party the previous year. He served on the council for two terms from 1959 to 1971 and again after leaving Parliament. It is no stretch to say that serving the community of Liverpool was George's life's work. Whether it was fighting for a better deal for Liverpool Hospital or for improvements to local roads, George never forgot the people who put him in this place or on the council.

In 1971 an opportunity arose to stand for the State electorate of Liverpool and George was elected. In a demonstration of his ample talent, he quickly rose to the shadow Ministry. In 1976 Neville Wran won government. George was subsequently appointed Minister for Roads. He later served as Minister for Industry and Decentralisation and Minister for Small Business and Technology, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Police and Emergency Services. In politics it is so easy to get caught up in the daily battles of trench warfare. But I think it would be fair to say that all of us in our quieter moments would want it said of us upon leaving this place that we made a contribution. Nothing could be truer for George Paciullo. He made a real contribution.

George is the politician who, above all else, will be remembered for the introduction of random breath testing in New South Wales in 1982. He did not just introduce the legislation, he insisted upon it. He fought for it even when stakeholder groups were opposed and when few of his colleagues in the Wran Government were supportive because they thought it would be electoral suicide. But George Paciullo persisted because it was good public policy. He knew that it would make a difference. The road toll in those days averaged 1,200 victims a year, which is more than three times its average today. As unbelievable as it sounds, back then drink-driving was part of the culture. People went to the pub, had some beers and then got behind the wheel and drove home. It took a courageous leader such as George to say that we can live in a better society. He was able to draw a line in the sand and say that his legislation would change and save people's lives. As chairman of the Staysafe committee, he made it his mission to equip the Police Force with random breath testing units. It is fair to say that campaign was not easy.

As legend has it, an irate publican rang the Government and requested a photo of George so that he could put it on a dart board and his customers could throw darts at it. Nonetheless, a three-year trial of random breath testing began in December 1982 and, as we all know, it would eventually become law and save many lives. Police estimate that about 7,000 lives have been saved by its introduction—probably more if we account for population growth and the number of cars now on the road. It was George Paciullo who banged down doors to make it happen. George passed away in October from complications related to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma—where else but in Liverpool Hospital. George was always passionate about people in Liverpool not having to travel all the way to Sydney to receive top-quality care. I was moved to read in the *Liverpool Leader* the words his son, Murray, spoke at George's funeral service. He said:

About 10 days before he died, I told him I was very, very proud of him and all he achieved in life and I was really glad he was my dad. He said: thank you.

But the very last thing he said before he died was: Don't worry.

I think anyone who has ever lost a parent would identify with that scenario and those simple, beautiful words. George Paciullo was a humble man. He was not given to extravagant shows of emotion, but he showed his caring and his dedication through his actions, particularly his actions in this place. Today we honour George Paciullo's service to the Labor Party but, more importantly, George Paciullo's commitment to the Liverpool community and to the people of New South Wales. On behalf of the Labor Party in New South Wales, I pass on my condolences to his surviving family and friends, including his son, Murray, daughter-in-law, Michelle, and grandchildren Chelsea and Will, who are in the gallery today. I want them to know that, just like them, this side of the House will always be very proud of their father and their grandfather. He was a great Labor man—a man who made a huge contribution to our community, to road safety and to the people of New South Wales.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.51 p.m.]: As Leader of the House I also express my condolences to George Paciullo's family and extend my sympathy to all the community, who will no longer benefit from the great man that was George Paciullo. I have been in this place quite a few years and I met George Paciullo on a number of occasions. I acknowledge the words of the Leader of the Opposition, but I point out that members on both sides knew George Paciullo and will miss him. He had great respect from both sides of the House, and that is because he was a man who gave respect to both sides of the House.

Last time I saw George Paciullo was in 2000, and I remember it well. I was a former chairman of the Staysafe committee, and I was invited to a function to celebrate approximately 20 years of its contributions to the community. George attended the function also and I had a chat with him. He was a very unassuming man. His demeanour in this place and the way in which he conducted his affairs as a chairman of Staysafe appealed to me. When I became chairman of Staysafe I was presented with George Paciullo's first report, which was entitled "Alcohol, other drugs and road safety: First Report". When I read it I was fascinated by his approach; at the time I was trying to work out how I would approach being chairman of Staysafe. At page 4 of the report he said:

As Chairman of STAYSAFE, I adopted the policy from the outset to conduct its affairs on a bi-partisan basis. The nature of the subject ensured there was no conflict of party philosophy. In this regard I acknowledge the positive response of all Committee members during deliberations.

He set the scene, and from that time onwards that was the way Staysafe was conducted—in fact, it was recognised worldwide as being the model of a parliamentary committee. There were never any politics on that committee. Indeed, the Labor members I worked with on that committee, as well as the Coalition members, were very conscious of the George Paciullo way of doing business and that was the way we conducted ourselves on that committee. Minister Hartcher noted some comments George Paciullo made on his resignation, but I want to take a slightly different tack and read the part of his resignation statement that interests me most. He said:

But nothing has given me more pleasure than to feel the public had a general faith in me, recognising I was a politician who put their interests above any other consideration. For me that is the ultimate reward.

That again is evidence of the essential nature of George Paciullo. He was here for the good of the public, he was here for the good of the community, and every endeavour reflected that. He also said in that same resignation statement:

Through our team approach I made many firm friendships which I hope will be lasting ones.

And they were. In fact, sitting in the Speaker's gallery today is Lisa Mullins—who was Lisa Carty in those days. She worked for George Paciullo when he was the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. She is now working for the Government—many honourable professional people work for governments on either side of politics. The words she has written for me reflect George's approach to his team. She wrote:

George is remembered by his staff as a very warm and wonderful boss. He kept in touch with many of his staff, there were many dinners together and many staff attended his funeral—even after these years the bond was very strong.

I have the greatest respect for George Paciullo. I think if this place had more George Paciullos the reputation of politicians would be far greater than it is today. He was a man of courage, he was a man of conviction, he was a man of commitment and he was a man of care. That was George Paciullo.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [3.56 p.m.]: Speaking on a condolence motion is always a little bittersweet: there is a bitterness about the passing of someone but there is the opportunity to remember positive things and contributions that people like George Paciullo made. George was born in 1934 and, as we know, he passed away last month. In that period he was the member of Parliament for what I call and what he believed was the centre of the universe—Liverpool. He was the member for Liverpool from 1971 to 1988. In fact, he was a predecessor of mine and our terms are separated by only a short period when Peter Anderson was the member. After 11 years in this place George attained ministerial rank and held a range of portfolios—Roads, Industry and Decentralisation, Small Business and Technology, Consumer Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs, and Police and Emergency Services. He resigned in 1988, which led to what is known in Australian Labor Party folklore as Liverpool Mark I.

George returned to politics subsequently at Liverpool council. He had been an alderman from 1959 to 1970 and mayor in 1968 and in 1969. He then returned as councillor and mayor in 1994 until 2003. Much has been said about George's contributions as chair of the Staysafe committee and to random breath testing. I will not go into that because it has been talked about today and it has been talked about quite significantly in the media. There is another aspect of his ministerial work and parliamentary work that I will comment on that has largely escaped unnoticed in all the media commentary. I must preface it by saying that he and I were very different; we were of a different generation. George joined the Labor Party the year after I was born; he was in the Right and I was in the Left—and I did not play cards on a Friday night, which is of significance in Liverpool. He was an activist in the Right in the local area—a factional warrior—and I was the equivalent on the Left.

Despite all of our differences, one of the issues that he was involved in which I was particularly attracted to was Aboriginal affairs. At a time when it was not easy and it was not common, he had an understanding of Aboriginal affairs and a passion for Aboriginal people that, I am sad to say, has not been recognised in all the

commentary following his death. He was a member of the Keane Committee, which gave rise to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act—still the most beneficial piece of land rights legislation in the country. His work on that committee was significant in that regard and he subsequently became a Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Despite what may otherwise be described as our differences, I had immense sympathy with the views he held. Indeed we were very close on a whole range of those types of issues. It is perhaps a regrettable comment on the manner in which the media covers these matters that that has not received the coverage it should have received. In a sense, George was way ahead of his time on those issues. I am delighted to have this opportunity to make that point.

Obviously, George and I had most dealings locally in relation to internal Australian Labor Party politics. I joined the Liverpool branch of the Australian Labor Party in 1983. Several years later there was a vacancy for the position of secretary-treasurer of the Liverpool branch. I nominated for that position and so did Mark Latham. George supported Mark, and almost inevitably Mark won quite handsomely. There are two things to say about that: the first is that subsequently both George and the rest of the Australian Labor Party regretted their preference for Latham over me. The second is that it was the last internal Australian Labor Party ballot I lost in Liverpool. My wife is now secretary of the Liverpool branch. It is certainly true that George could gather immense support and popularity.

When George decided that he wanted to return as mayor in the 1990s, he told people he would do so only if there was a demonstration of support. That demonstration of support was very graphically shown when one night at the Calabro hall in Lurnea 497 people appeared spontaneously to join the Labor Party. I think that is the record for the largest number of people applying to join a Labor Party branch at any one time in the history of Australia. Whatever else may be said, that says something significant about George's capacity to gather numbers, to gather support and to persuade people to support him. Having said that, it is also worth noting that within a few years after that, he and I were issuing joint how-to-vote tickets for Australian Labor Party preselections.

George understood that having a factional fight is not an end in itself; that we do not have a factional fight just to win the fight, we need to do something with it. Frankly, unlike some other people on the Right in south-western Sydney, George understood that there was something larger than just having a factional battle. While this language perhaps is not often referred to publicly, it is a tribute to George and to his larger view that he did not play the low-rent factional game that some other people played in other parts of south-western Sydney. He also had a great belief in supporting sitting members and consistently rebuffed some silly attempts to undermine people such as me. Obviously, for that I am very grateful.

The other point I make about George is that there were not a whole lot of blokes with a non Anglo-Saxon name whose parents got off the boat and yet were elected to municipal councils in 1959, and there were not too many of those who became mayor in 1968. That says two quite important things: it says something about the nature of Liverpool, its openness, and its capacity to deal with a whole range of cultures—and as I keep saying in speeches, Liverpool probably does not celebrate that as well as it should—but it also says something about George. Yes, it is significant that that happened in Liverpool, but it would not have happened unless someone like George had been involved. I think there are some broad lessons about the nature of south-western Sydney and Liverpool that can come out of George's achievements at that point in our history. I think it really says something quite significant. I conclude my tribute by extending my condolences to Murray, Michelle and their children. George will be sorely missed.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [4.03 p.m.]: I join with other members in expressing my condolences and sympathies to Murray and Michelle, their children, Chelsea and Will, and other family members, Robert and John, on the passing of George Paciullo. Like many current and former members of this House, I joined George's family and members of the community at the funeral service at the All Saints Catholic Service, Liverpool, on 17 October. The service was fittingly a very moving one, and there were some lovely tributes. George's record of public service has been spoken about, published in newspapers and described particularly well in the eulogy at the church by Lidia Kaban. I was impressed with references by Father Philip and others to George's connections with and his love of the city of Liverpool. For many decades, Liverpool has been called home by so many members of the Italian community, especially after World War II.

Being born in Liverpool and living at Canley Heights, as a young boy I spent many days visiting Liverpool. My father had a shop at 302 Hume Highway and, unfortunately, prior to the TAB he used to put a bet on at the back of a shop just up the road, and he always backed the slower horses. He also did some gambling at nearby establishments. The Liverpool shopping centre was modest compared to all the other shopping centres, such as the big Westfield centres that exist now. The main street of Liverpool is now a mall and carries light traffic, but in those days it was the main arterial road and formed part of the Hume Highway. Stores like Coles, where I first bought Spiral notebooks, Knock and Kirby's, the Rural Bank, and the Ampol truck stop opposite

the old cemetery are all places of which I have fond memories. They represent a time and a place where George Paciullo and his family started public life. I am talking about the fifties and sixties—a time of dusty small roads and many larger unsealed roads, and sanitary service toilets. I first saw a flushing toilet in Liverpool and marvelled then at their efficiency—perhaps I still do. It was an incredible era.

I was elected to this House in October 1983. At that time, George already was an established and well-respected member of Parliament. Rex Jackson was the Minister for Corrective Services. I was to introduce Rex Jackson at an opening ceremony for the Parklea jail, but he had to resign, which created a Cabinet vacancy. Perhaps that is a story for another time. As I was settling into a new office, George was being elected by caucus to a ministerial position—an appointment that I recall many people regarded as being long overdue. In relation to George's parliamentary career, there are quite a few points that one could talk about. Virtually all aspects of his career have been mentioned at least in part today. The first I would like to mention is a story that has stuck to him—that he did not vote for himself in the caucus ballot following the election of the Wran Government in 1976. The story has become folklore. It is an exorable part of the history of George Paciullo, but of course it is incorrect. George did vote for himself.

Let me explain: if caucus elects, say, 20 Cabinet members—the number of Cabinet members in 1976 escapes me because I was nowhere near the place—then one to 20 is a primary vote. In 1984, when I was voting in Cabinet, we all agreed to put, for example, Peter Cox as number one, and then we voted according to our factional ticket. That was the situation when George Paciullo was a candidate. He voted for himself in the one to 20, but by arrangement with everybody he did not give himself the number one vote. When the count was completed, George had a number of votes that was equal to Rex Jackson's votes. Both had one number one vote in the whole ballot. George lost the ballot on a draw from the hat. It is believed, and has been committed to writing, that the number one vote George received was from Neville Wran, who wanted George in his first Cabinet because of the role George had played in the lead-up to the 1976 elections.

Another story that has been mentioned on at least one web page is that George ran for the leadership of the Labor Party in 1988 and was defeated by Bob Carr. That is not true. Following the 1988 election, Barrie Unsworth first indicated that he would stay on as leader, but then changed his mind. A number of candidates were discussed in the corridors of Parliament House and around Sydney, including George Paciullo, Laurie Brereton and a number of others and eventually, of course, Bob Carr. Had Laurie nominated for the leadership, I believe that George also would have nominated. However, when Bob Carr indicated that he would nominate, George knew that he would not have the numbers.

I was at a meeting with George and others at the home of Janice Crosio following that election when George said that as Carr was the leader he would not be running, nor would he seek a position in the shadow Cabinet. He left the press to speculate until the caucus meeting was held to select not only the new leader but also the new shadow Cabinet team, and then he made his announcement. They are two stories about George Paciullo's career that have been somewhat exaggerated. In the first place, he did not run and was not defeated by Bob Carr in a caucus ballot. That is not true: he did not nominate. In the second place, of course he gave himself a primary vote in the 1976 post-election ballot.

Previous speakers have mentioned random breath testing. If ever a new policy attracted criticism, both political and personal, it was that one which changed the way we all thought about drinking and driving. On the one hand, George's determination cost him popularity in caucus, combined with the fact that he was assisting the Premier on matters during the late 1970s. That is probably the reason it was a few years before he made it to Cabinet. On the other hand, as has been mentioned, he saved untold thousands of lives. Few members can say that they were responsible for a policy that saved so many lives as George Paciullo could have said about his policy of random breath testing. One fact that may have been lost in time is that George was a very successful police Minister. I recall in the 1980s when I was a backbencher in this place many police, Liberal voters in particular, would be critical of the Labor Government, the former Attorney General Frank Walker, even the Premier Neville Wran and to a lesser extent Barry Unsworth, but they would say without reservation that George Paciullo was their best ever Minister for Police. In my area he gave us a 24-hour station at Riverstone.

I recall in 1984 welcoming George and his wife, Jan, to a Tony Johnson testimonial dinner at the bowling club at Riverstone. In 1988 he said he hoped I would become the shadow Minister for Police and generously offered his assistance if that ever came about. Of course, it did not. George was an honest and decent man who did his job to the highest standard. He was proud of his achievements, and even more proud of his family. I am proud to say I had the opportunity to be a member of this House when George was a member and I was able to work with and know him. Vale, George. I offer my deepest sympathy to all his family and I look forward to a cup of tea with them following this condolence motion.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [4.11 p.m.]: Like many people I was saddened to hear of the passing of a great servant of the State of New South Wales, particularly south-west Sydney, and a dear friend of mine, the Hon. George Paciullo, OAM. The Hon. George Paciullo was born on 20 February 1934 in Sydney, son of Sisto Paciullo, market gardener, and his wife, Immacolata, who migrated from Calabria to Australia during the Great Depression. George was educated at Liverpool Primary School and Homebush Boys High School. He married Janette Ruth Blinman on 3 November 1964 and they had a son, Murray, who is here today. My deepest sympathy goes to George's son, Murray, daughter-in-law, Michelle, and her father, Robert Hamblon, as well as to his grandchildren, Chelsea and Will, and George's brother, John.

George's contribution to both this State and his local area is immeasurable. His local popularity was cultivated through hard work and strong leadership. Elected to Liverpool City Council at the age of 24, George would become the city's youngest ever mayor in 1967 while he continued to work as a draftsman with the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service. Following the retirement of Jack Mannix, George was preselected for the seat of Liverpool in 1971, easily winning, and he commenced a distinguished parliamentary career. George was appointed shadow Minister for Sport, Recreation and Tourism in 1973 and whilst serving in the Wran Labor Government of the 1980s George took on the very important role of Minister for Roads. Throughout his ministerial career George served as the Minister for Roads, the Minister for Industry and Decentralisation, the Minister for Small Business and Technology, the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, providing honesty and leadership in government.

George will be remembered for being the member who implemented random breath testing in the State of New South Wales, a very important step in our ongoing battle with drink-driving and in ensuring public safety. A controversial policy at the time, random breath testing was immensely unpopular with the wider community. George copped abuse from many quarters, some of it from his own branch members. At Mount Pritchard, club members would say that police were in the car park putting stickers on car headlights so that when they left the club the police could pick them out for a breath test. George had to cop the criticism, but he argued that random breath testing was a great initiative for New South Wales—and in the long run it was. Random breath testing began in 1982, when George was chair of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Road Safety. Thankfully for the community, George's strength and bravery to push random breath testing through the Parliament have resulted in fewer deaths and less carnage and have made our roads a safer place. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported in 2007 that an estimated 20,000 lives had been saved thanks to the introduction of random breath testing. That is because of my great friend George Paciullo.

George's contribution to New South Wales cannot be underestimated. In 1989 George retired from State politics, eventually making a return to Liverpool City Council where he served as the longest serving mayor from 1993 to 2004. Amongst his many achievements and awards, George was awarded the Order of Australia in 1999, the Centenary Medal in 2003, the Companion of the Order of Liverpool in 1990, the Order of the President of the Solitary Star of Italy in 1972, and life membership of the Australian Labor Party in 2002.

In the late 1960s, when George was the mayor of Liverpool, I worked for Prospect Electricity, which had a depot just behind the council chambers at Liverpool. We worked in gangs of three. Three guys would be assigned to a truck and would go out and do electrical work. One day the engineer told us to go and fix the lights in the mayor's office. We had never been in the mayor's office before and we looked at all the paraphernalia on the walls. One of the guys shut the door and behind the door were the mayoral gown and chains. I was the youngest of the three and the other guys said I should put on the gown and chains. I did not want to do it in case I was caught, but the others locked the door so that we could take our time. I put on the gown and chains and had a quick look in the mirror. In those days we did not have mobile phones with cameras so we were unable to take a photo. Nobody else ever knew about it.

I related this story at functions and many years later, when telling George, I said it was an omen that I would become mayor and a State member of Parliament. I never really believed that I would follow in George's footsteps to this House, but I did. George said on many occasions that immigrants and refugees, as we were, could make it if they wanted. We both wanted to make it and we did. I thank George very much for the opportunity to go to his office and, unbeknown to him, try on his gown and chains to see if they fit. Many years later I became mayor of Fairfield and the State member for Cabramatta.

I would like to speak briefly of a dark time for George Paciullo. It relates to the Oasis affair. The Oasis was a development on the corner of Memorial Avenue and the Hume Highway in Liverpool. It was going to be a great legacy from George to Liverpool and the people of Liverpool. As has been said by other members, George Paciullo was a man of great honesty and transparency. George would never do anything that would in any way smear his name or the name of his family. As has been said, George loved his family and he loved Liverpool and the people of Liverpool.



When I spoke to George many years later about the Oasis project he told me that from the beginning to the end of the project there had been a partnership with the Bulldogs to undertake this great development. The Bulldogs notified the State Government and the Minister almost monthly as to the progress of the development. George said that at no time did the government of the day or anyone else tell them that the development was no good and that it should be cancelled. Eventually the project got out of hand. The Bulldogs had been paying their players over the salary cap and the money to pay them was being taken from the Oasis project.

The trouble hit the fan and the matter was referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption for investigation. The commission found no wrongdoing by George Paciullo or Liverpool City Council. No criminality or wrongdoing was attached to them. I cannot say the same for the other partners. The government of the day nevertheless held an inquiry into Liverpool City Council, which was sacked due to what was said to be incompetence and an administrator was appointed. This was a sad time for George Paciullo. It was most unfair that it happened in George's time given his service to council. I have put that on the table at this time because I know George was very upset about what happened and how it happened.

I do not have a great deal of time, so I will shorten my contribution. George Paciullo had a great love of tennis. He had a tennis court built on the block next door to his house, and he used that court for many years until he could no longer run around the court as he had done. George eventually demolished the court and built another house. I extend to his son, Murray, and his extended family my deepest sympathy on the passing of George Paciullo. Murray, your Dad was a great man. I had known George since 1972. He was my mentor. I could ring George and say, "George, what do I do in this or that circumstance?" and he would always be there, willing to help me and give me guidance. New South Wales has lost one of its great servants, and south-west Sydney has lost a great hero. George, my dear friend, rest in peace.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [4.20 p.m.]: I will be very brief in extending my condolences to the Paciullo family. I was saddened to hear of the passing of the Hon. George Paciullo, OAM. George was greatly respected by his colleagues and those throughout the community. He was loved and known for being an all-round great man who was a loyal servant not only to the great State of New South Wales but also to our local communities. George grew up in Casula and was from a working-class background. He embraced his Calabrian heritage and always remained firmly grounded in his local community. His roots were clearly evident at his memorial service at All Saints Church, Liverpool, with the presence of the Caribinieri, an official guard of honour bestowed upon the altar by two official Italian guards. George's friends and his Italian community friends, the paesani, were present, as were many religious associations to honour their proud son. It was pleasing to see all the religious associates there, but particularly his great mates from the poker club.

George was a man who commanded a great deal of respect throughout numerous communities. He will always be remembered for the legacies he left behind. Some of those have been mentioned in the debate on this motion today. It was true testament to his character and his standing within the community that all the different religious and ethnic organisations were present at his memorial service to show their respect for this wonderful and truly remarkable man. This shines true to demonstrate how well respected and loved he was in our community. My sincerest condolences go out to George's family. We have lost a dedicated, passionate, loyal and iconic man who maintained a very strong bond with not only his family and friends but also local residents with whom he cultivated these strong ties throughout his many years serving the community. He will be missed. Rest in peace, George. May perpetual light shine upon you.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [4.22 p.m.]: I would like to make a brief contribution to this motion and pass on my condolences to the Paciullo family. George was a humble man from Casula who could be seen on his bicycle to a point near the end of his life. I was a doctor at Mount Druitt Hospital emergency department the night that random breath testing was introduced. It was as if somebody had turned off a tap. After nights of violence and blood, that day I saw two little kids with fever at 10 o'clock. The violence had been stopped. George Paciullo's bravery in pursuing random breath testing has saved enough lives to fill the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It is such a great legacy and such a great contribution. Vale, George Paciullo.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Routine of Business**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [4.24 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the conclusion of the consideration of the Forestry Bill prior to the commencement of the discussion on the 10,000 signature petition on the Randwick Education and Health Specialisation Centre, presented by the member for Ku-ring-gai.

The Government wants to deal today with the Forestry Bill 2012, which has been transmitted to this House from the Legislative Council. Generally, at 4.30 p.m. business of the House would be interrupted to debate the petition that is noted on today's business paper. I have moved a suspension of standing and sessional orders to permit debate on the Forestry Bill to continue to its conclusion. In doing so, I note that the only Government business to be concluded today is the Forestry Bill. There will be, almost inevitably, a division at the conclusion of debate on the second reading of the bill, so members should be aware of the need for their presence at the conclusion of the debate. Hopefully, the debate can be dealt with quickly because I expect members of the public to be present shortly for the discussion on the petition.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**FORESTRY BILL 2012****Second Reading**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [4.25 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Forestry Bill 2012 will establish the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales as a State-owned corporation; update and modernise the previous Forestry Act; make consequential amendments to a number of associated Acts; and repeal the Timber Marketing Act. The establishment of the Forestry Corporation as a State-owned corporation will result in an improved governance structure for the business. The corporation will remain in government ownership. The change in its governance structure, however, will give it a renewed focus on its core business of managing the State's timber resource and sustainably harvesting timber. In this way the bill will benefit the taxpayers of New South Wales, who can expect a better return on the community's assets. While the provisions of the Forestry Act 1916 have been updated, modernised and modified to reflect that the Forestry Corporation will be a State-owned corporation rather than a statutory authority, the regulatory requirements on forestry operations have not been substantively changed by the bill. The bill also does not change the ability of the community to access and use the State forest estate.

I am not going to repeat all that was said about the bill by the Minister for Roads and Ports in the other House. However, I will briefly address two minor amendments made to the bill in the other place. Clause 10 of the bill sets out the objectives of the Forestry Corporation. I note that the Government accepted minor Opposition amendments to the wording of two of the objectives of the corporation in the other place, which relate to having regard to the interests of the community in which the corporation operates and contributing towards regional development and decentralisation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.28 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Forestry Bill 2012. I lead for the Opposition in this place. The shadow Minister with carriage of this matter is the Hon. Steve Whan in the other place. The Opposition opposes the bill. The bill is expressed to be an Act to provide for the dedication, management and use of State forests and other Crown timber land for forestry and other purposes; to constitute the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales as a statutory State-owned corporation and to specify its objectives and functions; and to repeal the Forestry Act 1916 and the Timber Marketing Act 1977. Other comparatively minor amendments are involved. As indicated by the Minister who moved the second reading of the bill, amendments were moved by the Opposition in the other place, and those amendments were adopted. The amendments included adding two new paragraphs, (b) and (d), to clause 10 (1):

- (b) to have regard to the interests of the community in which it operates,
- (d) to contribute towards regional development and decentralisation.

The Hon. Steve Whan in the other place set out at length the Opposition's position. Our core position is that this bill purports to convert Forests NSW to the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales. We would not necessarily oppose the creation of a State-owned corporation, but we believe the bill is setting it up for inevitable privatisation. On that basis we oppose the bill.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.29 p.m.]: I support the Forestry Bill 2012 in my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources, the chair of the NSW Forests Industry Taskforce, and chair of the NSW Land and Water Advisory Panel. My response to the rot spoken by Opposition members in opposing this bill is that for 16 years they gave the forestry industry in this State a wedgie, to use the vernacular. They let the State's forestry industry fall to an unsustainable timber supply and entered into contracts that would make one's eyes roll to the back of one's skull. The Labor Government did nothing to support jobs in the associated industries, such as mills and transport. Its running of the forestry economy added to the operational costs of anything forestry.

For all that lack of effort and support for the forestry industry it should stand condemned. State Forests provides significant benefits to the people of New South Wales: renewable timber supplies, creation of jobs in regional areas, injection of money into our economy and an environment for a variety of recreational activities. Forested lands cover 26.5 million hectares of the land mass of New South Wales—roughly one-third of the State. The timber industry contributes \$1 billion to the New South Wales economy every year. The Forestry Bill 2012 is a great initiative from the Minister for Primary Industries. I commend her efforts and those of NSW Forests. I support the bill.

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [4.32 p.m.]: My electorate has an important timber mill at Tumbarumba operated by Hyne, the largest privately owned timber company in Australia. This mill is part of the wider business that has become Australia's largest exporter of Australian-grown plantation softwood, exporting between 250 and 300 containers of timber product each month. In 2001 Hyne acquired the Tumbarumba sawmill from Boral Limited. Following a substantial high-level upgrade to the plant in 2003-2004, the Hyne Mill at Tumbarumba has become the largest softwood mill in Australia, using the latest technology to process 900,000 cubic metres of radiata sawlog per annum. This facility also produces Hyne T2 Blue, a termite-resistant framing material for the construction industry. The mill is the region's major employer. Locally based transport companies have contracts to transport timber. I refer to businesses such as Greenfreight, which established a local depot at Rosewood. Many indirect jobs rely on the Hyne mill.

Members will recall the incentives introduced in this year's New South Wales budget to stimulate new house purchases, thereby invigorating the construction industry, which in turn relies on and benefits the forestry industry. The Softwoods Working Group meets in our region. This group is a gathering of timber growers, transporters and millers on the industry side, with representatives from local government, regional development boards and Forests NSW, which will become the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales. The Softwoods Working Group deals with industry issues such as road networks and funding. Formed in 1987 under the auspices of Regional Development Australia, the Softwoods Working Group is operated by Murray Now. At nearby Tumut is the Visy pulp and paper mill, which produces cardboard and packing materials. Albury has the Norske Skog factory, which produces newsprint paper. The annual production capacity of the Norske Skog mill is around 274,000 tonnes, which delivers 40 per cent of newsprint and related paper grades used in Australia.

The Albury mill is the leader in the use of recycled fibre, which accounts for up to 55 per cent of raw materials. Each year the mill recycles around 160,000 tonnes of old newspapers and magazines, supplemented with plantation radiata pine. In short, the trails of the forestry industry crisscross the Albury electorate, involving many businesses and supporting large numbers of workers and their families. Forestry—and its management—is of considerable concern and importance to Albury and its economy. Management of our nation's forestry resources has not always been successful. Indeed, many Australians have felt the financial sting caused by the collapse of various managed forestry investment schemes with their reliance on tax breaks and long-time frames. Forestry resources deserve better management. They face specific challenges, such as fire control, and maintenance and design of burning-off programs, and they deal with feral animals and myriad environmental concerns.

Forests also are valued for their recreational contribution to the broader community. State forests are used for bushwalking, camping, trail bike riding and four-wheel drive activities. This means that State forests are a meeting place of diverse and competing claims and a source of income for the State to use in funding hospitals, education, law enforcement et cetera, as well as being home to native species and flora and fauna, which deserve our protection and support. With so many different voices calling for a stake in the State's forests it is sensible and prudent to update and upgrade the governance structures that control these assets and determine the conditions of our access to these precious places. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [4.35 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. The Forestry Bill 2012 will establish the Forestry Corporation as a statutory State-owned corporation, resulting in a more appropriate governance structure for the business in which the Forestry Corporation, under the direction of a skilled commercial board, will have a renewed focus on its core business of managing the State's timber resource and sustainably harvesting timber. This will help to improve the commercial performance of the Forestry Corporation and allow for a better return on the State's timber assets. The bill also will update and modernise the provisions of the 1916 Forestry Act to bring it into the twenty-first century. While the provisions of the 1916 Act have been modified to reflect the change of NSW Forests to a State-owned corporation, the regulatory requirements on forestry operations have not been substantively changed. The bill continues to allow for the use of State forests for recreation and other non-forestry uses by providing for the management of those users of State forests by land managers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 56**

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

**Noes, 21**

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

**Question 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.**

**RANDWICK EDUCATION AND HEALTH SPECIALISATION CENTRE****Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [4.46 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak to this petition containing the signatures of more than 10,000 residents of New South Wales outlining their concerns that over-development will occur at the Randwick Education and Health Specialisation Centre. Randwick City Council was requested some years ago to consider what planning controls would be needed to address the future needs of the Prince of Wales Hospital complex, the University of New South Wales and Randwick TAFE. The precinct was identified by the previous State Government as the Randwick Education and Health Specialisation Centre. The council set about a long and exhaustive consultation process with the community residing within a one kilometre radius of the hospitals and university. Many of these petitioners made submissions during the council's consultation process, and I am pleased to say that their concerns were acknowledged by the very professional staff at Randwick council, who ultimately recommended that very few changes be made to existing zonings.

I am proud of the part I played as a Randwick city councillor in ensuring that the new draft Randwick local environment plan has only very modest changes to the zonings and reflects the wishes of those who signed this petition. The intense study of this area of Randwick has demonstrated that, with the exception of a few sites along High Street and Belmore Road, this area of Randwick is already appropriately zoned to accommodate the future growth needs of these important institutions. Unfortunately, at times the consultation process became somewhat confusing for many residents as at around the same time the community consultation was taking place the owners of the Newmarket stables complex signalled their intention to redevelop their five hectare site adjacent to the hospitals. This petition does not specifically address the Newmarket stables proposal, and the draft Randwick local environment plan has recommended that no changes be made to the zoning of this site.

However, local residents remain concerned that the current rezoning and development proposal for the site put forward by the owners of Newmarket stables will have a major impact on the amenity of their homes, their suburb and its public spaces and will cause major disruption to traffic flows on nearby already congested streets. I have initiated a petition calling on the consent authority for this planning proposal, the Sydney East Joint Regional Planning Panel, to heed the concerns of residents and guarantee that the redevelopment of this site is in keeping with the surrounding neighbourhood and adds to, rather than diminishes, the character of the area. Nine-storey tower blocks are not the solution for this site, and I call on the developer to amend its plans to ensure that the heritage values of the Struggletown Heritage Conservation Area are not compromised.

The size of the petition we are debating today should stand as a warning to any council or government that the residents of the eastern suburbs of Sydney will not stand for any dilution of their ability to participate in and have their say about the future development of their community. Sydney is the most populous and the most favoured city in which to live in this nation. Not only do we have to ensure that sufficient new housing is built to accommodate the children of the current residents of this city as they set out on their own, but we also have to cater for the many new arrivals to this country that choose Sydney as their home. But new development must not come at the expense of the character of our suburbs or to line the pockets of developers. Prior to being elected to this place I campaigned against the massive overdevelopment that was proposed by the Coogee Bay Hotel.

Despite the New South Wales Labor Party secretly giving it approval at the eleventh hour prior to the election under its grubby part 3A legislation, the new Minister for planning, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, threw out the plans and saved our village of Coogee from destruction. Finally, we have a planning Minister who, unlike his Labor Party predecessors, does not spend his days in dark corners of inner-city restaurants, cognac in one hand and a cigar in the other, dispensing development approvals for massive developments in return for a handshake and a bag full of cash for his re-election campaign. The single most important action that will improve the liveability of this part of the Coogee electorate is for the Government to adopt my proposal to construct a light rail system from the city to Kingsford and Randwick, taking thousands of cars and hundreds of buses off the roads every day. I thank the petition organisers for all their hard work in bringing to the attention of this House the very real and passionate concerns that the residents of Randwick and my electorate of Coogee have for the future of their community.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [4.51 p.m.]: The member for Coogee concluded by thanking the petitioners. The first question I have is: Where are the not less than 10,000 petitioners? There is one person in the public gallery. This is the most scantily attended discussion on a petition containing 10,000 signatures in the 18-month history of these discussions. I do believe this petition was circulated by a gentleman named Andrew Roydhouse. My assistant has spoken to his family and they have no knowledge of it being debated today. This petition concerns development in the electorate of Coogee and the member has not invited anybody into the gallery.

Andrew Roydhouse, the proponent of the petition, is not here and does not know it is being discussed. Why would he know it is being discussed unless the member for Coogee told him? The member for Coogee did not tell Mr Roydhouse because he has something to hide in respect of this petition. When talking about the proposed overdevelopment, calling on the developer to behave himself and calling on the joint regional planning panel to do the right thing, the member for Coogee failed to tell the House that the power resides on that side of the House to do what the petitioners are requesting. The power resides with the Government to do exactly what these petitioners are calling for.

We are dealing with two species of development here. The first is in relation to what the member for Coogee called the Inglis site, which is currently zoned 2A. The developer wanted to erect eight- or nine-storey towers on that site. Randwick City Council did the right thing and resolved that the site not be rezoned. What happened then? The Coalition Government resolved to accept a proposal for rezoning. That rezoning application is currently before the joint regional planning panel. The Minister for Planning, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, is the consent authority. If the member for Coogee speaks in reply, instead of grandstanding about Labor history and calling on the developer to refrain from maximising its returns—and who blames the developer for that—the member needs to demand of the Minister for Planning that consent for the rezoning of the Inglis site be refused.

The Minister for Planning can get out his sledgehammer now and kill the rezoning application stone dead in an instant. I ask the member for Coogee to call on the Minister to stop the rezoning now. Randwick City Council has resolved in a draft local environmental plan in respect of the balance of this site regarding the health and education precinct for an increase from 12 to 15 metres. Various people have views about whether that is appropriate. Certainly the 10,000 anonymous people in the electorate of Coogee who were not notified of the discussion today—there is one person in the gallery—have no doubt about the inappropriateness of the draft local environmental plan that Randwick City Council has before it. On 12 October the Hon. Brad Hazzard wrote a letter to the Clerk of the House, as is the custom, and stated:

The draft local environmental plan is currently being assessed by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure prior to being reported to me.

When it is reported to the Minister he can resolve to refuse the local environmental plan. I want the member for Coogee to demand that the Minister not accept the local environmental plan. We will then all be happy. Send it back to Randwick City Council. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne) [4.56 p.m.]: It is in poor taste for the member for Maroubra to criticise people who have gone out of their way. This is democracy in action: more than 10,000 people signed the petition. The member cannot draw the analogy he did just because they are not in the public gallery. I draw the analogy that they are not here because they have full confidence in the representation of the member for Coogee. The Government has received a petition from more than 10,000 Randwick residents. The petition raises a number of concerns about the proposed planning controls for the Randwick council area, the potential for overdevelopment and the strain it puts on infrastructure. The petition also raises a number of other concerns about the amount of existing developments being approved in Randwick. These concerns are reflected across the State. Given the large number of signatures on the petition, these issues are clearly important to the Randwick community.

The draft Randwick local environmental plan that the council has prepared is now before the Minister. It is based on several detailed strategic planning studies that were exhibited extensively for public comment during 2011. It covered issues such as housing provision, the specialised health and education centre, and town centre controls. The draft local environmental plan is essentially a translation of the council's current local plans, and Randwick council's approach has been to retain planning and development controls similar to those that currently exist in most residential areas. Minor control changes are proposed. The draft local environmental plan was exhibited for five weeks early in 2012 as part of a comprehensive consultation process within the community.

Council held a number of public hearings in March 2012 to gauge and hear community concerns in relation to the new controls. This allowed the community a further opportunity to express its view. This is in stark contrast to the way that those opposite held public consultations when they were in Government. The concerns raised in the petition are consistent with the issues raised during the public exhibition of the draft local environmental plan. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has worked closely with Randwick City Council throughout the planning process. With regard to the new planning system, I am happy to announce that on 14 July 2012 the Government released the green paper that outlines major changes in the key areas. It is going to be difficult, but the Government is doing a great job and is consulting with the people of New South Wales to deliver a planning system that will deliver sensible infrastructure to areas that would not otherwise be considered under the current system.

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [4.59 p.m.]: This draft local environmental plan and development control plan are the result of the former Labor Government indicating that pursuant to the New South Wales Government Metropolitan Strategy (Draft)/East Regional Strategy this area be regarded as a specialist centre. It made excellent planning sense because the Prince of Wales Hospital campus is one of the finest hospitals in the world. The former Labor Government knew that that Randwick area should be a centre of excellence. Streets like High Street were utilised for medical establishments. The strategy of the former Labor Government was to establish a specialised centre, but it has become a medical centre with ample commercial space for medical specialties but with blocks of flats like dog boxes thrown in. They just cannot help themselves. That is what the 10,000 petitioners—many from my area—have taken issue with. The people in Kensington and Kingsford are sick and tired of the overdevelopment in this particular area, of the streets being full of cars, of shoddy developers and of shocking blocks of flats that were built in the Askin days.

What is the position of the Torgs in this regard? The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure thinks that this area should have affordable housing for the community, and he considers that to be minor. He does not live in The Spot. He does not live in Randwick. He does not live in Kensington or Kingsford. The only time he is south of the harbour is when he comes into this place. The member for Coogee, who is a member of the Government, can tell the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure to call in this development control plan and say no to flats, say no to dog boxes. Say no, because the people in the electorate of Coogee have had enough. Listen to the 10,000 people who have signed this petition. The gridlock that is being created by overdevelopment in this area and traffic around the University of New South Wales is oppressive.

**Mr Bruce Notley-Smith:** Look at the blocks under you in Botany.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Look at the blocks of flats in your particular area; they are coming out of your ears. You sat there for years on the council allowing all these three-storey—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order!

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Of course, the people are screaming.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! I call the member for Coogee to order.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** They are screaming because they cannot get to the hospital and they cannot get to the university. They cannot get anywhere in the electorate of Coogee.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! I call the member for Drummoyne to order.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The people of Coogee thought they had elected someone who was going to represent them. I urge the member to get his Minister to call in the local environmental plan. Get him to exercise the powers under section 53, section 54 and section 55 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. I know the Minister cannot read it, but members opposite can. The member should not stand in this House on behalf of the residents of Coogee and sign petitions when he has the legal power to fix it. The plan has been on exhibition. The member should consult the people of Coogee, the people of Heffron and the people of Maroubra. The petition has been signed by more than 10,000 people. [*Time expired.*]

**Discussion concluded.**

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS STATEMENTS**

### **HIROY MAGITA SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [5.04 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of members a significant achievement on behalf of the State by a 10-year-old girl who lives in Rosebery in my electorate. Hiroy Magita is in the public gallery with her mother, Norii, and her father, Uki. Hiroy has represented the State in the School Sport Australia Swimming Championships, which were held from 28 July to 3 August 2012 at Homebush. Hiroy represented this State in the breaststroke leg of the 200 metre medley relay, the 50 metre breaststroke, the 50 metre butterfly and the 100 metre breaststroke. She came third in both the 50 metre breaststroke and the 100 metre breaststroke final and she came fourth in the 50 metre butterfly final. Hiroy, who attends SCEGGS Darlinghurst and lives in Rosebery, trains six times a week. What she has

achieved on behalf of this State is significant. Not only has she represented this State with distinction but she was awarded the Australian sportswoman award at the end of the championship, a prestigious award that acknowledges athletes who have participated with distinction. In addition, Hiroy was recognised by managers and officials for her outstanding integrity, sportswomanship and fair play throughout the event.

Hiroy not only succeeds in swimming at such a tender age she is also a talented musician. At the end of term one she was awarded the most outstanding musician at SCEGGS Darlinghurst primary school—she is a talented pianist. Hiroy is a wonderful role model for all the children of our State. She has dedicated her time and has become a successful young girl in her chosen sport. She has brought great pride to her parents, to her school, and now to her State. After this House adjourns I will have the great privilege on behalf of the Government to present an award, signed by both the Premier and me, in recognition of Hiroy's State representation. On behalf of the State and on behalf of the Premier, who is unable to be here, I pay tribute to young Hiroy for her achievement.

### MARSDEN HIGH SCHOOL STORYTELLING PROGRAM

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO** (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [5.09 p.m.]: As we rapidly approach the centenary of Anzac commemorations, it is an important reminder of the imperative to ensure that the next generation understand the sacrifices made by our diggers. This understanding can be gained through textbook education. It can also be gained by listening firsthand to the experiences our diggers have faced. The men and women who have contributed to the service of their country have many memories to recall. The narrators were invited to recount their own experiences or the experiences of their fathers or grandfathers to the students. Jordan Amin, Mohammad Amjad, Casey Cahlin, Avnit Chand, Luke Cramp, Emily Godden, Jack Jandzio, Nina Kendall, Andrew Miguel, Ebony Orrin, Kim Simeon, Jack Willis and Yalda Yaser, students of Marsden High School, joined with the Diggers to share, to understand and to learn firsthand about the experiences. The room was emotionally charged, often with laughter and sometimes quiet reflection. The students wrote of this experience and I will read excerpts from some of their essays. Nina Kendall wrote:

He stared at us with his kind light blue eyes peering through his wide glasses that had fogged up around his pupil. His medals proud on his chest shine against his royal blue suit and although he walks with a frame it doesn't stop his humour or the sparkle in his eyes. His smile is welcoming and you couldn't help but smile back as he said to us "Why don't you lovely ladies pull up a chair?"

She continued:

The man was truly inspiring. He tells us how he trotted along with his 25 pounder by his side as he boarded many old and smelly ships to a training camp in Geraldton Western Australia. The shock on his face as we asked him what a "25 pounder" was puzzled him and made his brow crease in seriousness as he responded with, "a gun".

Jack Willis commented:

.... it was quite emotional when he was reliving the past and telling his stories to us. During the time of his service, Australia suffered a lot of casualties and he regrettably lost several friends whilst serving in Vietnam.

Jack went on to write:

Upon hearing the stories that the Veterans had to share with both me and my fellow pupils I found myself filled with nothing but gratitude. Not just for what the men sitting in front of me had done for our country but for what all soldiers, returned and serving have done and continue to do ... if it were not for the bravery and sacrifice demonstrated by our Veterans I doubt that the people of Australia would enjoy many of the liberties that many of us live out every day.

Yalda Yaser wrote:

Listening to one Digger describe the living conditions; from using a hole in the ground as a toilet then throwing smoke grenades to repel flies and insects to trekking through the dense jungle day and night with 50 kilogram packs, it was hard to imagine living through that every day.

Yalda concluded:

Overall, this whole experience of hearing first-hand stories about the Vietnam War has been invaluable and eye-opening. Learning facts and numbers in a classroom is nothing like hearing a life experience. I learnt that countless people have made sacrifices that have shaped this nation and that we should be grateful and recognize these brave heroes. I also learnt that these sacrifices should and will never be forgotten.



The art of storytelling is alive and well in Ryde and I acknowledge the support of Marsden High School Principal, Denise Lofts, and teachers Cimen Fevez, Sean van der Heide and Mamey Nakhoul. Also I recognise the assistance for promotion of the program by *The Weekly Times*, Club Ryde X and the Ryde and North Ryde RSL sub-branches. Last but not least I must thank our storytellers: Glenn Barry, Owen Bennett, Peter Colethorp, Cathy Colethorp, Elizabeth Colethorp, Janet Godsell, Ross (Rusty) Russell, Brian Swan and Bernie Cox for their willingness to share. I cannot emphasise enough that it is really important that the next generation of Australians really understand the sacrifices made by our Diggers, whether it is in the Boer War, the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean and Vietnam conflicts or in current day service. Often we talk about the liberties that we enjoy in this country and how we live in the greatest country on Earth. We live in the greatest country on Earth because we enjoy freedom—freedom that one will never find in other nations around the world. We enjoy that freedom because of the sacrifices—often, regrettably, the ultimate sacrifice—made by our Diggers.

### BAAYA YURRUNG PRESCHOOL

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [5.14 p.m.]: On Wednesday 7 November 2012 I had the pleasure of attending the naming ceremony and official opening of Baaya Yurrung preschool conducted in the local Gathang language. Baaya Yurrung means "rise above". The new preschool is in the grounds of the Manning Gardens Public School. It is significant that the name Baaya Yurrung was chosen because the children who attend the preschool and the public school come from a disadvantaged area in Taree; it is wonderful to see their achievements in rising above their difficulties. The master of ceremonies on the day was Jay Davis, who did a magnificent job. The welcome to country was delivered by Pam Saunders. The Principal, Ian Reeson, should be extremely proud of the achievements of both the school and the preschool. The Baaya Yurrung preschool and Girrawong preschool and kindergarten delighted us with a presentation of two songs in the Gathang language—*Heads and Shoulders* and *The Native Bee*. Luckily for me, after singing in their native language they then sang in English. Their singing was outstanding.

Guest speaker on the day was Melissa Buchanan, one of the parents and an educational assistant. The Manning Gardens Public School and Chatham High School traditional dance group, which is renowned for its traditional dancing, then put on a wonderful display. Also in attendance was Pastor Russell Saunders, an Aboriginal man I have known for close to 30 years. Not only is he a pastor but he is also an artist whose art is hanging in places around the world. Pastor Saunders blessed the new site and the work being undertaken at the school. It was very moving. He said his brothers were going out fishing that morning and that he was meant to go with them, but on finding out about the ceremony he gave up the fishing trip. When he realised the importance of the occasion and saw how well it was run, he agreed that the ceremony was a much higher priority than going fishing with his brothers; he said he would make it up to them later.

Next was the unveiling of the plaque by Ron Case and Pam Saunders to commemorate the importance of the day, not just of the children rising above their beginnings but, as white children and Indigenous children are involved, trying to get a connection between the communities. They are seeking a connection not only between the preschool, public school and high school children but also between all their families. It was wonderful to see so many people in attendance for the ceremony. This might not be a huge issue in Drummoyne, but it is certainly very important in the Manning Valley. I commend all the people involved in the ceremony and for putting on such a wonderful day.

### WISEMANS FERRY BMX TRACK

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.19 p.m.]: This evening I advise the House of a visit I made on Saturday 20 October to Wisemans Ferry, one of the spectacular areas of the Hawkesbury electorate, to open the new BMX bike facility located in the Wisemans Ferry Recreation Reserve. I was pleased to help provide 50-50 funding for the amount of \$20,000, together with Hornsby Shire Council, for the provision of a new BMX track at Wisemans Ferry on behalf of the young generations of keen BMX bike riders in that area. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the newly elected Mayor of Hornsby, Councillor Steve Russell, who unfortunately could not attend the opening of these facilities. However, he was ably represented on the day by Councillor Michael Hutchence, who accompanied Dana Spence from Hornsby Shire Council for the event. We were also joined by many members of the local Wisemans Ferry community, who were provided with a lovely barbecue lunch by the Wisemans Ferry Rural Fire Service. It was a wonderful community event and the new facilities have been eagerly embraced by the youth of the area.

I was pleasantly surprised on the day to meet Brett, the designer of the BMX track. I shared some fond moments with him about my past association with BMX bikes, although I had no idea anyone would even

remember that. In 1981 I worked for Competition Development, which manufactured the only true Australian-made BMX bikes known as "Quicksilver". I was astounded to be advised by Brett that Quicksilver bikes are now very sought after and expensive collectors' items, and that I and many of my past work colleagues have been immortalised on the [www.OZBMX.com](http://www.OZBMX.com) website where old-school BMX fanatics have compiled a thoroughly researched history of Quicksilver bikes and the dates of their manufacture at the old Competition Development factory at Riverstone. Mention on the site has been made of past employees such as Darrell Kendall, Mark Bradley and Dick Dykstre, who were all frame welders like me, and other employees such as Clay Holebon, Ken Mandleberg and also Steve and Jan Meadows, who were the owners of Competition Development. Darrell Kendall is now the owner of the Quicksilver BMX trademark and is proudly producing his own handmade bikes using the techniques that we used 30 years ago. The bikes are branded "TTR", which stands for "twin tube racing", a style of frame developed more than 30 years ago at Competition Development.

I thank people like my friend Chris from Goulburn and Brett who have revived some wonderful memories of this company and reminded me of the high-quality Australian products we produced more than 30 years ago that have certainly stood the test of time. All frames when produced were stamped with identification numbers, and those frames stamped with an "R" were manufactured by me. It is remarkable to see work done decades ago now in photographs on the OZBMX website. It is testament to the quality of our workmanship that literally hundreds of these old frames and bikes are popping up in backyards and garages across this country, some of which have been lovingly restored and look like they were made only yesterday. It is especially gratifying to see the famous helium chrome frames and mountain bikes that are classics of their time. Given that BMX is now a recognised Olympic sport, no doubt these memories will live on for some time. I take the opportunity to encourage the younger generations of this country to participate in BMX, which is a very healthy outdoor activity.

Following the opening of the BMX track my dear friends Lois and Bob Casserley invited me to join them for a lunch at The Retreat, which is a lovely resort located in Wisemans Ferry. The lunch was in honour of the wonderful carers in the Wisemans Ferry area. Joining a dozen of the carers at the lunch was none other than my old boss, Peter Goldstien, and his wife, Jessie. I served my welding apprenticeship with Peter in the late 1970s and he and Jessie now operate the Midway Church at South Maroota. The day was certainly full of surprises and memories. There are no greater community workers than Bob and Lois Casserley and Peter, and Jessie Goldstien, who give their all to help those less fortunate in their local area. Lois and Bob also run the Sunshine Group, which is located in Casserley Cottage—a lovely community building next door to the medical centre and named in honour of Bob and Lois, who have worked tirelessly for many years on behalf of the Wisemans Ferry community.

Lois and Bob entertained me and my wife, Wendy, until late in the afternoon with kind and generous hospitality. I again had the privilege of opening the Wisemans Ferry Artists Gallery exhibition. My good friend Tony Simpson of St Albans always kindly invites me to open this event at which local artists display some incredible paintings and sculptures made from a wide range of interesting materials. Some of the sculptures the artists have produced from old farming equipment such as stump jump ploughs are remarkable and they are certainly worth purchasing as a piece of history now remade into something spectacular. I highly recommend the Ferry Artists Gallery exhibition to anyone visiting beautiful Wisemans Ferry and thank everyone for the hospitality offered to me and to Wendy throughout the day. Wisemans Ferry is a remarkable area and a great tourist destination. It is named after Solomon Wisemans, who operated the first ferry service in the area. It is home to some fabulous old families and some lovely newcomers. It is not only a beautiful area and a great tourist destination but also has a wonderful community that I am proud to represent.

#### **ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, BANKSTOWN**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [5.24 p.m.]: I am delighted to inform the House about St Paul's Anglican Church at Bankstown. As I have previously advised the House, Bankstown is notable not only for its cultural diversity but also for its religious diversity. The people from many cultures who call Bankstown home have brought with them their various faiths to add to our religious landscape. The Bankstown Anglican community has a long history dating back to the very first years of the Bankstown settlement. Last Sunday, 11 November, St Paul's Anglican Church celebrated the centenary of its foundation. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend due to prior Remembrance Day commitments, but I have been told it was a tremendous occasion. The Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Peter Jensen, attended and gave a sermon to the packed centenary service.

St Paul's was founded in 1912, but the history of the Anglican faith in Bankstown goes back much further. The first Anglican Church in the area—St Matthews, Upper Bankstown—was opened on 6 December

1859, some 39 years before the first council chambers were constructed. The slab-hut building with a bark roof, which was located on the corner of Church Street and Liverpool Road in what is now Yagoona, stood for more than 40 years. For a time it was also Bankstown's first public school. The building was replaced in 1902 because it became clear that, with the expansion of the railway to Bankstown in 1909, the township would develop around the railway station rather than on the highway. The new site, which is towards the bottom of Chapel Road North, was at the time surrounded by open country, which is a stark contrast to the current surroundings. Of course, Chapel Road is one of the main roads in the Bankstown central business district and is home to many of our commercial buildings, Bankstown TAFE and the Roundhouse Bankstown; in future it will be home to Bankstown's central library and knowledge centre. The church is a fundamental part of the gateway to Bankstown's central business district.

The original St Paul's Church was a small timber building that still stands today. In fact, it is in the front of the present church hall located on Chapel Road. The first recorded service was a wedding that took place on 21 December 1912. Bankstown's growing population meant that a larger building was required and construction of the first part of the current church was commenced in 1938 and was completed in March 1939. However, with the outbreak of war in September 1939 all building work on the church ceased. The completion of the present church began some 20 years later in 1959 and the church was officially opened on Easter Day 1961. In 1984 the parish started its own choir school. In subsequent years it outgrew the church premises and was moved to the Uniting Church site on Liverpool Street. The school later became Bankstown Grammar School and moved to its present site in Georges Hall on the edge of Bankstown Airport. Last year it was renamed Georges River Grammar and it now has more than 800 students from kindergarten to year 12. Georges River Grammar is a great school community and one with which I have been delighted to work as the local member.

The population of Bankstown has grown and changed in the past 20 years, and the congregation comprises people of many nationalities. It includes long-term local residents and many from other cultures who have made Australia home. Alongside the two English-speaking congregations there is a Mandarin congregation led by Reverend Raymond Leung and a Vietnamese congregation lead by Reverend Vinh Pham. The congregation continues the tradition of preaching a Christian gospel. However, St Paul's also has a great community outreach program and it serves the local community by providing English classes, a mother's support group and facilities for numerous community organisations. The church hall is also made available as a polling booth for Federal, State and local government elections, so I know it well.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Archdeacon Geoff Huard for the spiritual guidance and leadership that he provides to the entire St Paul's parish and for the great work he does in my local community. I also acknowledge Reverend Arthur Rossiter, who served at St Paul's for many years. Archdeacon Huard told me that his goal is to continue to build the local congregation and to reach out to Bankstown's diverse community. As funds permit, the church is also upgrading facilities and amenities. I wish Archdeacon Huard and the congregation all the very best for the future.

### **SYDNEY FISH MARKET BLESSING OF THE FLEET**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne) [5.29 p.m.]: Last weekend I had the pleasure of speaking at the annual Blessing of the Fleet at the Sydney Fish Markets. I take this opportunity to draw to the attention of the House the importance of encouraging the traditions of our multicultural society. The Blessing of the Fleet is a wonderful annual event and a great opportunity for Sydneysiders and tourists to learn a bit more about the traditions of the Italian community and its connections to the fishing industry. If members were to attend the Blessing of the Fleet they would be forgiven for thinking they had just arrived in Calabria rather than the middle of Blackwattle Bay in downtown Sydney. The place is transformed, with colourful trumpeters heralding the start of the event and strong, healthy fishermen holding aloft a statue of the Madonna herself. That is right: the Madonna arrived at the Sydney Fish Markets last Sunday. In truth, it was an exact replica of the one that washed up on a beach in Bagnara Calabria 220 years ago.

Santa Maria di Porto Salvo—literally St Mary of Safe Ports—is the protector of all seafarers, specifically all fishermen. She is very much part of Calabria's history, culture and tradition. The birthplace of many of the Sydney fleet's fishermen and their families, Bagnara Calabria has long venerated Santa Maria di Porto Salvo. It is now an annual cultural event on the Sydney calendar with the Blessing of the Fleet. At this year's ceremony an exact replica of the Calabrian statue was present at the Blessing of the Fleet for the first time. Sam Bagnato, one of my constituents from Waremba, was not only instrumental in organising the sculpture of the replica but also oversaw the statue's permanent installation at its home at St Martha's Catholic Church, Strathfield, earlier this year.

At last Sunday's ceremony Father Christopher Fletcher travelled with the statue from St Martha's to the fish market. At 9.00 a.m. the Madonna took her place at the front of a fishing vessel and set sail with the rest of the flotilla around Blackwattle Bay. It was a moving ceremony. The fleet was later blessed by Bishop Comensoli, and prayers and blessings in Italian and English echoed through the fish shops while music played to celebrate the occasion. The Blessing of the Fleet is a popular event on the Sydney calendar and is recognised as both a cultural and religious event. All money raised from the event is donated to various charities. It represents an opportunity for people to come together to appreciate the traditions of a country that has established strong links and influences over the Australian community, links that are so appreciated by all Australians. It is at the Sydney Fish Markets where the Italian connection is particularly evident and where Sydney food lovers flock for the freshest fish this city has to offer.

When I attended the event last Sunday I was particularly taken by the number of people from all over Sydney and beyond who were taking part in festivities ranging from a spaghetti-eating competition to Italian folk dancing. This is a wonderful event that reinforces the importance of the Italian heritage to our culture in Sydney. I believe the Government should consider assistance with funding for this event under the Community Relations Commission. I congratulate all those responsible on the organisation of the Blessing of the Fleet and in particular Sam Bagnato on his generosity and commitment in bringing the Madonna to our shores. May all Sydney fishermen have a bumper and safe season.

### **NORTH COAST BUSHFIRE HAZARD REDUCTION**

**Mr ANDREW FRASER** (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [5.34 p.m.]: About 10 days ago in Coffs Harbour I had the privilege of hosting Les Tree and the Hazard Reduction Committee to listen to concerns of local Rural Fire Service volunteers and other members of the community in relation to hazard reduction on the North Coast. This House should realise and understand that for 16 years of Labor, and especially after 2003, millions of hectares of productive State forest were turned into national park. The first point is that they were pristine enough to be made into national parks. The problems that followed were not necessarily because they were made into national parks but because once they were handed over to the National Parks and Wildlife Service its officers busily went about closing the fire trails and burning the bridges within them.

To demonstrate this I will relate what has happened at Dome Road at Dorrigo where a national park was created out of a forest area. The National Parks and Wildlife Service put a locked gate on it. I accessed the area with some very concerned constituents. We cycled and walked until we came to a bridge that had been burnt out by a fire that had been lit in the middle of it. I approached the National Parks and Wildlife Service and asked why it would burn out the bridge. Its officers said that it was now an area of national park and they wanted self-reliant recreation in it. They also advertised the area as having a walking trail that went right to the back of Glennifer. I then asked what might happen if, for example, there was a fire. I also asked what would happen if someone was injured on one of those walking trails. How would an ambulance get in to attend to them? National Parks and Wildlife Service officers had not thought about that. The bridge remains burnt out.

The fire trails on the way down Dorrigo Mountain, which is now in the electorate of the member for Oxley, have basically been bulldozed. At the meeting the other night the importance of getting to the base of a fire was made clear. There is a lot of weed growth and understorey because of the heavy rainfall we have had on the North Coast over the past few years. That means that if a fire is started by way of a lightning strike—which we often see—there is a chance of having a total crown fire. Anyone who has seen a crown fire will know it is the most dangerous thing. The Minister for Fair Trading knows that because he was once the shadow Minister Emergency Services and during that time he visited the North Coast to look at the problem. The volunteers who fight the fires will not be able to get to the base of the fire. Hundreds of thousands of hectares that used to be forests were used for horseriding and livestock grazing. After all these wet years that area has extremely dangerous weed growth. Weed growth has been excessive, which means that firefighters will not be able to get to the base of the fires.

I heard what Mr Luke Foley said in the other place in relation to grazing in national parks. The parks he was talking about are river red gum and cypress forests, and also North Coast national parks that for many years were State forests that the former Labor Government claimed had an effective hazard-reduction program. What was the program? It was grazing. Anyone with half a brain would know that the hazard reduction was due to the cattle grazing in those areas, yet those areas were capable of being turned into national parks. Anyone who thinks the process was anything but pandering to The Greens to ensure Labor members got preferences in Sydney electorates really needs to take another good look at it. They will see that during debate on some of the forest bills designed to turn areas into national parks the member for Marrickville and the former member for

Balmain were the only contributors from the Labor side who supported the legislation. The former member for Strathfield told us that quolls live in trees, which shows Labor members' ignorance in regard to managing areas within regional New South Wales and especially forests.

I also point out that Forests NSW had 53,000 kilometres of forest trails to manage. When we were last in government pre-1995 those trails were kept in such a condition that a category C tanker could travel them at 70 kilometres an hour. Those trails are now in a state of disrepair because of neglect by the former Labor Government. Forests NSW on the North Coast no longer owns a grader; it has to contract one. In light of the upcoming fire season we must reopen the roads in national parks, maintain the roads in State forests and ensure that our volunteers, who put their lives at risk every time there is a fire, are given the best opportunity to put out those fires by getting to the seat of the fire.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.39 p.m.]: I support the comments of the member for Coffs Harbour. I represent an area that has extreme bushland and many national parks, and it is paramount to the protection of those areas and the native wildlife that the Rural Fire Service has access to those national parks. Common sense must prevail in these cases. We should not have to rehash the lengthy debate we had after the Victorian fires in which it was stated in no uncertain terms that one million domestic and native animals were lost during those bushfires. It is wonderful to have our national parks, but we must have adequate access. Just last week I stated in this Chamber that I had provided \$100,000 in funding towards the upgrading of Mountain Lagoon Road to provide access to those areas of the Hawkesbury that were inaccessible because the roads were washed away during recent floods. Those roads have been opened up and improved. Thanks to the support of this Government, which provided money to upgrade the roads, those areas can now be protected. I fully endorse the comments of the member for Coffs Harbour.

### TRIBUTE TO JAMES RODGERS

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [5.40 p.m.]: I pay tribute to an individual who has made an incredible contribution to the community through his work within my electorate of Lane Cove. James Rodgers has worked at St Ignatius College, Riverview, since 1978, teaching many hundreds, if not thousands of students throughout that time. I was fortunate enough to have had the privilege of being taught and mentored by James in my time at the school. Mr Rodgers attended Riverview as a student from 1966 to 1971. He then commenced his studies at the University of Sydney, graduating in 1977 with degrees in law and arts. In time, James would add to those achievements with a Master of Education. His employment at Riverview began in 1978 and continues to this day. In his time at the college, James has worked in a variety of administrative roles ranging from Director of Students to his present position as associate to both the rector and headmaster. As a teacher, he has taught English, religion, languages and the classics. Generations of students have benefited from his teaching, with his dedication and passion for the job challenging every student to strive to do better.

Yet it has not just been in the office or in the classroom that James has contributed to the development of his pupils. His commitment to the co-curricular side of the college has seen students benefit from his dedication and passion for ensuring that Riverview provides opportunities for every student to discover and develop his own talents and interests. This, in turn, helps students learn to accept both successes and defeats. His involvement in Riverview's extensive co-curricular program has provided James with the great privilege of coaching the school's first teams in cricket, rugby and debating. Yet there is no better means to encapsulate the dedication and commitment James has for the school than by highlighting his work in writing a definitive history of the contributions made by Riverview Old Boys to their country in times of war.

So far James has published two books that detail the stories of old Ignatians who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives while serving on the battlefield. *To Give and Not to Count the Cost* details the individual stories of each of the 60 old Ignatians who died while serving during World War I. *Dare to Do So Much* tells the stories of the 54 old Ignatians who lost their lives while serving in World War II. The effort and dedication he has shown in putting together these two books is extraordinary. It does much to create not only an understanding of Riverview's own history, but also of Australia's history in each of the world wars. Copies of these books can be purchased online or by contacting the school office. The profits from each of these books go to the Riverview Bursary Fund, which, since the opening of the college in 1880, has helped countless families provide a Jesuit education for their sons. Indeed, it is my understanding that if all books are sold enough money will be raised to fund two full bursaries.

There is no better manner of encapsulating the motto of St Ignatius College, Riverview, *Quantum Potes Tantum Aude*—As much as you can do, so much dare to do—than through the ongoing life and career of James

Rodgers. There can be no doubt that James' wife, Elizabeth, and his two sons, Patrick and Michael, are enormously proud of the ongoing contribution their father makes to our community. But this is equalled by the pride that Riverview and its community, both past and present, have in James that has moved me to speak about him in the House today. I hope that my old college continues to benefit from James' involvement for many more years to come.

### **PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

**Mr DARREN WEBBER** (Wyong) [5.42 p.m.]: I refer to the release of the draft report from Evans and Peck, which is an independent evaluation of the upgrade options for the Pacific Highway through Wyong central business district. The delivery of this review is the fulfilment of yet another key election commitment to my constituents in the Wyong electorate. The previous Labor Government was very aware of the much-needed upgrade of the Pacific Highway to alleviate traffic congestion problems through Wyong, but simply failed to deliver. One of the most shocking things I ascertained since being elected was that detailed planning had not even begun, other than the choice of a corridor option. The upgrade of the highway through Tuggerah Straight simply moved the bottleneck from Tuggerah to the south of the Wyong central business district across the river.

Recently, the NRMA conducted a driver survey and the Wyong central business district was voted as the worst traffic bottleneck on the entire Central Coast, even outdoing the west Gosford interchange. In 2008 the Roads and Traffic Authority delivered a series of options with associated costings, which included three corridor options for the Wyong central business district: an eastern bypass corridor, a western bypass corridor or continuing with the current central corridor using the existing highway through the town centre. Following a public exhibition in 2008, the Roads and Traffic Authority commenced more detailed planning on the preferred option, which was to maintain the current corridor through town.

I was briefed by Roads and Maritime Services on the revised preferred option, which also was placed on public exhibition. Unfortunately, not all within the community were pleased with the preferred option. Following extensive consultation with key stakeholders, I approached the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, and expressed that community concern was largely around original costings undertaken by the former Roads and Traffic Authority. The Government appointed Evans and Peck to undertake an independent evaluation at arm's length from Government of the upgrade options to ensure that the preferred option was economically sound. Two weeks ago the Minister and I were briefed by Evans and Peck in relation to the outcome of the review. It is important to note that Wyong Shire Council and the remaining key stakeholders were also briefed. The key aims of the review outlined in the terms of reference are:

- Provide cost estimates for the two bypass options displayed in 2006
- Provide cost estimates for the five through-town options displayed in 2008
- Provide cost estimates for the preferred through-town option displayed in 2011
- Ratify or otherwise, the advantages and disadvantages for the three corridor options investigated in 2006
- Ratify or otherwise, the comparison between the five through-town options investigated in 2008

This year the State Government has committed \$500,000 to continue the planned upgrade through Wyong. This independent evaluation and review of cost estimates ensures due process is followed and that the State Government will, in the long term, commit to the best option for residents and commuters of Wyong. The results of the draft report support the revised preferred option that was exhibited in 2011, that is, the central corridor. All but one of the options independently reviewed were found to be within a 10 per cent range of the original Roads and Maritime Services estimates. Once again, this adds further weight to the proposal being pursued by Roads and Maritime Services. The Pacific Highway through Wyong is used by 25,000 residents on a daily basis. This traffic is essential for the ongoing viability of the Wyong township, as it faces challenges from expanding economic hubs to the north and south.

This month Wyong Shire Council unanimously voted to support the proposed option. It is extremely important to note that the other bypass options would have impacted significantly on pre-existing residential suburbs. As well, there would be sensitive environmental impacts, including on a wetland. Although there remains a small minority who oppose the through-town option, since my election I have found overwhelming support for the preferred option. Residents want to get on with it and fix the problem as quickly as possible. I am supportive of a best outcome for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and business owners alike. I encourage residents to contribute during the current consultation period with Evans and Peck. I thank the Minister for Roads and

Ports, his hardworking staff, Roads and Maritime Services, and Evans and Peck for all their work to get us to this stage. I will continue to work with stakeholders to finalise planning, in accordance with my election commitment, and, importantly, to deliver a Pacific Highway upgrade through the Wyong central business district and up to the north Wyong industrial precinct.

### **NSW GRANDPARENTS DAY**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES** (East Hills) [5.47 p.m.]: On Friday 26 October 2012 I hosted a morning tea at my electorate office. But this was not just any morning tea; this was a very special morning tea. It was special because I had the pleasure to host about 30 grandparents from the East Hills electorate. Grandparents are very important members of our families and communities. They play a vital role in our society. That is why it was so fitting that in September last year the Premier announced that in New South Wales Grandparents Day would take place on the last Sunday of October every year. Grandparents Day reminds everyone to spend some time with their grandparents. Grandparents Day offers grandparents quality time with their grandchildren while providing grandchildren an opportunity to share in the history of their family. My parents and my wife's parents have a very close relationship with our two sons, and I know how important they have been in the lives of our boys. It was a pleasure for me to be able to share time with some of the grandparents of the East Hills electorate. I hope that they all had a very enjoyable Grandparents Day with their families on Sunday 28 October.

The Grandparents Day morning tea would not have been the success it was if it were not for the excellent help I received from East Hills Boys Technology High School. Both the catering and the entertainment were provided by students of that school. I have no hesitation in saying that the food was delicious and the entertainment was fantastic. I have received feedback from guests who attended the morning tea and they have been full of praise for the boys and their school. The students who attended my office on Friday 26 October conducted themselves with professionalism and are a credit to their school. I congratulate the school's Principal, Jenny Rhodes, and the teachers on the great work they are doing. New South Wales Grandparents Day promotes the value of grandparenting throughout New South Wales. It acknowledges grandparents and encourages them to pass on their knowledge and stories. I look forward to continuing to work with and support the grandparents of the East Hills electorate, and I look forward to celebrating many more Grandparents Days to come.

### **PUNCHBOWL BUS SERVICES**

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO** (Lakemba) [5.49 p.m.]: Today I urge the Minister for Transport to intervene directly to resolve an important but straightforward transport problem in my electorate. The people of Punchbowl, particularly those who reside in Victoria Road, have been fighting a losing battle to improve the local bus service. For many years families, parents with young children and the elderly who rely on local buses could catch a bus in their street and attend to their local shopping needs and medical appointments. As a result of a review, these routes were altered and now no buses use Victoria Road. This means that nearly 1,000 people who live in Victoria Road now have no access to regular bus services. Unfortunately, due to the geography of surrounding streets and the stormwater channel that runs along Wiggs Road to the south, there is no convenient location for a bus stop in the vicinity of Victoria Road that locals can use.

Two bus services operate in Cullens Road, Punchbowl, which runs parallel to Victoria Road. A suggestion by many local residents who have signed a petition seems simple and logical, that is, to reroute one of these two services from Cullens Road to service the families of Victoria Road. Cullens Road currently benefits from a bus service every 15 minutes with the two bus routes using this thoroughfare. By rerouting one of those services, the Cullens Road residents retain a regular, half-hourly service in their street and another 1,000 residents in Victoria Road, who currently have no access to a regular bus service, will also be able to catch a bus.

I believe the Minister for Transport is serious about improving access to public transport. We have identified the problem and provided a simple, no-cost solution that will make an enormous difference to local families. Families in Punchbowl have lower car ownership rates, a higher reliance on public transport and lower household incomes than the Sydney average. A regular, reliable and convenient bus service is essential to these families. I call on the Minister and the Government to listen to their pleas and respond to the petition from my community.

I have attempted to arrange a meeting with representatives from Transport for NSW and the local bus operator to discuss this issue. The Punchbowl Bus Company, the local bus operator, has been more than willing to meet. However, to date, despite numerous requests for meetings, Transport for NSW has ignored my request. On behalf of the thousands of people who live in Punchbowl Road, I once again urge the intervention of the Minister

for Transport to solve this problem and to respond to the needs of the many residents who have been calling for this service. I acknowledge the particular efforts of Ms Jeanette Murphy in Victoria Road, who has worked tirelessly to bring this issue to my attention and to fight for improved services for her neighbours in Victoria Road.

### **SOUTHERN SYDNEY FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE**

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [5.54 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak today about a service that greatly benefits many local residents in the Rockdale electorate and more broadly across the entire St George region. The Southern Sydney Financial Counselling Service, which is located in Hurstville, is a service offered by the Salvation Army. Before I continue, I acknowledge especially Tony Devlin, head of Moneycare, Major Trevor Nicol of the Hurstville Salvation Army, and their teams for the good work they do in our local community.

The Salvation Army offers valuable and much-needed advice to those suffering financial hardship and struggling to make ends meet. This assistance may be in the form of providing information, advice and education on matters relating to money and budgets. There are people in our community who, through no fault of their own, struggle to manage their finances. Those people stand to benefit most from the services offered by the Southern Sydney Financial Counselling Service. In particular, there is a need to assist those who come from a culturally and linguistically diverse background because, in many instances, they may be unfamiliar with the process of managing budgets.

This Government is committed to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community and breaking the cycle of disadvantage. It is a key goal of the NSW 2021 Plan and members in this place are always pleased to recognise community-based organisations which endeavour to increase the quality of life of people living in their community. The Minister for Fair Trading understands the important role that organisations such as the Southern Sydney Financial Counselling Service plays in our local communities. The recently announced NSW Financial Counselling Services Program 2012-2015 reflects this need. Fair Trading understands that the demand for financial counselling across New South Wales is high and that the continued funding, as a consequence of this program, will provide much-needed relief to those experiencing financial hardship.

The NSW Financial Counselling Services Program 2012-2015 provides financial grants to community-based organisations and individuals for the delivery of financial counselling services by accredited counsellors, consumer legal casework, the training of financial counsellors and public education in the management of personal finances. Locally, this funding is making a real difference to families in the St George region. I had the pleasure of recently joining the Minister for Fair Trading and my colleague the member for Oatley in meeting with Tony Devlin and Trevor Nicol of the Salvation Army and other workers of Moneycare in the Southern Sydney Financial Counselling Service, who contributed greatly to the lives of those in our community. The Minister presented a cheque for \$283,692. This will assist with the continuation of such valuable programs as the Southern Sydney Financial Counselling Service. This funding goes a long way towards helping people get back on their feet and out of financial difficulty.

As members of Parliament we often have the opportunity to meet people within our local communities that others do not get the chance to meet. We have the opportunity to see programs operate that many others may not even know exist unless we actively promote their virtues. The Southern Sydney Financial Counselling Service is one such program. The program assists those experiencing financial difficulty, whether they live in Rockdale, Hurstville, Kogarah or Sutherland. I am pleased to recognise the service's contribution to our local community in this place today and I am pleased to say that the funding announced under the NSW Financial Counselling Services Program 2012-2015 will assist in keeping its programs active and helping those in need of financial advice.

### **SYDNEY AIRPORT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [5.59 p.m.]: The Kurnell peninsula is home to the Kamay Botany Bay National Park and the internationally recognised Towra Point Nature Reserve. But the front page of Monday's *Daily Telegraph* led with an article on a proposal for fourth and fifth airport runways abutting the Kurnell peninsula and an airport terminal on the Kurnell peninsula. Under that proposal, two parallel runways would be built in southern Botany Bay; international and interstate domestic traffic would move to the new development; the current airport would be used for interstate and general aviation operations; existing runway 16L/34R would be closed; a road bridge across Botany Bay would link the two airports; and terminals would be located either on the eastern or western sides of the runways.



It is a proposal reminiscent of what Bruce Baird vigorously opposed when he was the Federal member for Cook. It is a proposal that Scott Morrison, Bruce's successor as the member for Cook, vehemently opposes. It is a proposal that both Councillor Kent Johns, mayor of Sutherland Shire Council, and I have described as "ridiculous". It is a proposal that is strongly opposed by the shire community. It is also a proposal discredited by the March 2012 report of the joint Commonwealth-State steering committee on aviation capacity in the Sydney region.

The proposal would decimate Botany Bay and the Kurnell peninsula. Half the development would be on reclaimed land in Botany Bay. The joint study found that the proposal would have significant environmental impacts on lands and ecosystems—for example, reclamation of land and sand dunes protruding into Botany Bay could have implications for wave energy, beach profiles, water quality and sedimentation, aquatic flora and fauna in the area, and sea level rises. It would jeopardise the international commitments of the Commonwealth and efforts by the New South Wales Government to protect these areas.

The proposal would worsen noise pollution for the residents of the shire. The proposal would fail to solve Sydney's broader aircraft noise problems. The joint study concluded that "given the urban development close to the Kurnell site and the implications for Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport flight paths, an airport development could also increase, not decrease, the number of people exposed to aircraft noise". The proposal is not just bad news for Cronulla; it is bad news for southern Sydney, the inner west, the inner east and the northern suburbs generally. The proposal would fail to solve Sydney's aviation capacity problems. The joint study found that the proposed construction would effectively displace the existing airport without enabling a significant change in capacity in the region. The joint study also rejected other proposals for an airport at Kurnell as impractical on cost and operational grounds.

The location of airports is ultimately a Federal decision. Whatever the views expressed by individuals, it is not New South Wales Government policy, and it is not part of the New South Wales Government's platform, to build an airport at the southern part of Botany Bay or at Kurnell. I agree with Scott Morrison that it is incumbent upon the Federal Government to nominate a site for a second Sydney airport before the next Federal election. I also agree with Scott Morrison on, among others, the following propositions: first, with or without a second airport, the cap, curfew and noise-sharing arrangements must remain in place; secondly, the shire already bears an unfair burden of aircraft noise; and, thirdly, because, on current forecasts, by 2015 Sydney Airport demand levels will exceed the capacity of the long-term operating plan to protect shire residents, work must get under way on a new long-term operating plan that will institute new noise-sharing arrangements. As we approach 2020, the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook's landing at Kurnell—the meeting of two cultures—the time has come not to give Kurnell an airport but to give it the recognition and respect it deserves.

### **HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [6.04 p.m.]: Tonight I speak of an issue that is close to the hearts of many members in this place: cancer. On 21 October 2012 I was privileged to attend and speak at the closing ceremony of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Relay for Life. That event, which was held at Rofe Park, Hornsby Heights, and attended by more than 1,000 local residents, was one of 23 such events organised by Cancer Council NSW to raise much-needed funds for the organisation's projects and services. The Relay for Life initiative brings members from across the globe together in the battle to prevent cancer. Every dollar raised through Relay for Life events takes us one step closer to beating this insidious disease. Cancer is one of the most significant health issues that people worldwide face. Although State and Federal governments are investing millions and millions of dollars in research and preventative initiatives, it is the demonstration by local communities to willingly address this issue that excites me. And that is what I saw at Hornsby Heights a couple of weeks ago. Cancer does not discriminate. It does not matter if you are young or old, male or female, black or white, or Catholic or Protestant. Anyone of us can be affected by it at any time in our lives.

This year I was touched first-hand by cancer. My father was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My father is a 60-year-old male who never drank or smoked, is fit and otherwise healthy. My story is not exclusive: so many families have been in my position. We were shocked when we got the news that dad had cancer. There is so much emotion attached to it. Dad's cancer was very aggressive but through early detection and advances in modern medical science he is now cancer free. But 20 years ago it would have been a life sentence. It is because of the efforts of communities that come together and participate in events such as Relay for Life and raise much-needed funds that I am able to share that wonderful story with the House. I hope to be a member of this place for a very long time. In that time, through the fund-raising efforts of initiatives of Relay for Life and the work of governments at all levels, regardless of political persuasion, we will be able to treat cancer as we treat the flu. It is my hope that we will be able to take a tablet, have a day off and come back to work cancer free. The community as a whole should be working towards that.

The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Relay for Life raised \$147,000 in much-needed funds to combat this terrible disease. So many people participated at this event but a couple of them deserve special recognition. Richard Hodge of Hornsby Heights is a great friend of mine. Earlier this year Richard's mother was diagnosed with leukaemia and Richard, in support of his mum and the battle she is going through, put himself through the gruelling exercise of walking the 24 hours. He raised a lot of money, as did Garry Spence from the Hornsby RSL. The Hornsby RSL Club raised a substantial amount of money for this great initiative and I thank the club. Cancer Council NSW was very supportive as well. I thank Peter Bright, one of our local organisers, for making the day such a wonderful success. Without the example set by these people our goal would not have been achievable. It is my hope that through initiatives such as Relay for Life and the work of governments at all levels, regardless of political persuasion, together we will combat and defeat this insidious disease.

### **TRIBUTE TO JAMES EDWIN KIRKNESS, OAM**

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN** (Gosford) [6.09 p.m.]: I recently had the pleasure of representing Premier O'Farrell at a surprise function at the Rotary Club of Gosford to help celebrate a milestone at the club and pay tribute to an outstanding club member: James Edwin Kirkness, OAM. That evening I proudly presented Mr Kirkness with a certificate and plaque from the Premier of New South Wales. He also received a certificate from Sakuji Tanaka, President of Rotary International, and the Prime Minister of Australia. Jim, as he is known locally, was being recognised for achieving 50 years service to Rotary. It is hard to imagine someone being in one organisation for that length of time, and it is testament to his dedication and loyalty to the ideals and objectives of Rotary that he has done so. Jim was born on 25 September 1921 at Bradys Gully, where his father, James, and mother, Rosina, had an orchard. Rosina was a war bride who married James in Southampton in 1918. His grandfather and father were both lay preachers for the Methodist Church so Jim attended church from infancy to this very day. Jim does not miss church.

After finishing school Jim trained as a fitter-machinist. During World War II that was a restricted occupation but he eventually was granted permission to go to sea as an engineer. He ended up on the *Caledonian Salvor*, which was involved in salvage work on the Australian coast, at Milne Bay, Rabaul and New Britain. The ship had a crack salvage team on board. While Jim was on shore leave he married his long-time love, Beryl Lawrence, in 1946. This year they celebrated 67 years of marriage. In 1946 Jim opened his own business on the Central Coast and ran the business for 52 years until his retirement in 1999. He did that at the age of 78 and he is now 91. Perhaps there is something to be said for late retirement in relation to longevity.

In 1953 James became a foundation member of the Gosford Apex Club and served for nine years with that club. In 1962, after his compulsory retirement from Apex at the age of 40, Jim joined the Gosford Rotary Club in November 1962. During Jim's 50 years in Rotary he has seen 50 presidents take office and hundreds of members inducted into Gosford's Rotary club. Jim is now regarded as an elder of the club and performs a mentoring role for new presidents and others organising charity works on behalf of the club. He has been the driving force behind Rotary's Henry Kendall Interact Club for 38 years. For many years the Red Cross Calling and the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal have been Jim's domain.

James was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by Rotary. He was awarded Citizen of the Year in 1985. He received an award from L. J. McCarthy for helping the youth of Gosford. He received an appreciation award from the Salvation Army. He has received the Centennial Medal and an Order of Australia medal. He also received the Red Cross service award and the Baden Powell service award, to name but a few. Jim Kirkness has been doing good deeds all his life. He has been helping others and enjoys doing so. Jim Kirkness is a fine individual, a dedicated man, a loving husband and father, and a stalwart of the Central Coast community. He is also an inspiration to many people in my electorate. I commend Jim Kirkness for his community work, and I commend him to this House.

### **PAWS IN THE PARK FUN DAY**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [6.15 p.m.]: Today I draw to the attention of the House a great local event in Camden. On Sunday 28 October Camden Council's second annual Royal Canin sponsored Paws in the Park Dogs Day Out event was held at the Bicentennial Equestrian Park in Camden. More than 2,500 people and their best friends of the four-legged kind attended the day to participate in either a 2.5-kilometre or five-kilometre walk around the beautiful and scenic approximately 80-hectare park. Entry was via a gold coin donation and that raised nearly \$5,000, which will go to microchipping projects and responsible pet ownership education within the Camden local government area, and also to supplying Camden's local pound, Renbury Farm, with stimulating toys for the animals.

The day is held annually to promote responsible pet ownership in our area. After the opening walk our dog lovers and our dogs were treated to free veterinarian checks, discounted microchipping, dog agility and flyball demonstrations, Jack Russell racing, police dog demonstrations led by a former Camden local resident, Sergeant David Wright, best dog competitions, dog behaviour advice and countless stall holders with various services and goods to offer. Considering that Australia has the highest incidence of pet ownership in the world, with some research indicating that more than 80 per cent of families in Australia have owned a pet at some stage, responsible pet ownership is an important issue. The support shown by our community at this event shows that the people of Camden are animal lovers and support responsible pet ownership.

Great events such as this do not happen on their own. I thank my fellow organising committee members: the mayor, Lara Symkowiak, who as chairperson, was instrumental in the formation of the inaugural event last year, Councillor Debby Dewbery, Michelle Burrell and Kerrie Armstrong from the *Camden-Narellan Advertiser*, who did an outstanding job in promoting this year's event, Ted Gillroy from the Macarthur Lions Club, Peter Standen from the Bicentennial Equestrian Park Men's Shed, Michelle Gallow, who is an extremely dedicated Camden Council ranger, Steve Ferguson from Macarthur Veterinary Group, Lorraine Barnes from Renbury Farm, Colleen Ritchard from the University of Sydney Veterinary Clinic, Matt French from the RSPCA, Camden Council's Nicole Magurren, Geoff Green, Tanya Palmer and Danielle Sammut, and Michelle Anderson from Royal Canin. It was through the hard work of this extremely dedicated committee that this event turned out to be the extremely successful and much-enjoyed family day that it was.

I thank Fiona Stalgis, Ashlea Livingstone, Lee Wear, Nathan Armytage, Megan Gellel, Jennifer Rowe, David Funnell, Joe and Tayla Gallow, stallholders, volunteers and Camden councillors Peter Sidgreaves, Penny Fischer and Theresa Fedeli. The people I have just mentioned all represented organisations that had a number of people working in support of the dogs' day. They gave their time and helped to ensure that the day has become by far one of the biggest on Camden Council's calendar. On the day it was great to have the presence of Dr Katrina Warren and her rising star and four-legged companion, Riley. As was the case last year, both proved tremendously popular. It would not have been possible to have counted the number of photographs they happily posed for. Dr Warren was a huge hit also when judging our ring events. A highlight of the day was having Mario "The Falcon" Fenech out and about, talking to the many fans that came up to greet him. He proved to be a great ambassador for rugby league. I did not know that so many South Sydney supporters live in Camden. On more than one occasion Mario relived the glory days of 1971.

Without our sponsors the day would not have been such a success. I thank the event's major and gold sponsor, Royal Canin, as well as media partners the *Camden-Narellan Advertiser* and Channel Nine; silver sponsors Appealing Images, Bayer Australia Ltd, Derks, Bark Busters, Pet and Aquarium World and Funnell's Electrical; and bronze sponsors Boundless Images, Sassy Treats, Vicki Patterson Chiropractic—who I must say is a fantastic chiropractor, although I am little biased—Positive Paws Dog Training and Pet Supplies, Fetching Dogs Inc., Macarthur Veterinary Group, Butterfly Wings Animal Rescue, the University of New South Wales and Camden Council. I congratulate the committee, the volunteers and all who were involved and attended the day and who made it such an outstanding success. I look forward to again being involved in next year's event. Camden Council, Mayor Lara Symkowiak—who chaired the organising committee—and all the committee members must be congratulated for that outstanding event.

### MILLERS POINT PUBLIC HOUSING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH** (Sydney) [6.17 p.m.]: In my first private member's statement I draw attention to the contrast between the Government's handling of two matters right next door to each other in the Sydney electorate. The Government appears to have gone out of its way to ignore process while supporting and fast-tracking a second casino proposal, yet is ready to sell adjacent public tenants' homes. Millers Point is one of Sydney's oldest and strongest communities. It is home to public housing tenants who contribute to the fabric of our city and who are anxiously worried that their homes will be taken away, and their tight knit community destroyed, under the Government's review of housing in Millers Point.

Recent media reports claim that the Government is evaluating up to 250 properties for sale—a massive sell-off. This follows the previous Government's sales of 32 homes and a further four homes being approved for sale. The Government says that Millers Point houses are not appropriate for the mainly singles and couples on the social housing waiting list, but the 55,000 people on the list include large families. There has been a long history of government neglect and underfunding, resulting in older heritage properties becoming expensive to maintain. Maintenance has been ignored, homes have been left vacant to deteriorate and be vandalised, and there is a large backlog of repairs.

Alarming, it seems that the current Government intends to sell occupied homes and move tenants, and many have been in residence for years—some for five generations. Selling homes and removing low-income tenants will have a major impact on this community. It will reduce housing for key workers that is close to the city and push more tenants with health and welfare problems to the fringes of the city without transport, jobs or support services. Reports have suggested that tenants be relocated in the inner city, but Housing NSW reports inner city urgent waiting times are up to two years, or five to 15 years for others. People needing larger family homes—like many of those being sold in Millers Point—will have to wait for more than 10 years.

Inner-city social housing is close to health and welfare support services, jobs and public transport. This proposal will displace Millers Point tenants, expand the already lengthy waiting list and reduce available stock. The State Heritage Register includes the Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct and describes the area as "unique in Australia because of a strong sense of cohesion facilitated by a range of complementary architectural, structural, physical and social elements". The precinct should be maintained. There is widespread alarm over statements by the Minister for Finance and Services in a *Sydney Morning Herald* article on 26 October in which he stated:

Inevitably, when considering the future of Millers Point, the Government needs to consider it in the context of all of the surrounding areas, including the Barangaroo development area.

Selling high-value inner-city properties is like selling the family silver; it will also cleanse the area of poorer people. Some people have pointed out that poor people get moved at the same time that millionaires get the rules changed to suit them. There is community outrage at the approval process for James Packer's second casino on the Barangaroo site. It seems that there will be no tender process for a second casino and no independent assessment over whether dealing with one company will provide the best outcome. Rules for not going to tender were changed just before the proposal was approved, despite the Government's promise before the last State election that it would end deals being done behind closed doors.

Unfortunately, the Opposition has jumped at the chance to agree to James Packer's plan for a second casino without tender, after a longstanding one casino policy. Casinos can be hotbeds for crime and are places where people lose money. Any decision to change the law for another casino should be made only after extensive community consultation and with input from crime experts, welfare organisations and the local community. The casino and hotel will be on public land and up to 60 storeys high, with major impacts on the Barangaroo development, particularly the adjacent public open space. I do not believe Sydney needs another casino, especially within walking distance of our existing casino—The Star—which also occupies a prime harbour waterfront location.

Meanwhile, Millers Point public housing residents live in fear of being turned out of their homes. I believe we need to retain inner-city public housing, because stable low-cost housing is vital for people to get back on their feet after a crisis or serious health condition, or indeed a gambling problem—something that anyone can experience. I call on the Government to halt plans to sell inner-city public housing and to invest in social housing to provide homes for those 55,000 people waiting for accommodation. I ask the Government to apply an open tender process and make a full evaluation of costs and benefits for a second Sydney casino before any decision is made.

## DAPTO FIRE STATION

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [6.22 p.m.], by leave: Tonight I advise the House of a visit I made to Dapto fire station on 5 October 2012. As we know, Fire and Rescue NSW is responsible for managing fire emergencies in major cities, metropolitan areas and towns across regional and rural New South Wales. I am amazed at the capability and resources available to each truck and the wealth of knowledge and local experience displayed by the fire crew. When I asked what they do during their downtime they explained the training they do and the skills they need to practise not just for firefighting but for rescue, hazardous material incidents and counterterrorism procedures. Their stories of local fire prevention and school education were impressive too, with the fire crew visiting schools, businesses and fetes daily.

We spoke about the money issues within the fire service and the community, but some concerns were highlighted during my visit. Senior firefighter Paul Camilleri told me about the pressure that the O'Farrell Government's budget cuts are placing on the organisation, which has led to a threat of station closures. He explained that with support from the Coalition the firefighters may be taken offline for entire shifts to save

money. The firefighters see this as dangerous to the community and to themselves at fire incidents. Senior firefighter Josh Boughton showed me another area affected by the O'Farrell Government's budget cuts—the fire station premises, which need larger areas for training.

Senior firefighter David Corbin expressed his disappointment at the O'Farrell Government's wages policy and the effect it was having on his income. Another horrifying story that I learnt from my local firefighters was that the Government is currently looking to reduce the normal fire response to automatic fire alarms from two fire trucks to just one. The firefighters are concerned that Fire and Rescue NSW had prepared a policy document called "Stated Operational Guideline" in preparation for this change, although the firefighters and their unions do not support the change.

What alarmed me most about my visit was the news that the New South Wales Government intends to overhaul fire services funding in New South Wales. The firefighters told me that the Premier is trying to change the way that fire stations are funded. They and their campaign website explain that for more than 100 years insurers have provided the lion's share of our emergency services funding. It makes sense because a strong fire service saves them billions of dollars in insurance claims. That is a true user-pays system. But now the insurance companies have convinced the Premier to tear up that system. This will deliver to the insurance companies a windfall of up to \$700 million in extra profits.

The O'Farrell Government is hiding the fact that the largest beneficiaries of the fire service are the insurance companies. The more property a fire brigade saves, the more money the insurers save. That is why the insurers should continue to fund fire services. So while the Coalition reduces the budget of our fire services, it passes on the total cost of running the fire brigades to the community and lets the insurers have a service for free. The Coalition's cost-cutting of our front-line emergency services is a clear example of the risks that our communities will face under the O'Farrell Government, as it slashes and cuts important services to save money. No matter how much the Government spins it or how much fire and Rescue NSW tries to suggest coverage still exists when fire stations are offline, it is a fact that responses to fire and rescue incidents will be slower—significantly slower—and more dangerous for our front-line firefighters under this Government.

Our emergency services are not businesses; they are services. We do not do away with our military even though they are rarely used. We maintain them and resource them. This must continue for our emergency services in New South Wales, and it must continue for Fire and Rescue NSW. The New South Wales Government must reassure New South Wales residents that it will not move away from the current custom and practice of keeping fire stations staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and that staff will be maintained at all fire stations in New South Wales. I publicly congratulate station officer Darin Sullivan, senior firefighter Paul Camilleri, senior firefighter Josh Boughton and senior firefighter David Corbin at Dapto fire station, who do a sterling job.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.27 p.m.  
until Tuesday 20 November 2012 at 12 noon.**

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