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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 2 May 2013

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

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

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

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

#### DEATH OF SENIOR CONSTABLE TONY TAMPLIN

**Mr TIM OWEN** (Newcastle) [10.04 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that the Northern Region Police Media Liaison Officer, Senior Constable Tony Tamplin, passed away at Waratah police station on 29 April 2013;
- (2) notes that Tony Tamplin served in the NSW Police Force for 35 years, with 29 years in his media liaison role; and
- (3) expresses its sincere condolences to the family, friends and workmates of Tony Tamplin for their loss.

My colleagues and I from the Hunter stand united today in honouring the memory of Senior Constable Tony Tamplin, who sadly passed away on 29 April 2013 aged just 54. Since Monday there has been an outpouring of public grief in the Hunter as the community mourns a true character who touched many lives. Anthony William George Tamplin was a man of many layers. He was a family man deeply loved by his wife, Sonia, their six children—Natusha, Anthony, Yelena, Annika, Alexander and Kalina—and his parents, Tony senior and Anne. He was a tireless aid worker who donated much of his spare time to assisting local charities. He was also a jovial and hugely popular marriage celebrant. Above all, he was a stalwart of the NSW Police Force who recently celebrated 35 years in uniform.

Over the course of his distinguished career, Senior Constable Tamplin became the face of the New South Wales police across the Hunter. He provided a valuable link between the police and the wider public in his role as police media liaison officer. Tens of thousands of people grew up with Tony—and I was one of them. He was part of our daily lives; we watched him on NBN television, read his candid lines in the *Newcastle Herald* and his amusing but informative column in the *Star* or admired his quick wit on local radio. However, it was not only his work with the media that led to Tony Tamplin becoming a much-loved community figure.

Tony was a man of great compassion who was often seen at community events, such as the Variety Bash in support of children's charities, and he always left a great impression. It is probably fair to say Tony Tamplin was one of the most loved coppers in the history of the NSW Police Force. I was at the Waratah police station when news first broke of Tony's sudden passing and it was not long before floral tributes were placed on the steps and social media message boards were flooded with words of gratitude and condolences. As the elected representative of Newcastle, their voice in Parliament, I thought it appropriate that I share some of those poignant messages. David Gardiner wrote:

Tony was one of the most professional, helpful, down to earth people I have ever had the pleasure of dealing with as a news journalist. He had the rare skill of being able to convey information, often sensitive, into easy to understand language. Tony's compassion and his strong sense of humour, as well as his involvement in charity events such as the Variety Bash, will be forever remembered.

Heather Buckley wrote:

I only knew Tony Tamplin through his piece in the STAR newspaper and listening to him on KOfm. I was amazed at his passion for the community and for the young kids of Newcastle and Suburbs! He will be sadly missed and my heart goes out to his wife and family and also his colleagues.

Tony McKenzie wrote:

I have known Tony through the Police for probably most of his 35 Yrs. Mate you did us all proud. Newcastle has lost a great man and an even greater COPPER. You wrote the book on Police and Media relations.

In my role as a member of Parliament I have come to respect and admire the great work the NSW Police Force does in the community. As Robyne Slade said in her tribute, "police men and women play a major role in making our communities safe". I have come to know many members of the local command and I could think of no finer representative of the force than Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. We are conducting this debate this morning while his funeral service is being held in Newcastle.

The police officer's role is not an easy one. Living under a strict disciplinary code and sworn to uphold the law of the land, police officers relations with the public are sometimes difficult, especially in enforcing laws that are not popular with certain social groups. Despite this, Tony was always warmly received by the public. Behind the scenes the life of police officers is not easy—they comfort lost children, lend a shoulder to cry on when the elderly lady experiences a break-in at her home or counsel families after delivering the worst news imaginable about a loved one. It is a job that can be so emotionally confronting that few outside the force can ever really understand just how hard some days can be. Yet Tony was always a pleasure to be around, was courteous and a true gentlemen to everyone he met.

On behalf of the Newcastle community, I pay tribute to the countless hours of work that Senior Constable Tamplin donated to assist others, in particular, his work with charitable foundations. Tony is a man who will be sorely missed; a man who in the past few days has been fittingly described by many as "a larger than life persona", "a man with a big heart", "one of Newcastle's finest", "a massive community figure" and "a man with a wicked sense of humour". Tony wrote a column for the 24 April 2013 edition of the *Star* in which he reflected on his 35 years of service in the NSW Police Force. He quoted William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania:

I expect to pass through life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.

I believe Tony attempted to live his life by the principle of doing good for others, and in doing so he has challenged all of us to show kindness to those around us. There will never be another Tony; he was unique, a champion of his community who will forever be remembered with great fondness. On behalf of the Newcastle constituency and the Hunter region I conclude by saying that our thoughts are with Senior Constable Tamplin's family, friends and the entire NSW Police Force during this difficult time. I commend his life's work to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER** (Lake Macquarie) [10.10 a.m.]: I acknowledge the fine contribution of the member for Newcastle and join my colleagues in paying tribute to Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. It is hard to believe that I will not be seeing Tony at community and charity events, so ubiquitous a presence and so dominant a personality was he in the Hunter region. Tony was indeed the everywhere man. As the member for Newcastle noted, and as I am sure other members will note, Tony was the face of the NSW Police Force in the Hunter and he had been for 29 years, but his public profile went much deeper than that.

Tony was attached to numerous charities, among them the children's charity Variety, cancer fundraising groups, the Blood Bank and Hunter Life Education. His picture was constantly in the local newspapers or on the news on television in connection with the promotion or support of events for charities such as these, with photographs inevitably showing him hamming it up for the camera or flashing that wide trademark grin that even his equally characteristic bushy beard could not hide. I am sure that members can conjure up a picture of Tony Tamplin at a Variety bash with his good mate Super Hubert, that marvellous magician in the Hunter.

**Mr Andrew Cornwell:** The world's skinniest magician.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** The world's skinniest magician and one of the Hunter's biggest cops. When we talk about Tony Tamplin we should not forget such wonderful imagery. I first met Tony Tamplin in the 1990s when I was a councillor on Lake Macquarie City Council. In subsequent years I had cause to share a stage or to mingle with him at many events in my capacity as a councillor and later as mayor of Lake Macquarie and State member. A few years ago we officiated together at a ceremony to mark the beginning of the first stage of the children's park at Speers Point. Variety, which is a significant partner, helped to create an adventure playground that is accessible to children with disabilities. I know that the member for Swansea would agree with me that Speers Point Park is a wonderful park.

With shovel ready, standing on the top of a double decker bus, I announced to the assembled dignitaries and onlookers that we were there to turn the first sod. I then quipped that I thought that was no way to talk about Tony. He laughed, of course, showing his customary goodwill—as always, happy to be the butt of the joke and more than capable of good naturedly returning the compliment in spades. I cannot imagine how much money Tony's advocacy of charity causes has helped to bring in for those organisations but I hasten a guess that it would be hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Away from the cameras and that public persona he was generous with his time in other ways as well. In between his official media liaison duties and his charity work he attended countless community functions to speak to people about crime and safety issues. Whether it was addressing a handful of retirees about home security at a midweek morning tea or hundreds of people at a major crime forum, he gave the same enthusiasm to all. Through these grassroots activities and by using his public relations skills to harness the reach of the media, Tony was at the vanguard of proactive and pre-emptive policing. He was forever spearheading public announcements to remind people to be wary to lock up their homes when there was a spate of thefts, to observe speed limits and safe driving guidelines as busy school holiday periods loomed, to alert people to scams doing the rounds, or to warn parents to urge their children to be vigilant about stranger danger.

Tony Tamplin has been the voice of calm during many a crisis. As *Newcastle Herald* reporter Dan Proudman so aptly wrote in his obituary in Tuesday's paper, Tony was "a soft, reassuring hand on the region's collective shoulder". He was a soothing presence during the notorious June long weekend storms and floods of 2007, keeping order among the media masses at the site of the *Pasha Bulker's* beaching at Nobbys and making sure the critical emergency messages reached their targets. He also had an opportunity to use his liaison and public relations skills while working with the NSW Police Force at the Sydney Olympics—an experience I understand was a career highlight.

While perhaps most fondly remembered for his skylarking and good-natured support of community causes, it is important to acknowledge the absolute professionalism he displayed in all aspects of his job and his innate ability to project the right mood for the circumstances. Much of the work he did managing communications at the interface between the police and the community involved difficult and traumatic events. He always dealt with such matters sensitively and reasonably, respecting the balance between public interest and the privacy of victims and others affected by criminal acts or accidents. I spoke to Superintendent Craig Rae, formerly the local area commander of Lake Macquarie Area Command. Craig wants to pass on his message of respect for Tony Tamplin who did so much to elevate the standing of police in the region.

The balance that Tony Tamplin struck is not always easy to attain, and sometimes relationships between media and police are strained as a result, but Tony earned the utmost respect of those within the Hunter media, as evidenced by the tributes they have made on hearing of his passing. Indeed, there has been a huge public response to his death—one that I would say is unprecedented for a member of the Police Force and a measure of the high regard with which he was held by all in the community. Tony died just two weeks after marking 35 years with the Police Force—he joined as a teenager—and he spent nearly 30 of those years serving in the Hunter region. On the occasion of his thirty-fifth anniversary last month he nominated his colleagues as the reason for his enduring enthusiasm for his job. He said:

The job itself is an intriguing, wonderful, hard, emotional job but the reason you keep coming back every day is the people you work with.

I keep getting up every day, not thinking I have got to go to work as a copper but thinking I am going to go and see my mates. This is the biggest club in the world. There are 16,000 people in my club.

Tony was renowned as a family man—a father of six and one of six siblings. He was a popular marriage celebrant, known for his ability to soothe the nerves of brides and grooms with his characteristic humour and terrible dad jokes. Always a good sport, he entered into the spirit of any ceremony—even donning an Elvis Presley wig and cape to preside over the wedding of a couple who had won a radio competition that allowed listeners to decide on aspects of the wedding, including the celebrant's dress code. One of the last times I saw Tony was at the annual bikers' toy run at Christmas, another of his favourite community causes. He was in the thick of things as usual, laughing, talking and working the crowd. As I said when I commenced my speech, it is hard to believe I will not see him playing that role again. His death is an indescribable loss to our community and I offer my deepest sympathies to his wife, Sonia, to his children and to all who loved him.

**Mr GARRY EDWARDS** (Swansea) [10.16 a.m.]: Today we are acknowledging and remembering one of the greatest icons in the Hunter—Senior Constable Anthony William George Tamplin. It is with real sadness

that I speak of the sudden and unexpected loss of a dedicated community man and a hardworking and loving family man at the age of just 54. I would have expected to have been speaking about Tony and his many accomplishments at perhaps his retirement in another decade or so. I extend sincere condolences to Senior Constable Tamplin's family, friends and colleagues. Only a fortnight ago Senior Constable Tony Tamplin celebrated his thirty-fifth year as a member of the NSW Police Force—35 years of passionate dedication, 35 years of caring and integrity not just for the NSW Police Force but also for communities in New South Wales and in Australia.

For many years Senior Constable Tony Tamplin has been seen as the face of the NSW Police Force in the Hunter and a man who, despite the ever-changing world around us, could always be trusted. A generation of young folk in the Hunter have grown up recognising, listening to and believing in Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. As public relations officer for Hunter police since 1984, Senior Constable Tony Tamplin was and still is the face of the region's police ranks, but his dedication and commitment stretched further than that. Senior Constable Tony Tamplin was a unique and committed community man, well recognised and respected for his ongoing charitable work. Notably he spent more than a decade raising awareness and money for the children's charity Variety. Senior Constable Tony Tamplin will be remembered by many as a true, real and rare Aussie character. His wicked sense of humour, larger than life personality and ability to take the mickey out of himself endeared him to all who met him.

No-one has done a better job of bringing the police and the wider community closer together in our region—at least not in my time in this place or in the region—than Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. Once again I express deepest condolences to Tony's wife, Sonia, to his children, Natasha, Anthony, Yelena, Anikka, Alexander and Kalina, to his dad, Tony senior, to his mum, Anne, and to all his siblings on their loss. A statement by Superintendent John Gralton, Commander, Newcastle City Local Area Command, in the *Newcastle Herald* on Tuesday 30 April 2013 sums up Tony's passing, "The Hunter has lost a piece of its heart." Vale, Anthony William George Tamplin, husband, dad, police officer, charity worker, civil marriage celebrant, community builder and bloody good Aussie bloke. Tony, your name will survive you as a true son of the Hunter.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.20 a.m.]: I make a short contribution to this condolence motion in memory of my former police colleague and mate Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. I endorse everything that has been said, and will be said, by my parliamentary colleagues from the Hunter about a great man who was larger than life. I have spoken in this Parliament on a number of occasions about child sexual assault issues in the Hunter Valley and those comments are well recorded in *Hansard* and in the media. But what has that to do with Tony Tamplin? The first two victims in what has now become a plethora of incidents, which have had an unimaginable impact on that wonderful region, went to Tony Tamplin and his staff to seek guidance and advice on how to face the most difficult chapter ever to unfold their lives. To me that pretty much says it all as to the level of regard and respect with which Tony was held. Members will talk about that respect today but I witnessed it firsthand.

Tony played an important role in the media that followed the arrest and investigation of Father Ryan and the subsequent investigations. The contribution he made cannot be understated, particularly in his support of the victims. Two guys, in the infancy of these matters, choose to place their trust in Senior Constable Tony Tamplin to help them work out how they would bring forward the most damaging chapter in their lives. For that those victims and I will be forever grateful. I cannot sufficiently express how deeply remorseful I am and how shocked I was when I learnt of Tony's passing. I offer my deepest sympathies to his family and colleagues; my condolences and thoughts will be with them for a long time. As the member for Swansea said, Tony loved the cops and his colleagues, and they loved him right back. Vale Tony Tamplin.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [10.22 a.m.]: Whilst Tony's influence did not extend to the Cessnock area the people in my electorate still chose to call him with their issues. Some of my constituents told me, "I rang that Tony Tamplin. He is on TV. He seems really nice. I thought he would help me." Sadly, the heinous crimes that the member for Orange spoke about are occurring right across the region. I commence my contribution by acknowledging how lucky we are today to be talking about Tony Tamplin in this place—not lucky because he died but lucky because we knew him. Many people, for instance, from Sydney, the Illawarra and out west did not get to know him but that is their loss. Tony was an outstanding individual.

Tony started presenting the police news at a time when Brian Bury and Brian Henderson were presenting the evening news, Graham Kennedy was at the top of his game and Paul Hogan was on television. I have grown up with only Tony Tamplin reporting the police news. For 30 years the Hunter region had only

one cop on television, radio and in the media reporting police news. That was the person he was to the people of the Hunter. Tony Tamplin was larger than life. Interestingly, his wife, Sonia, noted that 20 years ago he had said to her that when he died he wanted his life to be celebrated and for people to have fun remembering him. I will start by having a bit of fun at his expense. The *Newcastle Herald* reported that Tony had left behind big shoes to fill. Tony was a big guy and he would have seen the irony in that. He had bloody big shoes to fill, physically and literally.

In preparing my speech I rang a friend who had worked with Tony Tamplin over the past 10 years in Variety to ask him for his thoughts about Tony. My friend, a significant character in his own right, said that Tony was hard to describe. He was just big but he exuded positivity and optimism. People wanted to be around him and he brought them together when they were around him. Tony gelled with people. He had enormous respect and empathy for people. He had a big smile, a hearty laugh and he was humble. My friend will be attending the service that is being held today for Tony at Newcastle Town Hall. Tony Tamplin's last column for the *Star* sums up why I love the people of the Hunter and why I enjoy the privilege of representing the people of the Hunter in this Chamber. In that article Tony reflected on the enormous support he had been given in recognition of his 35 years of service as a member of the NSW Police Force. Tony said:

It is because of this tremendous current of support that I love this city. We are a community, we still recognise one another as people, not as house or unit numbers lost in a concrete maze. When Mother Nature bares her teeth, a resident falls on hard times, a person falls victim to an illness, or when crime threatens our community, we all pitch in.

He finished that column by saying:

Thank you for showing kindness as we pass one another.

All members should remember that and we all need to do it. I sometimes wonder whether I am doing the right thing when I look someone in the eye as I pass him or her in the street. I do not know these people—they could be Joe Blow or Jenny Blogs—but I like to show kindness to the people in the street. Tony Tamplin did that. Vale Tony Tamplin.

**Mr ANDREW CORNWELL** (Charlestown) [10.26 a.m.]: I too make a brief contribution about the life of Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. Tony grew up in a large family and he and his wife, Sonia, raised a large family. But Tony was also a member of a family of 16,000 police colleagues and a family of 500,000 fellow Hunter residents. Tony was loved and adored by all those families. He was the face of policing in the Hunter. In many ways the respect with which our police are held today was reflected in the respect that people had for Tony. Tony never used police lingo in the media; he used language to which the public related. He would never talk about an alleged perpetrator or a group of youths. He would say, "Some idiot has been snapping trees in the main street of Wallsend", or, "Some dope has gone and done this in Cardiff". People genuinely warmed to him because the way in which he described things reflected what they felt.

Tony always struck an appropriate note. It was always stern but it was always sincere. It was evident from the way in which he communicated his message to the community that he clearly loved his job. Tony devoted a large amount of his time to charity work. One was more likely to see Tony standing beside Big Dog or Super Hubert, the world's skinniest magician, than standing beside the Commissioner of Police. Tony and Super Hubert were brothers in arms for the Variety charity. Tony used his profile to assist in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for Variety. It would be remiss of me if I did not use this opportunity to shamelessly plug Variety as that is what Tony would have done. He would have had a brief opportunity of about 30 seconds to talk about a policing issue and he would then take about five minutes to plug Variety. Charity work was core business to him. Tony was a lover of life. He was generous in both time and spirit, self-effacing and sincere. He was a big bloke; he was bighearted. Vale Tony Tamplin, you will be sorely missed and a great loss to the Hunter community.

**Ms SONIA HORNERY** (Wallsend) [10.28 a.m.], by leave: In this motion of condolence we are talking about the distinguished career of a wonderful police officer from the Hunter. I agree with the comments of the member for Newcastle about Tony's quick wit. Tony was definitely a much-loved community figure and probably one of the most popular coppers in the NSW Police Force. I agree with the comments of the member for Lake Macquarie that Tony would have been instrumental in helping him, as mayor of Lake Macquarie, to open the children's park and get on with it. I love the way the member for Cessnock described Tony Tamplin as "indescribable", because he certainly was.

As the member for Charlestown said, Tony was much loved and adored by the population of the Hunter. In my contribution I will refer to two particular encounters with Tony that were quite memorable. The

first encounter was when I asked Tony to speak at a seniors forum on advocating for home security. I liked Tony's frank and fair discussions with the seniors of the Wallsend community—he did not muck around about ensuring that they were aware they had to take responsibility for their own home security. That is what I liked about Tony: When it came to the nitty-gritty Tony knew how to explain to people that as members of the community they had to take responsibility for their own safety. That is important.

The second opportunity I had to meet with Tony and his wife, Sonia, was about another important issue: disadvantaged children. By the way, Tony's wife, Sonia, is a lovely woman and their children are wonderful. I am sure this is a sad time for Sonia and the family and on behalf of the House I pass on my condolences to them. Tony, Sonia and I talked about disadvantaged children in a particular school. They were concerned about ensuring that we had teachers' aides for the students with disabilities. Tony did everything right. He was a model constituent; he is the kind of constituent a member wants when there is a problem. They ring the office and make an appointment. They write a letter explaining the problem; they are courteous. They wait for an agreeable time to meet and then they discuss the problem.

Tony wrote to me about the fact that some disadvantaged students in a local school were about to lose their teacher's aide, who was sorely needed in that classroom. He thought that the students would not be able to learn without the teacher's aide. So we wrote to the school and the department, and we were successful in retaining the teacher's aide for those disadvantaged students. We did it all right and everyone was happy. In conclusion, Tony was a man of diplomacy and he did not muck around. He was much admired not only by the Wallsend community but also by the Hunter community, and it was well deserved. I am worried about Sonia; I hope she is okay. I imagine it is tough to have six children and to be without a dad. No-one wants to hear about that. I simply pass on my condolences, and I hope the family is okay. Tony will be sorely missed in the community.

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN** (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.32 a.m.], by leave: I add my humble contribution to the worthy tributes to Senior Constable Tony Tamplin. Words at a time like this are so often inadequate—there are only so many ways that we can describe someone who has left an indelible mark on our community and will be missed so very dearly by so many. The fact that my Hunter colleagues on both sides of the House are united today as one, speaking in unison on this motion, is a testament to the deep loss felt in all our communities. This is one thing that the eight of us agree on, and unfortunately we are united by grief.

As we speak, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Minister for the Hunter, the Hon. Michael Gallacher, is representing the Government, the Parliament and, more personally, the Hunter members—Liberal, Labor and Independent—at Tony's funeral. The Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage, and member for Maitland, the Hon. Robyn Parker, is representing the Government outside Parliament this morning but I know her thoughts are with us as we speak and with Tony as he is laid to rest.

Along with the Newcastle Knights and the Jets, Tony Tamplin was another vital piece of fabric in the fascinating patchwork that makes up the Hunter. The community's outpouring of sadness at Tony's passing is evident in the stories still running in the media and the many social media sites being inundated with tributes. A true servant of the public for 35 years, Tony Tamplin has left his mark on our community. Tragically taken at what I consider a young age, his legacy has left our community with a fine example of the blue uniform—a worthy citizen who gave so much to so many.

Through his day-to-day work, Tony personally touched thousands of people. Through his work in the media, he touched countless more. So many people feel they knew Tony Tamplin personally—he was in our living rooms at night and on our radios in the car during the day, giving us the latest information. He was the always reliable, dependably soothing voice of the police, whether it be warning us about a new scam by criminals, delivering the bad news about a tragedy or appealing to the public for assistance in a missing person's case. His dulcet tones were the balm we needed when there was a local crisis.

The well-known beard became familiar to us all, his soothing voice one we all came to trust when we heard it on the radio. He was a popular celebrant who married hundreds of Hunter couples; he was renowned for sharing in the couple's joyous day as if it was the first ceremony he had ever officiated. He was a champion of charities, in particular the Variety Club and autism research. I heard the member for Charlestown mention Super Hubert. That is the second time Super Hubert has been mentioned in *Hansard*. But Tony Tamplin was so much more than the fundraiser, the popular celebrant or the jovial face of police in the Hunter. We must not forget that he was a much-loved husband and father, a cherished son and brother. The House extends its sincere

sympathy to Tony's wife, Sonia, and his family. I hope they are in some small way comforted by the incredible outpouring of grief by people they will likely never meet, such was the respect and admiration for Tony. Vale Tony Tamplin.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT** (Baulkham Hills) [10.36 a.m.], by leave: As most members from the Hunter Valley know, I try to write myself into the Hunter Valley script, given that my family has lived there since the 1860s. But that is not the reason I make this contribution. I knew Tony professionally, as did the member for Dubbo. It was 20 years ago, in 1993, that as a university graduate I decided to make an honest career in the NSW Police Force media unit. That is when I met Tony, who was the media liaison officer based in Newcastle. Tony was, as members have described him, larger than life. I remember as a 23-year-old working in the police media unit with those tough, seasoned coppers, particularly in the Hunter Valley. Tony was a reassuring figure who would be happy to put his arm around me and give me some sage advice, particularly when I was under the pump.

I was always in awe of how much the media in the Hunter Valley, and particularly Newcastle, respected Tony. I do not think there was an incident in Newcastle that Tony did not control. And if he was not in control of it, particularly so far as police operations were concerned and the broader emergency services portfolio, he used to hide it well. There were always unwritten rules in police media relationships—nods and winks and the like. I suspect that Tony perfected that early in his career because neither the police commanders nor the media ever seemed to give him a hard time. I am conscious of Tony's charitable work. I am conscious that he had been in the job for 35 years, but the media embraced him as one of their own. When one works in public relations one knows that the greatest way to free oneself of spin or the accusation of spin is to be written into the script and to be seen as one of the media, and Tony certainly did that.

Whether it was floods and storm emergencies, or indeed serious crime, Tony put a human face to the NSW Police Force. At the time I started working with the NSW Police Force media unit my wife, Nicole, also started in the unit. Although we were young, single people, Tony, Nicole and I would often attend police events. Tony would tell me that it was a scandal that I was going out with the superintendent's daughter, and not long after we got married Tony said it was a scandal I had married the superintendent's daughter. Tony was that way inclined. He could talk to people from all levels of society. I conclude by touching on something the member for Wallsend said. If I know Tony well, I know that he would be horrified to think we would leave his wife and kids without support, love, prayers and indeed encouragement.

Tony was a father to so many people and now I think the people of the Hunter and the police family need to take a leaf out of his book and we need to be family to his children and to his wife. We sit here today depressed, sad and mourning over the fact that we have lost a great stalwart of the community and wondering who is going to pick up the slack. But there is a family now with six kids that has been left with an even bigger hole. So I join the member for Wallsend in making sure that Tony's family is aware that this Parliament is conscious of the fact that they are in mourning and without a father. If there is anything we can do to encourage the police and the people of the Hunter Valley to support them we will do it. Vale Tony Tamplin.

**Mr NATHAN REES** (Toongabbie) [10.41 a.m.], by leave: Today I make a brief contribution regarding the passing of Tony Tamplin. Most of the material about the integrity, decency and courage of this gentleman has already been covered by the fine contributions of the previous speakers. I take this opportunity to extend my condolences to his wife, his extended family, his loved ones and friends, and also to the 16,000-plus men and women of the NSW Police Force, who are part of his broader family. I had a couple of dealings with Tony, first as Minister for Emergency Services when the Newcastle storms hit in June 2007 and again as Premier. Tony was not just a fine policeman; he was a fine Australian and, as the member for Baulkham Hills said, a man who was decent, upright, straight up and down, and who had the respect of the media—and that is no small feat.

Tony had the quality of being irresistibly likeable—and those of us who work in politics know how valuable that is. Many of us try every day to narrow the awful gap between Tony and us. He was a gentleman, a father figure to many, a mentor to hundreds and a man extraordinarily well regarded in his community. The fact that so many people in this place have paid tribute to Tony this morning and that his funeral today is so well attended demonstrates the impact that he has had on his community. Tony was a man who was larger than life and who had a positive impact on everything he went near. The community and the country were very lucky to have him. Vale Tony.

**Mr TIM OWEN** (Newcastle) [10.42 a.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Lake Macquarie, Swansea, Cessnock, Charlestown, Wallsend, Port Stephens, Dubbo, Baulkham Hills and

Toongabbie for their warm and heartfelt contributions to this motion. There is not too much more to say. The police Minister is at the funeral this morning and I know that he will pass on the warm regards of the Parliament to the family of Tony Tamplin. As members have said this morning, it is a sad day for the city and for the Hunter Valley region. It is, of course, an extremely sad day for Sonia and the family.

Tony will be remembered as a great police officer, a great community man, a great family man and a man of great charity. But as the member for Cessnock said, we should all celebrate a life of extraordinary colour and commitment. Tony was a man whom I knew very well. In fact, I was due to ride on the Variety Bash with him in a couple of weeks. I know that he will be sorely missed. It is a sad day but we should remember Tony with great joy and celebration, and be grateful that the community of New South Wales had the privilege of having him with us for the past 54 years. On behalf of all members I say: Rest in peace, Tony—an extraordinary life that will be well remembered.

**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.*

### **MEMBER FOR KOGARAH**

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I will lay some ground rules for debate on the next motion. Members are, or should be, aware of Standing Order 52. Members on both sides of the House should listen and understand this. Standing Order 52 states:

When a member is speaking other Members shall not converse or make any noise or disturbance.

I advise all members that I intend to make sure that that standing order is complied with to the true letter of the law. I know that debate on the next motion will be very emotional. I also know that a number of people are in the public gallery to support the member for Kogarah. I advise those in the public gallery that Standing Order 260 states:

A person, not being a Member, who interrupts the orderly conduct of the business of the House, obstructs the approaches to the House, or causes a disturbance within the precincts of the House, may, by the direction of the Speaker, be removed by the Serjeant-at-Arms.

I intend to enforce that standing order as well. As I said, the next motion has already created some emotional debate within the halls of this place and in this Chamber. I ask all members to respect the standing orders of this place and to be aware that I will act immediately on any breach of those standing orders. That applies to members on both sides of the House.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [10.47 a.m.]: I move:

That this House censures the Member for Kogarah for:

- (1) deliberately and contemptibly misleading the electors of Kogarah by falsely asserting that when Labor was in Government every major hospital was rebuilt or upgraded across the State; and
- (2) improperly using taxpayer-funded office resources to make the misleading assertions to the residents of Kogarah.

It is a concern that the Government has had to move this motion against the member for Kogarah. The Government is concerned, as would be the community, about any member of Parliament using parliamentary entitlements to make false assertions or assertions that are not based in fact. That is completely unacceptable. We in the New South Wales Parliament have many benefits. We can use taxpayers' funds to convey truthful, honest messages—messages of integrity. We have found that the letter circulated by the member for Kogarah to her electorate contains some essential untruths. The publications guidelines that are laid down in the "Members' Entitlements Handbook" state explicitly that they must not: "Contain political party slogans/logos promoting electioneering or political campaigning." The correspondence issued by the member for Kogarah made an attack on the member for Oatley and on the member for Rockdale and also asserted some falsehoods. It stated: "When Labor was in Government, every major hospital was rebuilt or upgraded across the State". That is simply not true.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Name the one that wasn't; name one.

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

**Ms Linda Burney:** Leave him alone.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I warn the member for Canterbury that I would take great pleasure in removing her from this House.

**Ms Linda Burney:** I know you would.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** You're meant to be impartial.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I am impartial. I intend to be impartial, as I stated earlier. I will have no compunction in removing members who do not abide by Standing Order 52.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In addition to the member for Kogarah clearly breaching the guidelines set out in the "Members' Entitlements Handbook", she has also perpetrated falsehoods about the Government's position with regard to St George Hospital and certainly that of the former Government. St George Hospital is a perfect example of the former Labor Government's under-investment in hospital infrastructure. It was left untouched during its entire 16 years in government. Very little work was done on that hospital over that time. When the former Government finally committed \$10 million to the redevelopment of the emergency department in 2010 its announcement was underfunded to the tune of \$29 million. Then, to make matters worse, it never delivered the upgrade anyway. St George Hospital joins other hospitals that Labor promised would have work delivered but the work was never delivered.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Name one.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Name one? I will respond more fully to the member for Macquarie Fields: Tamworth, Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Bega, Wagga Wagga, Blacktown, Mount Druitt, and of course the northern beaches hospital. I thank the member for his interjection.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind the member for Macquarie Fields that under Standing Order 249 I do not have to place him on three calls to order. I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The assertion by the member for Kogarah that "When Labor was in Government every major hospital was rebuilt or upgraded across the State" is simply a complete falsehood. That claim was repeated by the member for Kogarah in seeking priority for her motion yesterday. The fact that the member also used parliamentary entitlements to repeat the discredited New South Wales Labor lie that the New South Wales Government has "cut" the Health budget adds to her complicity in the charges that have been laid against her through this censure motion. In fact, the budget for recurrent expenditure last year grew by almost \$1 billion.

This is a scenario in which the members for Oatley and for Rockdale have been able to bring to this Government a sad history of the former Government's complete failure to do the work that it said it would do. That Government let down the people of St George; it let down the people who rely on that hospital. I well recollect that in the final years of the Unsworth Labor Government the then shadow Minister for Health, Peter Collins, revealed pictures of a run-down hospital held together with chicken wire and struggling to meet patient demands. When the New South Wales Coalition came to government in 1988 it was committed to a major redevelopment and capital works program at St George Hospital. In fact, the Greiner Government spent \$200 million on a major redevelopment of St George Hospital, which included the existing emergency department, and upgraded the hospital to teaching status. That was the last major money spent on St George Hospital—far from the assertions made by the member for Kogarah.

The members for Oatley and for Rockdale have been responsible for ensuring that the message about the upgrade of St George Hospital has been brought to the Government and been actioned. Just a short time ago the Minister for Health and the Premier were out there turning the first sod on the upgrade of the emergency department. The bottom line is that a member of Parliament has come into this place and reasserted the fabrications and falsehoods that she put out through correspondence to her electorate using members'

entitlements. She deserves to be censured by this House. She deserves to be sent a clear message that she has deliberately and contemptibly misled the electors of Kogarah by falsely asserting these issues and that will not be accepted by this House. Taxpayer-funded office resources should not be used improperly. We condemn the member for Kogarah and certainly will be proceeding to censure her this morning.

**Ms CHERIE BURTON** (Kogarah) [10.54 a.m.]: First, I thank the residents who have come here today to support me. We have fought together for 14 years on behalf of the people of St George, and today is no different. I thank Steve McMahon—who is also here—the Labor candidate for Barton, who has been a strong advocate for St George Hospital and the urgently needed upgrade. Yesterday I sought to move a motion in this House calling on the Government to fund immediately an urgent upgrade to St George Hospital. Throughout that entire speech I was howled down to the point where the Premier himself left his office to come down to the Chamber and take frivolous points of order to ensure that I could not be heard and that I would be gagged. Every time I or one of my colleagues stand at this podium and present an alternative view we are gagged by those on the other side of the House.

Even when we seek to move a motion to be accorded priority—the only chance we get to assert that the Government is not doing something right—we find that our speaking time has been reduced from five minutes to three minutes. That is another gag. Today is a further example. The Government did not want to move a proper censure motion today because I would have had 15 minutes to speak after the mover of the motion and then 10 minutes in reply. That is 25 minutes during which the truth could have been told. Those opposite use their numbers and their bullyboy tactics every time, and they will use them today. They will win this vote today but only through sheer brute force. They have not put forward a single argument in support of this being a proper censure motion, and they know it.

Week after week I have had to sit in this Chamber and listen to members opposite peddle their lies about the previous Labor Government. Even the Johnny-come-latelies opposite who have yet to achieve anything for their electorates say that Labor did nothing for 16 years. That is a lie. I have some sobering news for them: Labor did not win four consecutive elections by doing nothing. That is an absolute insult to the people of New South Wales. I was here for 12 years of the previous Labor Government and I can confirm that there is a proud history of achievement. In my electorate alone we delivered almost \$2 billion worth of infrastructure. Can any members opposite claim that? I do not think so. Turning to the letter, I place on record that I stand 100 per cent behind this letter. Our job as members of Parliament is to inform our community and to fight for our community. In my letter I stated that Labor upgraded every major hospital in New South Wales, and I assert that again today.

Today I bring in my source document, which is from NSW Health, and which shows every single major hospital that was upgraded and the total amounts involved. With the indulgence of the House, I will name a few. Royal North Shore received \$1 billion; Sutherland Hospital, \$100 million; Liverpool Hospital, more than \$500 million; Auburn Hospital, \$80 million—that hospital was earmarked for closure under the Greiner Government—Westmead Children's Hospital, \$311 million; John Hunter Hospital, \$203 million; Orange and Bloomfield Psychiatric Unit, \$250 million; Bathurst Hospital, \$111 million; Campbelltown Hospital, \$112 million; Canterbury Hospital—another hospital those opposite closed—\$80 million for a complete redevelopment; Bankstown, Belmont, Wyong, Gosford, Shoalhaven, Maitland, Royal Prince Alfred, \$400 million for a complete redevelopment; St Vincent's Hospital, \$131 million; and Tweed Heads, Nepean and over 30 multipurpose health facilities in rural towns.

When we left office the recurrent Health budget was at a record high of \$16 billion. That represented a 192 per cent increase since the last time members opposite were in office. We also employed an additional 40,000 nurses across the State compared with when the Coalition was in office. In the letter I reminded my constituents about the \$3 billion in health cuts. The Minister for Health admitted it but she too is into the big Government spin cycle of talking about "forced savings" not cuts. But there is still the worst-ever trolley block in emergency departments, a blowout in waiting lists and hospitals having to close their wards. What does the Minister say? She says, "It's not my fault, it's the boards' decision." If the Government gave the boards the resources they need they would not be closing wards. What a disgrace.

Finally, *Hansard*, the public record, reveals the lack of support from the members for Rockdale and for Oatley. My letter states that they voted against my motion seeking priority to debate St George Hospital, and they did. It is recorded in *Hansard*. This letter is telling the truth. This letter is telling my constituents about the lack of support that this Government has for the St George Hospital. The Labor Party is proud of its record at the St George Hospital. The Labor Government provided \$10 million for the medical research centre,

\$8.2 million for the mental health unit, \$5 million for the day surgery unit, and \$1 million for the planning of the new emergency department. Prior to the election I secured \$30 million worth of funding for that project and this Government is taking the credit for it. We also expanded clinical genetic services, obtained additional special care cots, and provided \$15 million for Calvary Hospital and a dialysis bus.

This censure motion is not about the letter. This Government thinks there should be one view in the community and that is its spin doctor view. Week after week its members give themselves hugs and a good rap, but they are yet to do anything except plan and consult. I will not be intimidated. I will not back away from standing up for my community, and I will not be gagged. Good luck to the Government if it wants to use its numbers today to censure me. The people of Kogarah have elected me four times to this Parliament and they will not do that if someone is not a decent representative. I am here now and I will keep fighting for the people of Kogarah. I do not care how many times I am censured, but it should be done properly.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind visitors in the public gallery of the warning I gave prior to the start of debate on this motion.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [11.01 a.m.]: In speaking on this censure motion I quote from the member for Kogarah's electorate-wide letter:

When Labor was in Government every major hospital was rebuilt or upgraded across the State.

This is untrue.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind Opposition members of my previous warnings. The member of Kogarah was interjected on twice. I expect no interjections from Opposition members on the member for Rockdale.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS:** The Labor Party cared so much for the St George Hospital that it did nothing to substantially improve it during the 16 years it was in power. It was a Coalition Government with Peter Collins as Minister for Health that substantially modernised the hospital, spending more than \$200 million on the project. The Labor Party was more concerned with retaining government and playing revolving doors with its leadership than making a substantial improvement to St George Hospital. Its backbiting and internal fighting were not a recipe for good government. Unfortunately, its leadership team played a macabre version of musical chairs and the member for Blacktown has the last chair. Did the former Labor Party care about St George Hospital? No, it did not.

I will tell members a little story to highlight one example of Labor's neglect. In 2007, the St George Hospital needed a 1.2 CT radiotherapy simulator. Who delivered it? It was not Labor but a dedicated group led by Michael Kitimiridis, the Liberal Mayor of Kogarah, and Tony Abbott in his capacity as Federal Minister for Health. Without the CT radiotherapy simulator, St George Hospital would have had millions of dollars of expensive equipment that could not be used properly. The Labor Party came on board and matched it after it was installed and was operational. Contrary to the member for Kogarah's electorate-wide letter, which was distributed with parliamentary entitlements, in which she stated she is "calling on the Government to make upgrades to St George Hospital a priority"

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind the member for Macquarie Fields that he is already on a call to order.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS:** When the member for Kogarah was a member of the former Labor Government, there was no substantive commitment from the Labor Party to St George Hospital. The member for Kogarah might like to answer this question: How many simulators could be purchased with the \$400 million that bought nothing, but disappeared into the Rozelle Metro? Labor could have diverted that money and rebuilt St George Hospital. What did Labor deliver? It delivered waste, more waste, mismanagement and indifference to the St George region. The only ideas Labor ever had were pilfered from Liberal Party election flyers because when it came to vision in St George, it had none.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! There is too much audible conversation coming from Opposition members. If they wish to have a private conversation they should do so outside the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS:** To refresh the memory of members opposite, St George Hospital is a perfect example of the former Labor Government's under-investment in hospital infrastructure. It was left untouched

during its 16 years in Government. St George Hospital is one of the many hospitals that Labor promised to build or upgrade, including hospitals at Tamworth, Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Bega, Wagga Wagga and the northern beaches. But it did nothing. This is why the letter that was distributed by the member for Kogarah is not just misleading; it is false. The New South Wales Liberals and Nationals went to the last election with a commitment to build the emergency department. The Labor Party did nothing to substantially upgrade St George Hospital. Through the member for Kogarah it is once again wasting taxpayers' money by using parliamentary entitlements to mislead the people of St George. For this reason the censure motion should be carried.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [11.05 a.m.]: Yesterday we heard the phrase "misuse of taxpayer funds" tossed around. Today we are witnessing a misuse of taxpayer funds and the valuable time of this House with the stunt that is being perpetrated by the Government. Yesterday we were given an insight into the real priorities of this Government and this Premier. He sat on the benches waiting for this censure to be moved like a kid at a party who had had too much red cordial. He was bouncing around with a smug face, looking like a kid who thought he had just won the lollies.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order—

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The disorderly conduct of Opposition members is eating into the time of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** I ask that the member be brought back to the leave of the motion.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! First, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to return to the leave of the motion. Secondly, please refer to members by their correct titles.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** Yesterday the member for Ku-ring-gai's real motivations and priorities became clear. His priorities are not about fixing the problems in New South Wales which he spent four years highlighting. His priorities are petty, petty politics. That is what this motion is. What else would one expect?

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order. I ask that the member be brought back to the leave of the motion. I point out that the Premier is not taking part in this debate. He has no role. The commentary is peripheral and unnecessary.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The motion is about censure of the member for Kogarah. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** This is a motion about priorities. The priority of members opposite is wasting the time of the House by arguing about something that is completely not true. We stand by what the member for Kogarah had to say in her letter because it is an undeniable fact. The Premier of this State is wasting taxpayers' money and the time of this House on this stunt. And it is no wonder, because petty politics is what you get from someone who has never had a real job.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I draw the Leader of the Opposition back to the leave of the motion. I remind the member for Blacktown that if he wishes to raise issues of a substantive nature against the Premier he should do so under Standing Order 73.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** This motion has the Premier's fingerprints all over it. He sits on that side of the House in envy. He is envious of the fact that we have a member for Kogarah—

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: If the Leader of the Opposition wants to back his member, he should do it. But if he wants to attack one of the members on this side of the House, he should move a substantive motion. This is about a substantive motion. This is about misleading and deceptive conduct. He should back his member or get out.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The point of order is upheld. The Leader of the Opposition will return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** This motion is motivated by sheer envy. Members opposite can only aspire to be half as good a member as the member for Kogarah. This motion has been moved to protect the member for Rockdale and the member for Oatley because they are feeling some heat. We have a fantastic member and our backbenchers are twice as good as any member opposite. This is all about envy.

**Mr MARK COURE** (Oatley) [11.09 a.m.]: The member for Kogarah claims that while the Labor Party was in government every major hospital in New South Wales was built or upgraded. We have just heard about the hospitals that Labor promised for Tamworth, Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Bega, Wagga Wagga and the northern beaches but never delivered.

*[Interjection]*

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Oatley will be heard in silence. I call the member for Canterbury to order.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Contrary to the member for Kogarah's claims, I know of one hospital that was forgotten, neglected and underfunded over the 16 year-term of the incompetent former Labor Government. The epicentre of Labor's Bermuda triangle was St George Hospital. It was neglected, forgotten and underfunded. It was as though it had simply vanished. The former Labor members for Rockdale, Kogarah and Oatley failed to deliver any major redevelopment, any new buildings or any increases in funding. Instead they spent millions of dollars like drunks on a Friday night. Labor is no friend of St George Hospital. Who promised, funded, built and delivered a new seven-storey hospital ward building on Gray Street in 1993? It was a Liberal-Nationals Government under the stewardship of Premier John Fahey. Who promised, funded and built a new car park in 1991? It was a Liberal-Nationals Government and it was opened by Premier Nick Greiner. A major redevelopment costing \$200 million—

*[Interruption]*

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Mr MARK COURE:** St George Hospital is a perfect example of the former Labor Government's under-investment in hospital infrastructure. It was left untouched during its 16 year term in this State. Unlike the former Labor Government, this Government is getting on with the job. Last month the Premier and the Minister for Health came to St George Hospital to mark the commencement of the emergency department upgrade that was announced after the Coalition came to office. The contrast between this Government and the former Labor Government could not be more stark. The Coalition is rebuilding local health infrastructure and enhancing front-line services by providing more nurses and doctors. The Labor Party talks about doing things and members opposite pose for pretty pictures, but the Coalition is delivering. The member for Kogarah has her head down and she is scribbling away. She was parliamentary secretary assisting the then Premier and the then Minister for Health for almost two years, but she failed to deliver any funding for St George Hospital.

Unlike the Coalition, the Labor Party is no friend of that hospital. Our track record is clear: We have reopened the hydrotherapy pool that was closed by the former Labor Government, and we are building the emergency department and the mental health unit. As members know, the St George Hospital is a major State trauma centre that services the growing population of the St George area and the southern suburbs. That is why the Coalition went to the last election committing to build a new emergency department. We promised it, we are funding and we are building it. Construction of the new \$39 million emergency department is well underway. Tenders were awarded recently and construction has commenced. The new emergency department will provide increased capacity and improved facilities for patients. Unlike the former Labor Government, this Government is delivering.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [11.13 a.m.]: I am proud to assert once again that when the Labor Party was in government every major hospital in the State was rebuilt or upgraded. I have tweeted that assertion and I will include it in my next newsletter, so I look forward to being the subject of a censure motion. We should have more of these debates because this motion has triggered the real debate about what happens in New South Wales. It is indicative of what really happens rather than the tawdry theatre that we must endure in this House. People in the public gallery might well ask what we are doing and why we are debating this motion. We are debating it because yesterday the Premier—the man to whom the member for Oatley refers sycophantically as the "Colossus"—had a brain snap. The Colossus of Ku-ring-gai determined that this is the most important issue in the State.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: I am reluctant to take this point of order because the member for Maroubra is demonstrating the Premier's significance as the Colossus of the State, but he is not speaking to the motion and I ask that he be directed to do so.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The brain snap started yesterday when the Premier took two points of order on an Opposition backbench member, which manifested itself in this motion.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: The member for Maroubra must speak to the motion. If he does not he should sit down.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Maroubra will return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The Leader of the House has called for a fight but he is now taking repeated points of order because he no longer wants it. That demonstrates the glass jaws of the sissy members opposite.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Oatley will cease interjecting.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** This half-hearted censure motion is embarrassing. That is obvious given the lack of passion the Leader of the House displayed when he moved it. The Government cannot beat the member for Kogarah at the ballot box so it is using its numbers in this place to do so.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** She will brag to her grandchildren about the day that the Premier had to stoop so low to attack her in the House with a half-hearted censure motion.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Members opposite have glass jaws and they are obsessed with mere politics. To move this half-hearted motion censure motion on the member for Kogarah for misleading the House creates a very interesting precedent. We are talking about St George Hospital, but I remind members opposite that we have the literature that they have distributed and it contains some doozies. The member for Coogee has stated that there are now more beds and nurses at Prince of Wales Hospital. This Government has just closed a 37 bed ward at that hospital. The member has been misleading the State.

The Premier said that should a premier ever direct the Commissioner of Police about the use of resources that premier should be booted out of office. The same should apply to the member for East Hills, who said that he was very pleased to announce that he had secured 14 more police officers for the Bankstown Local Area Command. That local area command is still understaffed. The member has secured nothing and he should be censured. I have many similar examples. The member for Menai talked about a non-existent \$5.2 billion budget black hole. That has been comprehensively debunked, so she should also be censured. The member for Smithfield has put his parliamentary seal on a letter of endorsement for council elections. Members opposite have opened the door so they can walk through it.

**Ms CHERIE BURTON (Kogarah) [11.17 a.m.],** by leave: I said that \$80 million was spent at Auburn Hospital, but I was wrong—it was \$145 million. I will not back away from standing up for my community. All I have heard today from members opposite is lies. The member for Oatley said that there were no buildings. What is the \$10-million medical research centre? It is a building. What is the \$8.2-million mental health unit? It is a building. What is the \$5-million day surgery unit? It is a building. What is the \$5-million psychiatric emergency centre? It is a building. All we hear are lies and spin from members opposite. There have been many improvements and achievements at St George Hospital.

The real issue is that this motion is a smokescreen to hide the fact that doctors, nurses and the signatories to the petition containing more than 5,000 signatures collected by Steve McMahon demand a complete upgrade of St George Hospital now. The Government does not want to do it. The member for Oatley should listen to his doctors, nurses and constituents. He is way off the ball and has no idea what is going on out there because, as usual, he has put his ministerial ambition before the people of his electorate. I will not be silenced. For the past two years I have been a strong voice for Kogarah, and I will continue to be a strong voice

for the next two years. The member for Oatley cannot stand it. I will keep fighting for my constituents and for St George Hospital. Today's motion is a smokescreen to hide the fact that yesterday, for the second time, the member for Oatley and the member for Rockdale voted against a hospital that services their electorate.

The people who elected the member for Oatley and the member for Rockdale have to go to St George Hospital to get treated, and those members want to blame everything on Labor. I have just demonstrated Labor's achievements in health and in hospital infrastructure—it is on the record—and neither the member for Oatley nor the member for Rockdale can hide from that. In two years I will remind the electorate that those members voted against an upgrade of their hospital; that is what is so disgraceful today. They want to use their numbers to try to intimidate and silence me for standing up for St George Hospital. They are in government now and St George Hospital needs funding, so cough it up. The member for Oatley is on another planet. He is a bizarre individual.

This debate has gone way beyond the emergency department, for which I secured funding. As has been shown today, this motion is a smokescreen. I know that deep down Government members know this is a joke and they are embarrassed. I ask them to think about the arguments that have been put forward. I ask them whether they think it is right and fair in a democracy that somebody should be censured for supporting their constituents and for not agreeing with them. Would they vote to censure somebody for defending their community? Do they really think that is right and fair? They do not have to vote with their colleagues if they do not want to. They can say, "I believe in members of Parliament sticking up for their electorates; I believe in members of Parliament fighting for their electorates." I am not sure what members of the Government do, but members of the Opposition fight for their constituents. All I have done in this letter is fight for my constituency. Members of the Government want the truth. As they say in the movies, "You can't handle the truth."

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.21 a.m.], in reply: The Leader of the Opposition spent more time assailing the Premier, who holds a position that he has no hope of ever holding, than defending the member for Kogarah. Perhaps that shows the degree of concern and embarrassment about what she has done. The member for Maroubra seemed to forget that at the core of this motion were promises and falsehoods about St George Hospital. He never mentioned St George Hospital once, nor did he defend the assertions of the member for Kogarah. It would seem that the two people who came fast to provide a backup for the member for Kogarah did not have faith that she had done the right thing. I remind members that approximately 50,000 letters would have been sent out in the Kogarah electorate. Based on the cost of stamp, we are absolutely certain that she would have spent more than \$15,000, possibly as much as \$20,000, of taxpayers' money, that could have been used for far better purposes.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member for Kogarah has used those funds and her position to perpetuate falsehoods. The bottom line is that St George Hospital was chicken wire under the former Labor Government until the Collins Coalition Government invested a substantial amount of money in that hospital.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind the member for Canterbury that she is already on one call to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** As a result of 16 years of failure by the former Labor Government to do what was needed for the people in that area and support St George Hospital, we now have the member for Oatley and the member for Rockdale who have come to the Government in a very short period and who have a commitment of \$39 million for a new emergency department and to put St George Hospital on the radar for future works. As was said in the motion, we have a complete and deliberately contemptible misleading of the electors of Kogarah by a false assertion that certain things had been done in regard to hospitals broadly and, indeed, in relation to St George. It is simply not true. That is a misleading assertion by the member for Kogarah at taxpayers' expense of somewhere in the order of \$15,000 to \$20,000, which was wasted. The member for Kogarah deserves censure. The Government will now support the motion to censure the member for Kogarah. This should be a lesson to all members to get it right in future. They are all excited on that side because they have realised that their number is up.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** They have been pinned for the false assertion and for the use of taxpayers' money. This Government reminds the Labor Party that the reason there is next to none of them in this Chamber

is that these sorts of things were occurring when they were in government. They lied, and the people of New South Wales have seen that day after day at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Their former members are at the commission. They are the survivors. Get it right; be truthful. In future the member for Kogarah should get her facts right.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 59**

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

**Noes, 21**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! Before members leave the Chamber I remind the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Canterbury, the member for Murray-Darling, the member for Maroubra and the member for Cabramatta that they are all on a call to order and that that call will remain in force until the end of today.

**EDUCATION FUNDING**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [11.36 a.m.]: I move:

That this House notes:

- (1) the planned \$1.7 billion cut from the Department of Education budget will affect students in both public schools and independent schools in the Bankstown area;
- (2) these cuts are the equivalent of 34 million textbooks, air conditioning for 680,000 classrooms or 17,000 new teachers; and
- (3) condemns the Government for failing to invest in students across the State.

Since this motion was introduced in this place in November last year, the Government has decided to sign up to the Gonski reforms in education funding. This decision followed months of campaigning by Federal and State Labor members of Parliament to encourage the conservative governments of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland to agree to these important reforms. Interestingly, the New South Wales Government's contribution to the Gonski scheme is \$1.7 billion, which equals the cuts that the New South Wales Government had intended to make, and had begun to make, to education funding in this State.

Last year \$200 million was ripped out of the Education budget. Whilst the O'Farrell Government talks up its enormous and historic contribution to school education, those on this side of the House well know that the Government is simply putting back the money it took from education in the first place. This is the most despicable form of deception, and there has been criticism of this Government's duplicity from both sides of politics. I draw the attention of the House to an article by Janet Albrechtsen titled, "Go to the bottom of the class, Premier" which appeared in the *Australian* on 1 May 2013 and which states:

April 22 marked the day when Barry O'Farrell finally signalled he was not a real Liberal... After last week, O'Farrell is a Liberal in name only.

I am sure the conservative Right in this Chamber would agree with that observation. Tony Abbott is the biggest stumbling block to the implementation of the Gonski reforms. He has stated that he is opposed to the Gonski model of funding. The Federal Liberals oppose providing any more funding to the public school system while their colleagues at a State level rip away funds not only from public schools but also from independent schools. Only Labor supports a diverse education sector with both public and private education. Only Labor consistently supports a fair and equitable funding model to provide the funds needed to support every student in New South Wales and nationally. It is clear that Liberal governments are no friend of students, no matter what school they attend.

I want to make something very clear—this is a no brainer. Of the \$14.5 billion funding for education reforms under the Gonski scheme, New South Wales was always going to fare best, with funding of \$5 billion. It would have been outrageous for New South Wales not to have signed up to the Gonski reforms. It is hypocritical in the extreme for the New South Wales Government to claim now that it is a great supporter of education when we are all aware of the emotional turmoil and unnecessary stress that school administrators, teachers, students and parents have been subjected to for the past seven months—that is when the O'Farrell Government first announced its \$1.7 billion cut in education funding.

For more than six months there have been letters written, petitions, strikes, appeals and rallies by distraught teachers worried not only about their jobs but also about the future of education in this State and nationally. For six months the O'Farrell Government ignored appeals from those responsible for educating the youth of Australia and, importantly, ignored appeals from the students and their parents. In signing up to the Gonski deal the O'Farrell Government is returning to the New South Wales education sector with one hand what it took away with the other. I turn now to the statewide cuts that have so far been made to education funding, in particular to education funding in my electorate of Bankstown.

One of them was the cut to school cleaning hours. Surprisingly, the Government decided that it was not important to have clean schools. More than 10 schools in my electorate have had their cleaning hours cut by between seven and 10 hours each week. Cutting funding for the most basic cleaning services in our schools is proof that the O'Farrell Government's disgraceful cuts in education will literally impact on every aspect of our education system. Any parent, teacher or student will say that schools should have more cleaning hours, not less. Other cuts the Government has already undertaken include TAFE. TAFE has already been earmarked to cut more than 800 teachers and staff. The Gonski agreement will make no difference to TAFE; 800 teachers and staff will still be cut from the TAFE sector, and fees will still increase by 9.5 per cent. Sadly, the Government also decided to cut the joint training scheme, which cuts 8,000 apprentices—

**Ms Gabrielle Upton:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance. This motion is about school education, not vocational education.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Bankstown will return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** Let us talk about the schools in my electorate. I have a pile of letters that I have written over the past two years and some of the pathetic replies I have received from the Minister for Education when I have asked for assistance for schools in Bankstown.

**Mr John Williams:** How many did you write when you were in government?

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** This might be a joke to members opposite, but students in my electorate—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Bankstown has the call.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** —from a low socio-economic background constantly deal with a range of issues and difficulties. One school has 1,000 students, some of whom come from a refugee background; they are recent migrants who come from a financially disadvantaged situation. Some of the students are victims of domestic violence. I made a simple request for one additional counsellor for those students. Currently one counsellor is available on four days for 1,000 students, many of who have difficult lives. My request was knocked back. Another school had a serious security incident; two men approached children from kindergarten to year 2 and said sexually abusive things to them. I raised that incident in the House. I also asked the Minister why that school did not get a security fence. Today, nine months later, the school still does not have a security fence. Currently it has a fence that is the height of my hip, and I am only about five foot four inches. This is one example of how the Minister has done absolutely nothing for schools in Bankstown. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.43 a.m.]: There is no clearer evidence that Labor is asleep on the job than the fact that this motion is before the House today. The motion is about a planned cut to school funding. Have members opposite not heard—wakey-wakey—about the additional investment of \$5 billion—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Vaucluse has the call.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** —in New South Wales schools? New South Wales was the first State to sign up for that additional funding. Members opposite should know that that includes a legislated guarantee by the Commonwealth Labor Government, which will be in place by 1 July this year. It is interesting that this is the first time members opposite have talked about these historic reforms. We have not heard anything in question time. Why? Because they cannot play their usual games on the Gonski school funding reforms, to which this Government signed up.

Members opposite cannot play their usual games because the reforms are in the best interests of New South Wales students, parents and teachers. That is why the New South Wales Government, elected in a landslide in March 2011, will implement the Gonski reforms. People know that these reforms are good for the kids in schools. Members opposite have nowhere to go on this. That is why I am surprised that the motion is before the House today. Any member with sense would have withdrawn the motion so that members opposite would not be embarrassed about the good decisions taken by the Government to support schoolchildren in New South Wales.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Point of order: The Government has already cut \$200 million from the education sector in the past six months.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Vaucluse has the call.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I want to ensure that members opposite know what the Gonski reforms we signed up to are about. What does it mean for our kids in schools? It means more resources and fairer distribution of resources to kids in schools according to their need. At the centre of the reforms is an aim to achieve higher standards and better education for every New South Wales child. Members opposite cannot criticise that because that is at the heart of the reforms we signed up to last week. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for New South Wales schools and we have made it happen. It is time for New South Wales Labor to do a reality check, such as the one it has been force-fed through the Independent Commission Against Corruption. We are providing, through the partnership with the Commonwealth Government, real additional spending in New South Wales schools.

Let me debunk some of the myths that members opposite, particularly the member for Bankstown, are spreading around. The New South Wales Government has not cut funding for front-line education services. A record \$13.83 billion was invested in education in the 2012-13 State budget—an increase of \$383 million from the 2011-12 budget. Over four years the New South Wales Government will invest more than \$53 billion in education, compared with \$46 billion in the last four years of Labor's governance of this State. What the member for Bankstown and her friends are spreading around about class sizes increasing is wrong. Class sizes

will not increase. The Department of Education and Communities and the Teachers Federation—the good friends of Labor; they are now our good friends because we are putting in place good policy that benefits the children of our State—entered into a new agreement, which will remain in place until at least term two of 2016, that locks in class sizes.

I suggest that members opposite talk to their friends in the Teachers Federation to find out what is happening in our schools. But the Teachers Federation is busy publicly supporting the Government's reforms. Members opposite must feel uncomfortable about that. What is happening on the ground? The member for Bankstown talked about the withdrawal of support on the ground for schools. The drug and alcohol education policies will continue, as will public education representative sport, the Schools Spectacular, and the Premier's Reading Challenge and Spelling Bee. I could go on about the school programs that will continue. For the benefit of kids in schools, I ask the member for Bankstown to stop her scaremongering and to acknowledge and embrace the major step forward that the Government took last week when it signed up to the Gonski reforms funding proposals.

It is important to ensure that the vital work being done by the Government results in a system of school funding that can lift attainment across all schools, both public and private. During Labor's 16 years in government, the Teachers Federation ran State education for the benefit of its members, not students, who are our central focus. Labor could not make any considered decisions or introduce meaningful reforms because it was hostage to the unions and it was unable to govern for the whole of the community, particularly the kids in our schools. Labor had a revolving door of education Ministers, and it left no opportunity for those Ministers to get across their portfolios and understand and address the major issues.

In contrast, investing is a great way to describe what the Government is doing. The question we always start with in government is: How can we better invest for the benefit of students in our schools? We do not want to invest for the benefit of teachers or Labor's union members but for students across the State. That question is also driving our important reforms to teacher training. Our blueprint for action titled "Great Teaching, Inspired Learning" will step up the qualifications and quality of our teachers when they enter teacher training and as they continue through their careers, with induction processes and accreditation and maintaining those standards again for the benefit of our kids. That is why we are also committed to Local Schools, Local Decisions. The motion before us clearly has not been well thought through by those on the other side of politics. There is no better evidence that Labor is asleep on the job—asleep in relation to school education—than the fact that this motion has been put forward today. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [11.50 a.m.]: I congratulate the member for Bankstown on moving this motion, which I support. When the motion was put on the *Business Paper* last year, the Government had earmarked \$1.7 billion in cuts to education in New South Wales. We are now in the year 2013. The other day Government members asked the Premier a Dorothy Dixier during question time that enabled the Premier to hail the Gonski reforms. But not a word was spoken by the member for Campbelltown who usually says, "Hear, hear." The member for Campbelltown was unusually quiet. The Government was ripping funds away and at the same time causing stress to the community.

Twelve months later Government members are saying, "Look how good we are. We are the champions of education." Fair dinkum; members opposite should give themselves an upper cut for that. Education is not something that can be improved by fancy accounting. If we, as representatives of the community, want quality education we need to ensure that education in New South Wales is funded properly. I am a teacher by profession and I know firsthand the issues that teachers face in the classroom, particularly in delivering lesson plans. I know that too well after having spent 17 years teaching in the suburb of Fairfield.

**Mr Andrew Gee:** Seventeen years.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** That is right, and how good were they? I have been a member of Parliament now for two years. No two students are the same. There are students in the classrooms who are ahead of the pack, there are students who need different forms of motivation to ensure that the classroom captures their potential and there are students who do not understand the lessons at the same pace as their classmates. Some students require more attention and, on occasion, one-on-one teaching sessions otherwise they can be left behind. It is as simple as that. Their future learning is jeopardised because they are unable to understand the elementary concepts required to get them through their subject material and through high school.

There is no doubt in my mind that more money for education equals more teachers, better tailored teaching programs and better educational outcomes. When this motion was placed on the *Business Paper* by the

member for Bankstown, the O'Farrell Government was going back to the future for education in New South Wales; it was as simple as that. When Bob Carr became Premier in 1995, Labor inherited a public education system that was chronically understaffed and in desperate need of a funding injection. It was suffering from massive job cuts that were equivalent to culling 2,400 teaching positions and 800 support staff positions.

**Mr John Williams:** You didn't put them back.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI:** The community saw closures and a large number of students being placed into cramped classrooms. It is only now that education has come back from the brink, with Premier O'Farrell signing up to the Gonski reforms. It should be remembered that a large chunk of funding—\$1.7 billion—was to be taken from education. It is an essential service and one directly linked to the future prosperity of this State. Thanks to Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the implementation of the Gonski reforms education is now back on the agenda. I thank Federal Labor for that. Teachers in the classrooms of Fairfield and Bankstown face a host of teaching difficulties specific to our local schools. As the member for Bankstown pointed out, a large number of migrant students speak no English, or limited English, in our schools. There are students whose learning is affected by their household's socio-economic position. [*Time expired.*]

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS** (Port Macquarie) [11.54 a.m.]: In speaking in debate on the motion moved by the member for Bankstown I assure the House that I will not support the motion. Like the member for Vaucluse, I am surprised that this motion is still on the agenda considering the achievements of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government in the area of education. The member for Bankstown had a number of options open to her regarding this motion, one of which was alluded to by the member for Vaucluse. She could have withdrawn the motion or she could have amended it.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** No.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Bankstown will have another opportunity to contribute to the debate.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** The member for Bankstown could have amended her motion to read, "That this House notes that the NSW Government will contribute an additional \$1.7 billion to deliver the Gonski recommendations." Her motion could have read, "That this House notes that this additional funding will equate to an unprecedented investment in public education in this State that will directly benefit students, teachers and parents." Her motion also could have read, "That this House thanks the O'Farrell-Stoner Government—

**Ms Sonia Hornery:** Point of order: I ask the member to return to the leave of the debate, which is about \$1 billion of cuts to education funding, and not to suggest amendments to the motion.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Port Macquarie will return to the leave of the motion.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** The motion of the member for Bankstown could have been worded to read, "That this House thanks the O'Farrell-Stoner Government for reaching an historic agreement with the Commonwealth on school funding reform."

**Ms Sonia Hornery:** Point of order: The member should be asked to return to the leave of the motion, which makes no reference to suggested amendments.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** The member for Bankstown did not even refer to the motion.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Port Macquarie has the call.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** The member for Bankstown decided to leave this motion on the table as it is, so I take this opportunity to highlight what the Government has achieved in the area of education. This additional investment of \$5 billion in government and non-government schools across the State will be introduced from 2014 to 2019, with \$3.27 billion coming from the Commonwealth and \$1.76 billion coming from New South Wales. For the first time in the history of this State, funding will go to schools based on student need. Student need will be assessed consistently by the State and Commonwealth governments using transparent data, regardless of whether a student is in a government school or a non-government school. Resources will be targeted to students who experience educational disadvantage, with loadings for low socio-economic status, Aboriginality, language background other than English, disability, remoteness and school size.

I wish to correct the misleading comments made by the member for Bankstown regarding the timing leading up to the signing of this agreement. Throughout the past two years we have worked constructively with the Commonwealth to ensure that this agreement would be reached and that students in our schools would benefit. I note that the New South Wales Government's signing of the education agreement has received strong support. In the weeks leading up to this historical signing supporting the Gonski education reforms, I met with a group of teachers, including a local school principal, Mr Grant Heaton. Mr Heaton sent me an email last week in which he says:

I write to thank you for the very positive development regarding the possible implementation of the Gonski recommendations announced yesterday. I hope the other state premiers will follow the lead set by Barry O'Farrell.

Thank you also for the time you gave me and the other members of the delegation.

Mr Ian Watson, Regional Coordinator of the NSW Teachers Federation, said in the local media:

Public schools—in reality—are taking care of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable students in our community. This funding is going to all my schools to do a lot of things they have never been able to do in the past.

*[Time expired.]*

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [11.58 a.m.]: I stand in this Chamber as a proud member of the NSW Teachers Federation since the 1980s, along with more than 60,000 other members in New South Wales. I am sure there are many active and dedicated members of the Teachers Federation—

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Wallsend will return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** Does being a member of the Teachers Federation not have anything to do with public education? I am proud to be a teacher and a member of the Teachers Federation. I would like to highlight some issues in my contribution to debate on this motion. We are talking about the loss of 1,800 jobs in New South Wales as a result of the \$1.7 billion O'Farrell education cuts that have now begun. I am talking about the loss of hundreds of policy and support positions in the Department of Education throughout New South Wales. They have occurred not only in the Bankstown area but certainly in the Hunter, and we are feeling that impact now. I am talking about the loss of very important teacher aides not only from the Bankstown area.

I can attest to the fact that these cuts have occurred in the Hunter and teachers and parents have expressed concern to me about that. I am talking also about cuts to important language classes. One in particular I know of in the Warners Bay area of my electorate has impacted on children who have difficulty forming words and being understood. The member for Bankstown also highlighted a really serious issue: cuts to cleaning hours in school. I am the daughter of a very proud school cleaner who worked at West Wallsend Public School for 25 years. She left that job when she could not do it as well as she liked. She stopped doing it because the Government at the time started to implement cuts. This was before the O'Farrell Government.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Sting your own Government.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** No. In answer to the member for Tweed, it was in the time of the Greiner Government.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Wallsend will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** It is important to highlight the fact that cleaners whose jobs have been cut are crucial not only to schools but to hospitals and the Parliament as well. It is pretty sad when the Government starts cutting the jobs of people who are on award wages. It is also sad for schools. It impacts not just on teachers but also on the children because they are walking into classrooms that are not clean. That might seem insignificant to members of the Government but it is not to me—and particularly to my Mum, who took pride in keeping her school clean. I am sure that the cleaners at schools in the Bankstown area also take pride in keeping their schools clean.

I want to highlight the impact that the cuts are having on front-line staff. The member for Vacluse said there was no impact on funding for front-line staff. When the Government starts cutting language classes for

children who have difficult speaking, when it cuts the hours of teacher aides and cleaners, and when it reduces the number of policy staff in Education, it is cutting front-line staff. That will have an impact, particularly next year. I am seeing more composite classes in the Hunter and Bankstown areas as a result of the squeeze. It is good that teachers' class sizes have not increased, but for the benefit of our students I would like to see class sizes reduced.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.02 p.m.]: It gives me pleasure to speak on an education issue. This is a subject quite close to my heart as well. Whilst Opposition members claim that they have been in classrooms, I place on record that I was in a classroom for 20 years so I have a very good understanding of the importance of education. Let us not get confused by the diatribe of lies from the Opposition. They are misleading the House about education funding in New South Wales. We have already seen that this Government is concerned about student learning, which is the centrepiece of decisions that are made on this side of the House.

We do not stand for union demands. We are putting students at the very centre of our decision-making. This side of the House is making an enormous contribution to education across the State and giving it full recognition. Opposition members come in here dribbling about what the Government is doing. What the hell are they talking about? They have been asleep at the wheel, as the member for Vacluse said. In the past couple of weeks we have announced major reforms—\$5 billion extra is to be injected into education. That means more money and a greater share and distribution of resources. I come from a regional community. We have not received—

**Ms Sonia Hornery:** Point of order: It is relevance. The word "Gonski" is not mentioned in the motion.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! We are discussing education cuts; therefore the debate has to include education funding. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** We are talking about \$5 billion in extra funding being injected into education. I will give people in the public gallery a summary. In the next four years the New South Wales Government will put \$53.5 billion into education. In the last four years of the Labor Government those opposite put in \$46.6 billion. That is a big difference. Now we have a \$5 billion increase on top of that. This is the biggest reform we have seen in education and it will benefit more than 1.1 million students across New South Wales. I know it hurts members opposite when they see Teachers Federation members in the gallery, in newspapers and on television congratulating the Premier of New South Wales on signing up to this reform and congratulating the Minister on signing up to this extra financial input for education.

We are giving more power back to principals. We are giving more money back to schools for maintenance. Some school toilet blocks had been neglected for many years. We had schools where windows had not been installed. We had schools where lifts had not been installed. There was a \$1 billion backlog of work. This Government has been very mindful to ensure that there is an injection of funds to make sure our schools are up to standard so that teachers and students can enjoy learning. A new gymnasium is to be built at Denison College in my electorate. I am proud of that. This Government is injecting funds into education. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr STUART AYRES** (Penrith) [12.06 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [12.06 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [12.07 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Fairfield, Wallsend, Port Macquarie and Bathurst, and the battler from Vacluse for their wonderful contributions to the debate. Both the member for Fairfield and the member for Wallsend appreciate and understand the issues and are quite well read because it is clear that \$200 million has already been cut from the Education budget in 2012-13. I am surprised that the members for Vacluse, for Port Macquarie and for Bathurst are not aware that Premier O'Farrell has plans to sack 800 TAFE teachers and staff, and to increase TAFE fees by 9.5 per cent. The Higher School Certificate advice line has been scrapped, \$40 a day preschool fees have been introduced, cleaning hours have been cut in 601 schools, there has been an \$8.7 million budget cut to the Board of Studies, special needs funding has been cut from 272 schools, \$14.3 million has been cut from the school infrastructure budget in 2012-13—

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** Point of order: The member for Bankstown is replying to the debate and is only able to raise points that she made during the debate. She has just listed four or five points that were not raised by either member who has spoken. I ask that she be drawn back to the leave of the motion.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Bankstown will return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** This Government scrapped the Demountable Replacement Program. It scrapped a number of other programs including the drug and alcohol prevention unit and support for teachers' aides. Let us look at the Government's focus over the past year and where money has been redirected. It redirected \$19 million to allow shooting in national parks, \$20 million on executive training for top bureaucrats—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 76. That is completely irrelevant—just like Labor's record on education while in government. We are delivering in education.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Bankstown to return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** The Government spent \$270 million on purchasing and upgrading cars for Ministers and top bureaucrats—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Bankstown continues to flout my ruling. She will resume her seat and be no longer heard.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 20**

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

**Noes, 60**

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

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**MANNING VALLEY HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [12.17 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the Mayo Healthcare Group and Brett Goods, the Chief Executive Officer of Mayo Private Hospital, in Taree, on announcing that a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) unit will open in March 2013;
- (2) congratulates Health Care Imaging Services on locating the MRI service in the Manning Valley at the Mayo Private Hospital;
- (3) condemns the Federal member for Lyne for trying to take credit for the MRI decision made by Mayo Healthcare;
- (4) condemns the sudden interest of the Federal member for Lyne in Mayo Healthcare Group's plans when it became evident that the MRI was to be located in the Manning Valley;
- (5) condemns the Federal member for Lyne for claiming that he had written to the member for Myall Lakes outlining the clinical case for the MRI service to be located at Manning Rural Referral Hospital when simply passing on a letter sent to him by a Taree doctor;
- (6) notes that the Federal member for Lyne refused to seek Federal funding of about \$8 million to enable the MRI service to be based at Manning Rural Referral Hospital; and
- (7) condemns the Federal member for Lyne for trying to take credit for the more than \$80 million dollars funding for the upgrade of Port Macquarie Hospital while ignoring the needs of Manning Rural Referral Hospital and its patients.

It is time to debunk the myth that Mr Oakeshott cares about health in the Manning Valley. The Manning Rural Referral Hospital is part of the Federal electorate of Lyne. However, in examining the actions of the member for Lyne, one would think Taree and the Manning Valley fall outside his seat. The Mayo Healthcare Group and, more particularly, Mid North Coast Diagnostic Imaging approached the Federal member for Lyne in 2011 to seek his support for a magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] machine to be placed in the Manning Rural Referral Hospital. Oakeshott spoke about installing a second MRI machine at Port Macquarie. When it became evident that the service wanted it at Taree, his eyes glazed over and he was no longer interested.

I mentioned the need for an MRI machine in the Manning Valley in my inaugural speech. It was not until the healthcare group announced that the machine would be installed in the Manning Valley, at the Mayo Private Hospital, that the Federal member for Lyne showed an interest in what was happening. He approached the hospital about the machine being installed in the Manning Rural Referral Hospital, which was happy to have it if he could obtain \$8 million of Federal funding required to support it. He refused to do so and said that no Federal money could be provided. That is interesting because in 2009 the member applied for Federal funding for Port Macquarie Base Hospital. He now claims that about \$89 million of Federal funding has been allocated for the upgrade of that hospital.

That is very good for Port Macquarie and I have no problem with it, but why did he not do the same thing for the Manning Rural Referral Hospital? Why did he not apply for Federal funding at the same time so that hospital could be upgraded also? On the member's watch—in about March 2011—the hospital was facing the loss of its accreditation because of a lack of clinical services. When the Coalition was elected in March 2011 it changed the priorities so that more funds could be allocated to rural referral hospitals. The Manning Rural Referral Hospital now has two new anaesthetists, two new intensive care specialists, a new general surgeon, an ear, nose and throat specialist for the first time in eight years, and our first ever oncologist. Demand for oncology services was so great that the Government extended the funding to provide for 1.4 oncologists.

We also have a new stroke unit, another nephrologist, a geriatrician, 25 new graduate nurses and seven new medical registrars—who are very difficult to attract. This Government has allocated more funds for medical services to regional areas and the Manning Rural Referral Hospital is a good example of that. At the same time, the Government is also about to release a new clinical services plan that will address the needs not only of the Manning Rural Referral Hospital but also of Wingham Memorial Hospital, Cape Hawke Community Private Hospital and Gloucester Hospital. The Federal member for Lyne said that he lobbied for the MRI unit to be installed at the Manning Rural Referral Hospital. In fact, he had one meeting at which the administrators said that he should find the necessary funds. That was the only time he spoke to anyone about the issue.

The Federal member for Lyne said that he wrote to me, but he simply forwarded a letter from a doctor saying that the hospital needed an MRI. He made no submission outlining the clinical case nor did he lobby anyone. He said in a media release dated 5 November that he had outlined the clinical case for the MRI in letters

to the member for Myall Lakes and the chief executive officer of Hunter New England Local Health District. That was a complete fabrication; he never sent me a letter outlining the clinical case for an MRI. Practitioners and the community are pleased that there will be an MRI in the Manning Valley because they will no longer need to travel to Sydney, Newcastle or Port Macquarie to have a scan. Dr Hyde Page welcomed the news about the installation of the long-awaited MRI unit, saying that, although the base hospital had missed out on getting it, it was good that it would be at the Mayo Private Hospital. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES** (Barwon—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales) [12.24 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Myall Lakes on his continued commitment to providing health services in the Manning Valley. He highlighted a number of problems that he had experienced with the Federal member, who I understand does not believe the Manning Valley is part of his electorate. I think he has forgotten about it. The member for Myall Lakes pointed out that the misleading comments made by the member for Lyne and his lack of communication were a constant problem. I am glad the member has addressed that issue. Having said that, I am not sure I would want the member for Lyne to canvass me because the introduction would probably take 15 minutes. I congratulate the member for Myall Lakes.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [12.26 p.m.]: I seek leave to speak for seven minutes.

**Leave not granted.**

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** That says it all. The mover of a general motion is allowed seven minutes to make a contribution and other members are usually allowed the same. By refusing leave the Government has truncated my contribution. That is what this is all about. This State has seven million people and only two of them are in the gallery listening to this debate. I do not know whether they have even heard of the Manning Rural Referral Hospital. It seems they have; that is good. This motion demonstrates what the Government is trying to do. The member for Myall Lakes is obsessed with a jihad against the member for Lyne. Motions like this, to which no-one is paying attention, are all about political grandstanding. They are an abuse of the Hansard reporters, who deserve to be able to report better and more substantive motions. First, NSW Health is responsible for what goes on at the Manning Rural Referral Hospital. Funding for a magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] machine at that hospital is NSW Health's responsibility.

When Federal funding is provided to NSW Health it does not stop the Minister for Health from claiming credit for it. She has rabbitied on and on about the \$110 million provided to Port Macquarie despite the fact that only \$14 million was provided by the New South Wales Government and \$96 million was provided by the Federal Government. That fact is frequently ignored. States make applications for funding to upgrade rural hospitals through the Federal Health and Hospitals Fund, and the member knows that this is a New South Wales responsibility. This Government banned the staff at Armidale Hospital from making a round four application to the Health and Hospitals Fund even though they had a submission ready to go. The Minister spun to the Parliament that there was something wrong with the submission and that it could not be lodged. It is clear that an application from that hospital would have been considered. Similarly, if the Minister had wished to make an application—

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** Point of order: Mr Acting-Speaker, I ask you to bring the member back to the leave of the motion. The motion is about Manning Rural Referral Hospital not Armidale Hospital.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will return to the leave of the motion.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** I will finish the sentence that I started: If the Minister had wished to make an application to the Health and Hospitals Fund for the Manning Rural Referral Hospital she could have done so. I want to hear from the member for Myall Lakes that NSW Health will make an application for Federal funding in round five. The member can do that and he should tell his electorate whether he intends to do so. If necessary, he should show his constituents the Government's application. I seek leave to extend my speaking time.

**Leave granted.**

MRIs are vital pieces of medical equipment. We are still trying to catch up from Dr Wooldridge's shenanigans some years ago in respect of licences for MRIs. The reality is that if an MRI machine is not licensed is not usable by the majority of people who need it. Will the member for Myall Lakes say that those

who need a MRI scan at Mayo Healthcare will be bulk-billed? I have not heard him say whether the poor who have health needs or those who are disabled will receive a bulk-billed MRI in perpetuity from Mayo Healthcare. I note that many of the extra medical staff for which the member for Myall Lakes is taking credit were appointed under the former Labor Government; they are welcome and needed. Will the Government commit to further expanding the number of registrars and residents at Manning Base Hospital?

For the first time there are enough medical graduates willing to work in all the specialties in Manning Rural Referral Hospital. Although I have never worked at that hospital, my twin brother who has worked there assures me that it is a very good hospital. I have done many retrievals of critically ill children from Taree and I know that its clinical staff are of a very high standard. They do a wonderful job and it is time they had more support. The member for Myall Lakes should record in *Hansard* his commitment to increasing the number of training positions in medicine, surgery, paediatrics, anaesthetics and obstetrics at Manning Rural Referral Hospital. He could easily give that commitment and splash it all over the newspapers. In relation to the claim by the Federal member for Lyne that he wrote to the member for Myall Lakes, I can confirm that to be the case: A letter from a doctor passed on to a local member is a representation, as the member for Myall Lakes well knows.

When I was Parliamentary Secretary for Health I signed 300 representations per week from Opposition members, the overwhelming majority of which consisted of members sending letters they had received with a covering letter. That is how it is done, particularly if the letter is appropriate and eloquent. The referral of a letter from a clinician who has expertise and knowledge of the system is the appropriate form of representation to a Federal member. It is not the task of the Federal member to seek funding for an MRI machine at Manning Rural Referral Hospital: It is the responsibility of NSW Health to apply for the appropriate Federal funding. A separation of powers between the Executive and members of Parliament exists. This matter should be discussed between NSW Health and its Federal counterpart. This is an important part of interaction between the Federal and State governments. This motion is about politics, it is not about health care.

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [12.32 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Myall Lakes. In March 2011 Manning Hospital was on its knees—services were being wound back, the hospital was falling apart and it was in danger of losing its accreditation. It was a shameful situation presided over by the former Labor Government; those opposite should take responsibility for it. Their partner in crime was the Federal member for Lyne, one Robert Oakeshott. The circumstances at Manning hospital in March 2011 should be contrasted with those of today. I note that on 4 March 2013 Dr Jim Wills, the director of clinical services and director of the emergency department at the Manning hospital said that the national emergency access target results for the month were 90 per cent.

That means that so far for that month Manning hospital had managed to investigate, treat and move from the emergency department to the wards or to homes 90 per cent of all patients. Manning hospital is doing extremely well with its national elective surgical targets and has retained the services of a new specialist cardiologist, a second specialist nephrologist, an additional specialist surgeon, specialist geriatrician, several new specialist anaesthetists and seven new medical registrars. The contrast between then and now could not be more stark, and it has come about because of the intense lobbying and efforts of the member for Myall Lakes, working with the New South Wales Government and, in particular, the Minister for Health. They have turned Manning hospital around.

The member for Myall Lakes mentioned the magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] machine that has been installed at the Mayo hospital. On 6 November 2012, the front page article in the *Manning River Times* was entitled, "MRI for Mayo." The paper featured an MRI service that was to be installed at the private hospital in Taree, one of 12 nationally to receive a Medicare-funded service. On 6 November Dr Murray Hyde Page welcomed the news that Taree was to receive a long-awaited MRI facility. He noted that, even though the base hospital had missed out on getting such a machine, it was good news that an MRI would be available at the Mayo Hospital and that everyone would have access to it.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Will they be bulk-billed?

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** I like the member for Macquarie Fields. He is a good guy, but he is an acolyte of a failed and bankrupt ideology. He, along with the member for Mount Druitt and all those opposite, need to take some responsibility for the decay that they allowed to set in at the Manning Hospital. What did Robert Oakeshott do when the efforts of the member for Myall Lakes helped to obtain this magnetic resonance imaging machine for Taree? He tried to take the credit. He issued a media release on 5 November 2012 and claimed that he lobbied for the unit to be housed at the Manning Rural Referral Hospital and that he had outlined the clinical case for the MRI machine in letters to various people. But he did no such thing.

The member for Myall Lakes drove this reform process. The member for Lyne gave that giggly, "It's going to be ugly but it's going to be beautiful in its ugliness" speech when he installed that disreputable Federal Government into office, but the chickens are coming home to roost. That speech will go down as one of the greatest own goals in Australian political history. The people of Lyne are waiting for the member for Lyne, but he will duck the fight; he will not stand for Lyne at the next Federal election.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [12.36 p.m.]: The Opposition has no problem with congratulating Mayo Healthcare, which is mentioned in paragraphs (1) and (2) of the motion moved by the member for Myall Lakes. However, the Opposition opposes paragraphs (3) to (7) of the motion in relation to the federal member for Lyne. I point out that a trend is developing: The next motion on the *Business Paper* condemns the Federal member for Lyne in three out of five paragraphs. The member for Orange was honest to highlight what the motion of the member for Myall Lakes is all about. He said it is not about the magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] machine, health services on the mid North Coast, hospital services and the like but about—what were his words—a disreputable Federal Government and the support of it by the member for Lyne. In that display of politics the member for Orange has disputed some of these nonsense arguments. I will show why. I am involved in a campaign with my Federal member in relation to the provision of an MRI machine and I have some familiarity with the process.

**Mr John Williams:** Labor?

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** Yes. The MRI machine is licensed with the Federal Government to attract Medicare benefits. The money for the cost of the machine is provided by the State Government and the State Government—whether it is through Treasury or the Department of Health, I do not know—has its money paid back through the activity of the MRI machine. That applied when the MRI machine was put into Blacktown Hospital and it applies to all MRI machines wherever they are located. Paragraph (3) of the motion condemns the Federal member for Lyne for trying to take credit for the MRI machine decision made by Mayo Healthcare. The Independent members who supported the Federal Government had a lot of sway in the provision of these services to their electorates.

There can be no doubt, although it may not have been an absolute defining condition, that in looking at these submissions the role of the Federal member for Lyne would have been crucial in his electorate getting the MRI machine. To condemn the Federal member for Lyne for whatever level of support he gave to get that machine really is a misuse of this motion. The member for Myall Lakes refutes his own argument in paragraph (5) of the motion in which he condemns the Federal member for Lyne for claiming that he had written to the member for Myall Lakes. The member for Myall Lakes did not say that the Federal member for Lyne did not write to him; he criticised the format of the letter and what was in it, et cetera. I could talk about the other points of condemnation in this motion but I will not. The Nationals need to get over the fact that Mr Oakeshott left them some years ago.

**Mr Andrew Gee:** We are waiting for September.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** Whatever happens in September, The Nationals cannot get over the fact that he left them. Today's *Business Paper* is taken up with pages and pages of motions condemning the member for Lyne. I suggest that the member for Myall Lakes get over it.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [12.40 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Barwon, the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Orange and the member for Mount Druitt for their contributions to the debate. I can inform the member for Macquarie Fields that people who have a magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] at the Mayo Private Hospital will be able to claim the service on Medicare. The member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Mount Druitt referred to a letter from the Federal member for Lyne enclosing a letter from a doctor. That doctor's letter did not include a clinical case for the MRI; it was completely false for the member for Macquarie Fields to say otherwise.

The member for Macquarie Fields also said that the two new anaesthetists, two new intensive care specialists, the new oncologist, the new orthopaedic surgeon, the new general surgeon, the new nephrologist, the new cardiologist, the 25 nurses and the seven registrars were appointed by the former Labor Government. That is a lie. One of those doctors did not even live in Australia in March 2011. How could he have been appointed by the former Labor Government? Yesterday the member for Macquarie Fields said that I could not have been vaccinated for tuberculosis. I checked and I was vaccinated for tuberculosis, as were my police colleagues and as were the nurses of the day. To say that we were not vaccinated was a lie. The member for Mount Druitt said that MRI machines are paid for by the State Government. That is another lie.

Those opposite have come into this place and told the people of this State that the New South Wales Government pays for the MRI machines. That is wrong; they are paid for by the company. It is a commercial decision. The only decision made by the Federal Minister for Health was about Medicare, every other decision was made by the Mayo Healthcare Group. Both the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Mount Druitt have lied. What does that mean? It is the old Labor handbook—namely, come into this place and say anything. It is only a debate. It is only about the people of New South Wales, and truth and honesty. Labor has always done whatever it takes. At the Graham Richardson training school Labor members learn that you say anything because it is only a debate and no-one is going to check. But those opposite have been found out yet again.

I note that the member for Cabramatta is now in the Chamber. For 16 years those opposite misled the people of New South Wales. For 16 years they made promises before an election and straight after the election they were axed. That is what has happened to the health system and agriculture in this State. That is also what has happened to mental health in this State. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame. They forced people out of mental health hospitals, and onto the streets and into jails. The Minister for Mental Health is seated at the table. He is fixing the trouble caused by those opposite in mental health.

It is disgraceful that those on the other side oppose this motion. The Federal member for Lyne did absolutely nothing about it. In fact, he tried to talk the commercial enterprise into not installing an MRI machine at Taree but installing a second one at Port Macquarie. And the next motion listed on today's *Business Paper* concerns the member for Lyne wanting to put two universities at Port Macquarie, forgetting about Taree. It is about time the Federal member for Lyne recognised that the electorate of Lyne includes not only Port Macquarie but also Taree and the Manning Valley.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **MID NORTH COAST UNIVERSITY CAMPUS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [12.45 p.m.]: I move that this House:

- (1) condemns the Federal member for Lyne for his failure to campaign for a university campus to be located in Taree;
- (2) condemns the Federal member for Lyne for his choice to support Port Macquarie for a university campus;
- (3) notes that there are many reasons to support Taree as the preferred location for a university campus, including Taree's close proximity to Sydney and Newcastle; close location to the Pacific Highway; regular train services; and regular services on commercial airlines;
- (4) notes that Taree has cheaper housing available for university students and staff as well as a wonderful natural environment to offer a quality lifestyle; and
- (5) condemns the Federal member for Lyne for ignoring the merits of Taree the Manning Valley.

The Federal member for Lyne thinks his electorate goes from the Hastings River in the north to Lake Cathie in the south. In fact it goes a lot further than that: It goes from the Hastings River in the north to Gloucester in the south.

**Mr Andrew Gee:** What about Taree?

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Taree is part of it. The Federal member for Lyne has forgotten that to get to Gloucester he has to go through Taree. On 7 December 2011 the Federal member for Lyne welcomed a \$14 million Federal grant towards the cost of a regional university centre at Port Macquarie as part of a \$22.4 million grant to Charles Sturt University to expand its presence on the New South Wales mid North Coast. Charles Sturt University will make a \$1.5 million contribution towards the cost of the Port Macquarie centre. The Federal member for Lyne said:

This multimillion dollar expansion for the university in Port Macquarie will bring about major economic and social opportunities, not only for students but for the entire region ...

In a few short years we have come a long way in providing young people, and mature-age students, with greater access to higher education options in their hometown.

In their home town of Port Macquarie. On 20 December 2011 the Federal member for Lyne announced that the Commonwealth would invest \$20 million in a health and medical education campus—something quite separate—in Port Macquarie and that it would be the first of its kind in regional Australia. The announcement concerned a multi-partner medical education campus involving the University of New South Wales, the University of Newcastle and the North Coast Institute of TAFE. He said:

This has been a fantastic fortnight for higher education on the Mid North Coast, with a record investment of \$35 million [in Federal funding] in tertiary education ...

He means in Port Macquarie. Taree and the Manning Valley have a proud history in education over many years. The area has a very successful TAFE and a small campus for nurse education. The Government is about to build a new nurse education and training centre at the Taree TAFE. Why does the Federal member for Lyne only think about Port Macquarie when he is lobbying for these things? He talks about "home town". It is not the home town for Taree, the Manning Valley or Gloucester; it is the home town for Port Macquarie. He has to understand that. Taree deserves a university. If there is \$35 million in funding going to his electorate for education and two different campuses, why not have one in Port Macquarie and one in Taree?

Why does everything have to be based in Port Macquarie? It is unbelievable. This bloke does not understand what is included in his electorate. The Federal member for Lyne has been lobbying the University of Newcastle to get involved with a nursing student and medical facility at Port Macquarie. He should be doing the same thing for the Manning Valley and Taree. The people of Taree and the Manning Valley deserve opportunities in regional New South Wales. A member representing an electorate should be lobbying universities and education groups to locate a campus in Taree, which is part of his electorate, but the Federal member for Lyne has not done so. It is all about Port Macquarie.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is a lot of enthusiastic chatter in the Chamber, but I remind members that they will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** The Federal member for Lyne has also approached the University of New South Wales to become part of the multipurpose campus at Port Macquarie. It is hard to work out why a Federal member does not represent all of his electorate. To focus totally on one town, one city, and neglect the rest of the electorate is—

**Mr Andrew Gee:** Discrimination.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** It is a form of discrimination, as the member for Orange said. The member for Orange is a wonderful member. Although the Federal member for Lyne is lobbying for Port Macquarie, the highway does not run through Port Macquarie and it does not have a railway line—the rail line is in Wauchope. Students who catch the train to the area want to get off the train and go to where they live. But in the Port Macquarie area they must travel from one town to another. The train line and the airport are in the heart of Taree and the highway is only a minute away. As for student transport, Taree is the logical location of a campus. Also, real estate in Taree is cheaper, rents are cheaper and homes are cheaper than they are in Port Macquarie not only for students but also for lecturers.

Taree is only a short distance from some of the best beaches and mountains in New South Wales. We have the Ellenborough Falls, which is the longest single-drop waterfall in the Southern Hemisphere. The mighty Manning River is 156 kilometres of navigable waterways with islands. It is the only delta formation river in the Southern Hemisphere. Taree is close to the mountains. It is an idyllic location in which to live and a perfect place for a university campus. Once again, the Federal member for Lyne is discriminating against the people of the Manning Valley by throwing them scraps. He is lobbying for all the big ticket items for Port Macquarie at the expense of the Manning Valley.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [12.52 p.m.]:** The motion moved by the member for Myall Lakes relates to location of the mid North Coast university campus. As I said during an earlier debate on a motion, this motion appears to be a misuse of the Parliament's time and, if I may be so bold, the member's time. The member for Myall Lakes, as a State member of Parliament, would have many education issues in his constituency that he could have raised today. He would have many housing issues—housing is mentioned in paragraph (3) of the motion—that he could have raised today. He could also have raised issues relating to the local urban environment and quality of lifestyle. However, he moved this motion as an excuse to attack, boringly, the Federal member for Lyne.

Paragraph (2) of the motion is interesting. It comes as no surprise that the motion condemns the Federal member for Lyne, who has chosen to support Port Macquarie as the location for a university campus. This motion condemns a Federal member of Parliament, not a member of this House, for supporting a university campus in a place called Port Macquarie. There is a fight going on; obviously, the member for Myall Lakes thinks that a Federal member—I assume that Port Macquarie is in the Federal electorate of Lyne—should not be lobbying for a campus in Port Macquarie. The interesting point is whether the State member for Port Macquarie, who is a Coalition member, supports the argument that Port Macquarie should not have a university campus as outlined by the Federal member. I will be bold and suggest that the member for Port Macquarie was not consulted by the member for Myall Lakes when he decided to move a motion opposing a university campus in Port Macquarie—which, as we know, is a major commercial and education centre in that part of the State.

This is a blue between a Federal member and a State member in a neighbouring electorate about where a campus should be located. I have been involved in similar fights in western Sydney. Blacktown, Penrith and Parramatta wanted a university campus. At the end of the day western Sydney got a university and campuses were located in our electorates. Indeed, Blacktown eventually got a campus. It is an appalling situation when a senior State member attacks a Federal member for having the audacity to suggest that a university campus should be located in Port Macquarie. Of course, we all know that the motion is not about a university campus at all. It is not about whether a campus should be located in Taree, which is closer to the Pacific Highway, has cheaper housing and a lifestyle different from that of Port Macquarie.

This is simply another silly political argument put forward by a member of The Nationals to attack a former Nationals member who now has the audacity to campaign for a campus in Port Macquarie. I will not move an amendment to the motion, but I put on the record that the Federal member for Lyne should be congratulated on fighting for a campus in Port Macquarie. We wish him well in getting a university campus located in that beautiful part of New South Wales, Port Macquarie. If the State member for Port Macquarie were in the Chamber she would be concerned that one of her Coalition colleagues is trying to stop a campus from being located in her electorate; she would be horrified. In conclusion, private members' motions have been somewhat belittled today by the censure motion against the member for Kogarah.

However, most people would doubt whether the continual weekly diatribe of condemning the Federal member for Lyne and motions moved by the member for Myall Lakes and passed by this House will have an impact on the Federal member or his chances at the next Federal election, which the member for Orange truthfully outlined is the main reason behind these motions. On the contrary, I suggest that Port Macquarie constituents would be happy that their Federal member had been lobbying to get a university campus in their town. It is interesting; I call this another Coalition own goal. We will not be calling a division on the motion; it does not deserve that sort of attention in the House. However, we will be opposing it on the voices. If anyone should be condemned it is the mover of the motion for putting up frivolous and political motions for debate.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [12.58 p.m.]: Education underpins everything that we aim for in terms of where people end up. If people are given a solid foundation in education it will set them up for the rest of their lives. I remind the House that Tamworth does not have a university as such at this time; Tamworth has a campus that is an offshoot of the University of New England. Tamworth has close ties with the University of Newcastle but at this point in time it does not have a university. As Tamworth is the largest regional centre in the New England north-west it is only fitting that we fight for a university. If there is to be another university in regional New South Wales I suggest that Tamworth would be the logical choice, given that we already have an excellent education system.

However, people need to leave our region in order to study at a tertiary level because we do not have a university to provide the tertiary qualifications that many seek to achieve. We have an excellent TAFE system and an excellent primary and secondary school system, but a university in our region would cap it off. I reiterate that in regional New South Wales we are disadvantaged by not having access to tertiary education. The focus of this Government is education. I remind the House that New South Wales is the only State to sign up to the Gonski reforms and to do a deal on education with the Federal Government. When it comes to negotiating with the Federal Government the O'Farrell-Stoner Government has shown that it puts good decision-making ahead of politics.

**Pursuant to standing orders business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY****Report: Report on Driver and Road User Distraction****Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.**

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [1.01 p.m.]: The report of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety entitled "Report on Driver and Road User Distraction" is the second report of the Staysafe committee in the current Parliament and follows the committee's review of school zones conducted last year. I am pleased to note that one of Staysafe's main recommendations—to install flashing lights in all school zones—is being taken up by Transport for NSW, which has dramatically increased the rollout since the committee's report was tabled. Staysafe welcomes this development.

In its latest inquiry the committee is concerned about the proliferation of electronic devices and the cumulative safety impacts of such devices on vehicle drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and other road users. The interplay of communication and entertainment technology in the road environment is also of increasing concern to road safety experts and road safety administrations nationally and internationally, as rapid innovation in vehicle design technology accelerates into the future. Indeed, only last week the United States Department of Transport released guidelines to minimise in-vehicle distractions. The department's guidelines establish specific recommended criteria for electronic devices installed in vehicles at the time of manufacture that require drivers to take their hands off the wheel or their eyes off the road in order to use those devices. Staysafe recognises that many of these technological advances can be beneficial if their impacts can be anticipated and moderated by electronic means.

The main focus of the report is mobile phone technology and its increasing functionality, which can make risky demands on the attention of road users when they are navigating the road network. Legislative and regulatory controls have not kept up with rapid advances in technology design, resulting in increased injury and fatality risks for all road users. While mobile phones and in-vehicle devices are major sources of distraction, other activities by drivers and passengers, such as eating and drinking, grooming and smoking also contribute to safety risks. Education campaigns can assist in highlighting the consequences of such behaviour. In addition, the placement of roadside advertising and message signs adds to the burden on drivers' attention and causes further visual distraction, thereby complicating the driving task. The committee makes a series of recommendations to address these sources of distraction.

One of the impediments to reliable and accurate measures of the role of distraction in crash statistics relates to a standard definition of "distraction" as opposed to "inattention" and the committee has recommended that this be rectified through the Council of Australian Governments Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure. An agreed definition will also assist in the collection of more accurate mobile phone data from vehicles at crash sites, to determine the precise involvement of such devices. The committee further recommends the tightening up of rules determining the location and installation standards for mobile and in-vehicle electronic devices, in collaboration with manufacturers, to prevent unsafe devices being sold in Australia. In an effort to harness the beneficial uses of electronic technology, the committee also recommends an investigation of the potential of workload managers to reduce the level of distraction experienced by drivers when in charge of a vehicle.

In an effort to reduce potential distractions for novice drivers, the committee has recommended that the restrictions on mobile phones for P1 drivers be extended to P2 drivers. Research has demonstrated that this group of drivers are at greatest risk of crashing due to their use of mobile technology. Such an approach has recently been adopted by the Victorian Government, which in February introduced a similar ban on mobile phone use by P2 drivers. It is imperative that we instil good habits in our young drivers. The Victorian approach to distracted drivers also includes new tougher penalties, new technology and a confronting advertising campaign. The development of this campaign followed the death of 20-year-old Brooke Richardson near Cobram last December. Her car hit a tree head on at 100 kilometres per hour. Her mother lives in my Albury electorate and wrote to tell me:

Brooke Richardson was not a bad person, she was not a reckless person. Brooke was just doing what we all do each day. The problem was she was trying to drive and text at the same time.

The family has launched the Brooke Richardson Dont-txt-n-drive Foundation to raise awareness of the dangers. Any penalties applying to the illegal use of mobile technology must be reinforced by a rigorous compliance regime. The committee has recommended that second and repeat offences for illegal mobile phone use be

subject to increased penalties and the creation of a separate offence category for sending or receiving text messages while driving. In relation to roadside advertising and in line with recent Austroads research findings, the committee has recommended that more research be conducted into the impact of variable message signage to determine the safety risks associated with their increasing use. Additionally, the committee has recommended that on-premise digital signage be regulated under current planning instruments. In the area of prevention education, the committee has recommended that greater use be made of social media and specifically the Gearing website, to reach young people and that a general safety campaign be developed to alert all drivers to the optimal use of mobile phones while driving.

Finally, the committee has recommended that more research and attention be focused on vulnerable road users, to ensure that their safety is also given priority in devising strategies to reduce risks associated with electronic technology. As part of this inquiry, the committee received 40 submissions and conducted two days of public hearings to gather evidence from a range of government and non-government agencies, researchers, road safety practitioners and individuals. I would like to thank all those who shared their knowledge and experiences with the committee and who contributed to the evidence contained in this report. I also thank the committee members and staff for their role in delivering a report that I hope will result in greater safety for our road users. The tabling of this report makes a significant contribution to the policy debate in this important area of road safety. The committee trusts that the Government will respond positively to its recommendations.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [1.07 p.m.]: I commend the chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, the member for Albury, for presenting this report to the Parliament. He raised a number of interesting points about the deliberations of the committee. The school zone flashing light program rollout will continue around the State. Flashing lights have been welcomed in the schools in my constituency. As drivers, I am sure all members will agree that flashing lights around school zones are an important reminder to motorists that they are entering an area where they have to reduce speed to 40 kilometres an hour and be conscious of the presence of children in the vicinity. I agree that the installation of flashing lights complementing school zones is a great achievement. I also agree with the chairman's comments about the importance of continuing to roll them out across the State.

I was interested in the issue of the use of mobile phones by motorists. I note the tragic circumstances referred to by the member for Albury about a constituent of his—a good person who used her mobile phone while driving a motor vehicle and who paid for that motoring discretion with her life. The problem of undertaking activities whilst driving a car seems to be increasing as new technology is being introduced. The issue of mobile phone usage has been around for some time and I note that there has been some tightening of the law of late. Texting is even more dangerous than using a mobile phone. It could easily be argued that although steering a car with one hand while talking to somebody on a mobile phone is certainly dangerous it is nowhere near as dangerous as somebody driving without looking at the road while fumbling with the letters and numbers on a mobile phone.

As a motorist, I have seen this in vehicles passing me. It is quite obvious what motorists are doing. One thing they are not doing is looking ahead. While driving around Sydney who has not pulled up behind a car at a red light and found the vehicle did not move on when the light changed to green? The reason is the driver's head is down and he or she is sending somebody a text message. I think law enforcement should be focusing even more on texting as part of driver behaviour than on mobile phone use, dangerous though both those actions are. I commend the chair and all members of the committee from both sides of the House for bringing forward a very worthwhile report.

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [1.10 p.m.]: As a member of the Staysafe committee I can say that this report on driver distraction is certainly timely. It was well supported by the community and people wanted to see some evidence of what the Government might do to reduce driver distraction that causes road accidents. During the two days of hearing some of my preconceived notions were knocked over by some commentary about the use of some technology, particularly mobile phones. It was suggested that if we get some commonality in the type of equipment put into cars the use of mobile phones should not be a distraction. Certainly texting is a distraction, but the evidence given by the Taxi Association was quite enlightening. Texting is an obvious distraction but taxidriver who are regularly on the road see drivers engaging in an amazing variety of distractions. As legislators it is very hard to draft a law that stops people reading a book, doing their make-up or turning around and trying to adjust a child's harness in the rear seat while driving.

It is really about educating drivers. One thing came through to me very clearly: Regardless of what laws we put in place, compliance comes via education. We must let people know that when they are in charge of

a motor vehicle they have a responsibility not only to themselves and their passengers but also to other road users. The report makes some recommendations to the Government. Much of it relates to education of drivers and trying to get their compliance in not being distracted. Clearly drivers are aware that what they are doing will limit their response. On that basis they are creating a risk for other road users of having an accident with a driver who just does not want to comply with common sense. I think it is a great report. It contains some information that is current, which is very important because we are dealing with technology. All the evidence came from people who had information about the latest technology and where we are heading in that respect. The work done by the committee was timely and provides the Government with a very good insight into what sorts of actions it can take to minimise driver distractions.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** I am sure this report would be endorsed by every member of this House and the wider community. I extend my appreciation to the chair of the committee, the member for Albury, and all the members of the committee.

**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. 35/55**

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

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [1.15 p.m.]: As chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I take this opportunity to comment on the recent Legislation Review Digest tabled on 30 April 2013, the thirty-fifth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. The committee examined five bills introduced into Parliament in the week commencing 25 March 2013, and commented on two of those bills. The bills that did not attract any comment were the Baptist Churches of New South Wales Property Trust Amendment Bill 2013, the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Bill 2013, and the Road Transport Amendment (Obstruction and Hazard Safety) Bill 2013.

I now turn to the remaining two bills. The Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2013 will permit the exchange of personal and health information about alleged victims and alleged perpetrators of domestic violence. In particular, an agency that provides domestic violence support services—referred to as a support agency—may, in certain circumstances, collect, use and disclose personal information for the purposes of providing domestic violence support services to the person, or where it is necessary to do so to prevent or lessen a serious threat to the life, health or safety of a person. The committee noted the potential privacy ramifications of the amendments contained in the bill. Although the committee recognised the safeguards contained in the bill, including the requirement to work closely with the Privacy Commissioner when drafting information management protocols, the committee still considered it important to identify the issue of privacy and bring it to the Parliament's attention.

The second bill, the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013, will enable one-stop access to customer services for New South Wales government agencies to facilitate the provision of information about government services for the people of New South Wales. Service NSW will perform customer service tasks on behalf of government agencies. The committee does not consider sharing information between Service NSW and relevant agencies to breach privacy principles per se but the fact that the bill provides that Service NSW can share information with any person, agency or class prescribed in the regulations may expose individuals to breaches of privacy not identified in the principal legislation.

However, as the Minister is not to make such regulations without first consulting with the Privacy Commissioner, the committee did not make further comment on this issue. For a detailed consideration of the issues identified in the bills I once again invite members to review the digest. I remind the House that the digest aims to assist members in their consideration of bills, and serves as a useful guide to which members may wish to turn their attention to ensure an informed and robust discussion of all legislation before this House. I thank the committee staff for their assistance.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [1.18 p.m.]: I speak in the take-note debate on the Legislation Review Committee Digest No. 6 of 2013. I too acknowledge the chair and members of the committee, and the

hardworking committee staff for preparing the digest. The committee staff will be very busy in May preparing at least four digests. The committee reviewed the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Amendment Bill 2013, the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Bill 2013 and the Road Transport Amendment (Obstruction and Hazard Safety) Bill 2013. The committee made no comment on these bills. That is not to say there are no issues of note for this House; it is simply that there are no relevant issues under the purview of the committee regarding these bills.

The committee reviewed the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2013, which amends provisions for the sharing of information between departments concerning victims and the perpetrators of domestic violence. I note that this legislation received bipartisan support. It is good when we can put aside partisan point-scoring for issues such as domestic violence, which concerns every member of this House and our communities. The committee raised concerns relating to privacy. The bill concerns the sharing of information. However, the committee noted the safeguards present in the legislation, which states the circumstances under which information can be shared and the limits placed on the kinds of government agencies and non-government organisations that can share that information.

The committee also noted that the Attorney General is required to seek the advice of the Privacy Commissioner whenever making domestic violence information management protocols. The committee referred to Parliament whether the bill trespasses on an individual's right to privacy. The committee also raised issues about the fact that the bill is set to commence by proclamation, rather than on a set date established within the legislation. However, given the sensitivities surrounding this issue and the need for some flexibility, the committee made no further comment on that issue. The committee also reviewed the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. The committee raised issues relating to privacy insofar as the bill allows the Minister to make regulations that might violate privacy. However, given the requirement for the Minister to consult with the Privacy Commissioner, the committee made no further comment on this bill.

I again apologise for not being able to attend the committee meeting, given that every second meeting continues to be held at 8.30 a.m. I have raised that matter with the Clerk and I apologise to the people of New South Wales for those occasions on which I cannot attend committee meetings. I have care arrangements, particularly on a Tuesday, that I must undertake prior to attending Parliament. I have a keen interest in this committee and wish to continue to be a member of it. I also enjoy attending the lunchtime meetings.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I remind the member for Murray-Darling that he is on a call to order, which remains in force until the end of the day.

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

**Report noted.**

*[The Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) left the chair at 1.24 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 public gallery of the Hon. Julie Soso-Akeke, MP, Governor of the Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. We enjoyed your company earlier today.

#### **QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.21 p.m.]*

#### **NSW POLICE FORCE CHILD ABUSE SQUAD**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier guarantee that the individual who blew the whistle on the human resources review of the child abuse squad will be protected from disciplinary action given that the report highlights that critical staff shortages are putting children at risk?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I refer the substance of that question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who is, of course, responsible for that issue. I have but one response to this question from the Leader of the Opposition: Milton Orkopoulos. For the benefit of those in the public gallery, Milton

Orkopoulos was a notorious member of this Parliament. In fact, he is the only member in the history of this Parliament who has gone to jail for paedophile activities, some of which allegedly occurred on these premises. Those activities became known to members of the Labor Party in this place but they did nothing about them.

They did not take the allegations to the police or to any other authority; they simply discussed them amongst themselves. His activities came to light and were investigated only as a result of the actions of one woman—Milton Orkopoulos' electorate secretary, Gillian Sneddon. And what was the response of the Labor Party to a woman who had devoted her life to the Labor Party and who worked for a Labor member of Parliament? The response was to lock her out of the office, lose her her job and turn their backs on her. That is the Labor Party's record on whistleblowers.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members that many of them are already on calls to order.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr ANDREW ROHAN:** My question is addressed to the Premier. What has the Government done to kickstart housing construction to make it easier for families to buy a new home?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the Member for Smithfield for his interest in this issue, which is of interest to every member across the State who represents families, particularly those with young children, who are thinking about trying to buy their first home. When we came to office in March 2011 the New South Wales housing market was the worst in the nation. On every key indicator we had fallen behind other States. Housing approvals that averaged over 54,000 new homes a year under the previous Coalition Government fell to the record low of just 24,897 while the former member for Heffron, the former Premier, was Minister for Planning. That was the lowest number of housing approvals on record ever in this State.

Under the failed policies of those opposite every year we saw thousands of families across the State denied the opportunity to enter the housing market and benefit from the security and path to prosperity that home ownership can provide. Before the election I said I wanted to ensure that home ownership became a reality for young families again. The Government has been determined to increase housing supply and it is delivering on that commitment. New figures released earlier today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show strong progress. The first two years of this Government has seen the best two-year housing approval period since October 2006. New housing approvals under this Government are now on average 15 per cent higher than in the last five years of the previous Labor Government.

This dramatic increase in housing supply since we came to office did not just happen by accident. It occurred because of the great work of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Treasurer and other Ministers who are determined to get land away, who are determined to ensure that we cut through the morass of our planning system in order to release land for housing and to get houses built. It is a great result for new homebuyers, a great result for builders and tradies—and especially those tradie ladies the Minister for Women is so keen on—and it is a great result for the State's economy.

Only a few weeks ago, together with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the member for Hawkesbury and the member for Riverstone I announced the State's largest-ever housing supply program. It is a 20-year plan that will see up to 171,000 new homes delivered across Sydney—a plan that will not only provide opportunities for thousands of young families to enter the housing market, but also boost industry confidence to ensure that New South Wales is, indeed, the state of business in Australia once again. This plan is supported by our investment in infrastructure that is both of local and State significance. It is a plan that complements our reforms to cut red tape and to modernise the State's planning system that have been outlined in the past couple of weeks by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

The property sector is responding to the change in strategy. A survey released a fortnight ago by ANZ Bank and the Property Council revealed that New South Wales had posted the largest increase in confidence in the property sector of all States and Territories and is now the highest-rated jurisdiction other than the mining boom State of Western Australia. It is a result that was unthinkable only two years ago. We are seeing a renovation of the State's housing sector that has transformed the State from the basket case of the national market into a jurisdiction that provides hope, reward and opportunity for homebuyers, builders, and tradespeople. Who wrote this?

*[Interruption]*

I think we will hear a bit more about hope, reward and opportunity up to 14 September. The Housing Industry Association reported this week that New South Wales posted the highest increase in sales of detached housing of any jurisdiction. They are homes with backyards in which young people can pretend that they are Robbie Farrah, a soccer player or a netball player because they have the room to do so. It reported a 22 per cent jump in sales compared with the national average of 3.5 per cent. Our main competitors, Victoria and Queensland, actually went backwards—Queensland by nearly 20 per cent.

The Housing Industry Association result provides yet further vindication of the Government's policy of targeting homebuyer grants towards the construction of new homes because the construction of new homes creates jobs, puts downward pressure on prices and helps improve housing affordability. What we are seeing is nothing short of a transformation—a transformation of a struggling, depressed housing market, which was almost ruined by the neglect and inept management of those opposite, into a vibrant, thriving industry that attracts new investment and builds confidence in this great State. We have companies investing again in property and housing construction in this State that had actually vacated the field. That is down to the work of this Government and its determination to make housing affordability an issue.

### NSW POLICE FORCE CHILD ABUSE SQUAD

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. In light of the Treasurer's answer to my question yesterday regarding whether he or his Government had received a request during the past two years for additional funding and resources for the child abuse squad, will the Treasurer commit to the House that he will at least seek that information and update the House accordingly?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The shadow Treasurer is performing at his best; he is on fire. He has been up asking questions. This is a great opportunity. Why doesn't the member for Liverpool smile?

**Mr Paul Lynch:** You answer a question and I might just.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Madam Speaker, the Government is very proud that it has increased the police budget. The difference between the O'Farrell Government and the former Labor Government in relation to the Police budget is about \$300 million, and that \$300 million is spent by this Government on front-line services that are desperately needed across the State. In addition to the O'Farrell Government putting additional police on the street—as the Premier and the Minister have said previously in answer to questions on this issue—police are being given the resources they need to get on with the job of fighting crime across the State.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order No. 129, relevance. This is the sixth question asked of the Treasurer and the Premier on this issue and they have refused to answer any of them. Will the Treasurer commit to the House that he will source the information and come back and tell us?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We do not want the member to get all emotional; he should just stay calm. It is important to understand—and those opposite well know this—that in relation to budget deliberations and discussions when we come into the House on budget day the outcomes are transparent in the budget.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Those opposite can look forward to budget day. In its two budgets thus far the O'Farrell Government has delivered a record infrastructure spend for this State. We have delivered improved services for this State and we are happy to have done that. We will not have budget discussions across the table with those opposite. Those details will be revealed in the budget.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: No-one in this Chamber doubts—

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

**Ms Linda Burney:** —how serious this is but how are you going to—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! What is the member's point of order? I have asked the member twice.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I have answered the question.

### NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA:** I address my question to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. What is the Government doing to build a brand-new, state-of-the-art hospital on the northern beaches?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** What a great question from the member for Davidson. The first question asked by the member for Davidson on being elected to this place was: When are we going to get a new northern beaches hospital? I can inform the House that today the Government made the most exciting announcement about hospitals ever made. I am really proud of the fact, despite the claims to the contrary by those opposite, that in many parts of this State we have built new hospitals that were long promised by Labor.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** At Bega, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Penrith and many other places.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Marrickville, the member for Canterbury, the member for Maroubra, the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Auburn will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** This new hospital will be a fantastic facility. The Government announced earlier today that it will be seeking expressions of interest from the private and not-for-profit sector to design, build, operate and maintain a 423-bed hospital on the northern beaches.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order. I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the second time.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** This fabulous state-of-the-art facility will have the best that technology can offer. It will have state-of-the-art equipment provided by a fabulously experienced and well-regarded hospital operator.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Not a builder; a hospital operator. This will take into account the 60 per cent of those living on the northern beaches who have private health insurance and 40 per cent of the current patients at Manly and Mona Vale hospitals who use private health insurance.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The increase over the current number of beds will mean more beds for public patients.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** As we speak, staff at those hospitals are being briefed, and the unions have been briefed. Staff will be given the opportunity to become employees at the new facility. They will retain their wage conditions et cetera, and transition payments will also be available. So far the response has been fabulous. I was thrilled to be joined by my northern beaches colleagues when the announcement was made—namely, the member for Wakehurst, the member for Manly, the member for Davidson and the member for Pittwater. This proposal has been worked on for a long time. It was promised by Labor back in 1999—yet another example of a hospital promise by Labor not delivered. In addition to the new hospital being built at Frenchs Forest, the Mona Vale Hospital will be redeveloped.

The Mona Vale Hospital will have a minimum of 66 subacute beds and it will provide other health services such as palliative care—services promised under the Fahey-Greiner governments but never properly

delivered by the former Labor Government. There has been extensive consultation with clinicians, the community, Health Infrastructure and others. We have visited Perth to see how a similar project operates there. I am confident that the not-for-profit sector and the private sector will have a great deal of interest in this. It will be a win, win all round. At the new northern beaches hospital we will be able to up the ante with regards the level of care that is currently being provided at the Manly and Mona Vale hospitals—which my colleagues described this morning as two fairly run-down sites. The new hospital will have a higher level emergency department—level five—and a higher level intensive care unit, and it will offer paediatric care, maternity care and medical and surgical treatment.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I have seen facilities and investments in building and operating other services. I have seen facilities that provide protection against infection and that use state-of-the-art equipment in intensive care units. They provide wonderfully enhanced services for patients. At long last people living on the northern beaches will have care delivered in a hospital that they deserve. The staff currently working at Manly and Mona Vale hospitals will be given the opportunity to work in this new state-of-the-art hospital. I am very proud of this commitment.

### POLICE TRANSPORT COMMAND

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** I direct my question to the Minister for Transport. Given that a recent NRMA survey found that the number one concern for female commuters is feeling unsafe on our trains, and given also that another disturbing attack on a train occurred last night at North Ryde, will the Minister guarantee that transit officers will stay on the rail network until the Police Transport Command is fully staffed in January 2015?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for her very important question. All members are concerned about the safety of our transport network. I place on the record that yesterday marked the first anniversary of the establishment of the Police Transport Command—which was a very positive move. The Government acknowledges that our customers and community leaders would like to see more police on our transport network. However, it is regrettable that rather than support our community the Labor Party is supporting some people in the trade union movement who do not want to see transit officers go.

I am pleased to update the House on the progress that has been made over the last 12 months since the establishment of the Police Transport Command. As I have explained to the House and said publicly on prior occasions, by the end of next year there will be 610 dedicated police officers in the Police Transport Command. In addition to those 610 police officers, this month 150 transport officers will come on line to focus on fare evasion. The Government made this important decision because it cares about security on our transport network. No-one but police has police powers. As the shadow Minister for Transport and now as the Minister for Transport I encountered many examples of transit officers being unable to intervene and assist customers because they did not have police powers.

This is a very important outcome for our customers and for anyone who cares about safety and security. The Government will take advice from police on matters of public safety on our transport network, not from those opposite. Indeed, in 2008 and 2009 they took this policy to Cabinet but Cabinet did not adopt the policy—it was written about widely at the time—because they did not want to upset their friends in the trade union movement. But this Government will do what is in the best interests of our customers and constituents. I place on record some of the activities of the Police Transport Command since it came into operation. In relation to the specific incident that happened last night to which the member for Wallsend referred, police were able to make that arrest, because police are in charge of the Police Transport Command.

**Mr John Robertson:** Where were they—on every highway? They were nowhere near the rail network.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

*[Interruption]*

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** With those interjections, the Leader of the Opposition has validated the importance of having police take over security on the transport network.

**Mr John Robertson:** They were not rail police.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is important—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. I remind him that he is on a call to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We know this is a sensitive issue.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will stop shouting. This is not an opportunity for him to argue his case. If he does not come to order he will find himself out of the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Members opposite do not like to hear the truth—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Having police take charge of security means that police can share intelligence about what is happening on the network. Police can detect where people are travelling and if there are particular hotspots they can ensure that resources are deployed where necessary. Only police have police powers; only police can share intelligence with one another. Between 1 May 2012, when the Police Transport Command was established, and 13 March this year—these are the latest statistics available—the Police Transport Command made 1,810 arrests, issued 31,059 infringements and took 3,734 actions under the Young Offenders Act on the public transport network, and obviously this will increase. I take this opportunity to thank the police Minister, the police commissioner and Assistant Commissioner Max Mitchell, who is in charge of the Police Transport Command, for the work they are doing. We will ensure that public safety is always maintained on the public transport network, and it will be boosted by police coming onto the network.

#### STATE-OWNED CORPORATION BOARDS

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations.

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

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** What changes are being made to ensure that board members of State-owned corporations are appointed on merit and work in the best interests of the people of New South Wales?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for his question.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Myall Lakes is a merit-based member of Parliament if ever I saw one: the community loves him. Yesterday I shared with the House the benefits that come to households if costs in State-owned corporations are controlled. The Leader of the Opposition did not understand that. If costs are reduced it means lower electricity and water prices across the State. I explained that benefit. Today there are additional reforms in our State-owned corporations to ensure that they deliver more benefits to the people of New South Wales. We are interested in looking after the taxpayers of this State with a simple policy that we are applying.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order. She has been warned several times. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I digress with an interesting point about Manly Hospital. Members opposite do not understand that difficult decisions must be taken to make things happen. As a local member I am happy to deliver a world-class hospital system for the long-term benefit of the people on the northern beaches. It is time a sensible decision was made, and that is exactly what I will do. When determining an appointment our number one criterion is: Who is the best person for the job?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is pretty simple. It is not about what union a person comes from or whether a person is a union member. This morning the member for Maroubra—the middle manager's hero—made the point that the Premier was a colossus. That is what he said. Based on the historic election result, the Premier certainly is a colossus. It is great to have the support of the member for Maroubra in that regard. In the lead-up to the election Labor members were interested in the governance of State-owned corporations. They got cracking, because 70 per cent of all appointments in the last six months of the Labor Government were either Labor affiliated or union affiliated. That is what they were up to. To give members a quick sense of the qualifications of people appointed, they included the associate secretary of the Electrical Trades Union—

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** —the general vice president of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the assistant general secretary of the Public Service Association—

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** —and the deputy assistant secretary of Unions NSW. And the list goes on and on.

*[Interruption]*

The list goes on because, as the member for Maroubra points out—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Maroubra interjects that on the eve of the election Michael Williamson was appointed. Who was he appointed by? It was by good old chuckles, the middle manager's hero. Michael Williamson happened to be an executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the national president of the Australian Labor Party—that is all. Consider the credentials of some of the people we have appointed to State-owned corporations boards since we came into power. They include a former chief executive officer of Deutsche Bank, a former chief executive officer of Barclays, the chair of the Australian Stock Exchange, the chair of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the chief financial officers of some of the top 100 companies in the land.

In terms of credentials to run State-owned corporations, we are interested in skills and experience. Consistent with our policy across government, if people have the appropriate skills and they are a union member then that is fine. We were happy to appoint the former president of the New South Wales Teachers Federation, Maree O'Halloran, to the Public Service Commission Advisory Board. If a person has the skills to bring to a particular role we are happy to appoint them. I told the secretary of Unions New South Wales that I am happy to work with him to look for appropriately qualified people to take this State forward. Ultimately that is what this Government is about. We look for the best possible people to drive the best possible results in the interests of the taxpayers of this State. These reforms will help to deliver that, and we are proud to take that forward.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECURITY**

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given that the Government has slashed the number of people providing security on our trains and station platforms, does the Minister take responsibility for the 13.6 per cent increase in graffiti and vandalism on the rail network?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** First, I refute the premise of the member's question.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Unlike members opposite, we have retained all our front-line staff positions. Indeed, when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Transport he slashed front-line positions. I am pleased to say that this Government has not only boosted front-line positions but also reformed the process.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Members opposite are sensitive about this point. In addition to improving the number of people involved with security on the transport network, I make it clear that we have a program whereby all front-line staff—about 1,860—are undertaking training to ensure that they are not sitting behind their desks but are on station platforms serving our customers. Labor did not do that. When I came to government I found out some interesting information about what the Leader of the Opposition planned to do with front-line staff. He intended to cut front-line positions, on top of the transport service cuts already implemented by his predecessors in the Labor Government.

I make it clear that, in terms of security on the transport network, nothing replaces police presence and police powers. I can give a number of examples from last month of police intervening directly in order to reduce antisocial behaviour and to bring people into line. Transit officers could not have done that because they do not have the powers, the training or the skills. Customers throughout the transport network deserve to have the best when it comes to security. I am disappointed to see that the member for Wollongong is not in the Chamber. Together with her colleagues, she said that having police on the transport network was a waste of resources. She told her local newspaper that police were better off undertaking duties elsewhere. But we are a government that takes security on our transport network seriously.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I express my gratitude to the Police Transport Command. By the end of 2014 there will be 610 police officers on the transport network in addition to 150 transport officers focusing on fare evasion.

**Mr John Robertson:** When?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am about to answer that. The rollout of 150 transport officers will begin this month and will be completed by the end of the year.

**Mr John Robertson:** What about now?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Leader of the Opposition should keep quiet. He did nothing to address the security shortfall on the transport network. He knows what everybody who catches public transport knows: transit officers typically travel in fours and fives but police are able to travel in pairs, thus increasing their effectiveness. Not only will there be 610 transport police officers—

**Mr John Robertson:** But they won't just be on trains.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will stop arguing. Does the member for Canterbury wish to take a point of order? If so, please cite the standing order that has been breached.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 59. The Minister might want to mention graffiti.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am grateful for that point of order because it allows me to speak about graffiti. Since we came into government, the Coalition has adopted the Auditor-General's recommendations in relation to graffiti. The Leader of the Opposition ignored those recommendations. Not only have we adopted the recommendations in relation to graffiti, but also having police on the job means that we can gather intelligence and prevent crime. We know that, rather than supporting the customer, those opposite will always support their union mates. That is a shame. Every member of Parliament who cares about security on the system should support the police in what they are doing. [*Time expired.*]

#### SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVES

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business. What action has the Government taken to support small business?

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I thank the member for Tamworth for his timely question. The member for Tamworth was previously a small business person and, from memory, he is on the board of the Business Chamber in Tamworth, so he is an appropriate person to ask that question. I will update the House on two powerful measures that the Liberal-Nationals Government is undertaking that will result in tangible changes for small businesses and, ultimately, a stronger economy and more jobs. First, there are the changes to WorkCover, including giving small businesses the reprieve that they deserve. Secondly, the other place has just passed historic regulation to formally establish the Small Business Commissioner as a statutory officer.

Previously under the WorkCover scheme a small business was defined as "any business with a basic workers compensation bill of \$10,000". Given the fact that premiums for small and medium businesses are volatile and difficult to predict, I am delighted to say that my good friends the Premier and the Minister for Finance and Services in another place, the Hon. Greg Pearce, have expanded the definition of small business to be "any business with a basic WorkCover premium of up to \$30,000". That is a tripling of the basic premium criterion. The bottom line is that 25,000 small businesses in New South Wales will have more predictable and more stable premiums. That is a big win for small businesses in New South Wales—a win that leaves the performance of those opposite for dust after 16 long years.

Under the changes, 167,000 critical New South Wales employers will benefit from an annual reduction to WorkCover premiums of 7.5 per cent, saving them more than \$200 million a year. These changes will assist farmers and other small businesses across regional New South Wales. Those opposite do not care about rural industry, we know that. But they could at least pay attention—they might learn something. I will give an example. A grain farmer in western New South Wales with a wages bill of \$655,800 would previously have had a workers compensation bill of \$57,092—that is close to 10 per cent of his wages bill. Under the New South Wales Government's new package that same farmer will pay a workers compensation bill of only \$25,418 if the premium is paid on time and up-front—a massive saving. That is less than half the previous bill. This is a big win for the farmers in Tamworth, Cooma, Cowra, Goulburn, Forbes, Bourke, Kempsey, Moree—wherever they are in regional New South Wales.

I know that members on this side of the House will be very pleased with these changes—whether they represent the electorates of Orange, Monaro, Dubbo, Goulburn, Bathurst, Tamworth or beyond. Another example is an electrical services company in western Sydney—to give an urban case—which has a wages bill of \$851,020. Previously the workers compensation premium for that company would have been \$32,147. Under the Government's new package the premium will be halved, with a \$16,300 bill if the company pays up-front and on time. That means that a hardworking electrician living and working in a place represented by, say, the member for Riverstone, the member for Penrith, the member for Mulgoa, the member for Smithfield, the member for Newcastle, the member for Swansea or whoever will find it easier to grow his or her business and to take on more employees. The Accommodation Association of Australia has welcomed the WorkCover reforms. It said:

The O'Farrell Government's initiative is expected to result in reduced premiums for employers and therefore, significant savings. The reduction in costs for tourism accommodation businesses to flow from the WorkCover reforms—which could be in the vicinity of 7.5 per cent of premiums—is warmly welcomed by the NSW accommodation industry.

It went on to say:

The WorkCover reforms offer enormous encouragement and the potential savings could result in more jobs.

That is a wonderful result for New South Wales. It continued:

The reforms will strengthen the accommodation industry in NSW.

Our support for the lifeblood of this economy does not stop there. [*Extension of time granted.*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will be heard in silence.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** The Government's Small Business Commissioner Bill 2013, to establish that position as an independent statutory officer, passed the Legislative Council yesterday. My hope and expectation is that it will pass this House today. This initiative of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals gives small businesses a level playing field and strong support. This bill has received support from the Australian Retailers Association and the NSW Business Chamber. I thank both those organisations for their support throughout this lengthy process.

For the Liberal-Nationals Government the most important result is that our reform agenda means less red tape for small businesses. Whether it is putting downward pressure on WorkCover premiums, establishing for the first time in New South Wales an advocate for small businesses through the commissioner or reducing red tape so that businesses can grow and create jobs, the NSW Liberal-Nationals Government is making New South Wales number one for small business confidence, for growth and for jobs. The Government has set up Small Biz Connect, a small business advisory service that provides small businesses with face-to-face assistance from experts in small business at a grassroots level.

We have started a three-year pilot program with the University of Western Sydney, finding the most effective and efficient way that services can be delivered to small businesses. That pilot program employs a dedicated full-time senior researcher and two research students. They are using people skilled with working with those for whom English is a second language. We have implemented a 30-day payment for small business suppliers on a properly tendered invoice for government agencies. We have also brought to New South Wales, both city and country, a new Small Biz Bus complete with advisers, touring around New South Wales to help small business people right across this great State.

### RESOURCES FOR REGIONS PROGRAM

**Mr GREG PIPER:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure Services. Will the Deputy Premier address the anomaly that sees local government areas such as Lake Macquarie, with direct impact from five operational mines, a major coal preparation plant, two coal-fired power stations and hundreds of road and rail coal haulage movements each day, miss out on Resources for Regions funding?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his ongoing and constructive interest in the Resources for Regions program and for his advocacy on behalf of his electorate. Earlier this year an independently audited assessment identified seven local government areas that were significantly directly or indirectly affected by mining activity and therefore eligible for funding in the 2013-14 Resources for Regions program. The assessment of direct impacts was based on royalties paid and the assessment of indirect impacts was based on survey responses from local governments as well as mining-related truck movements. While the assessment process was thorough, it did not consider that some local government areas that are directly impacted by mining activity may also be indirectly impacted. There was therefore a subsequent analysis of mining-related truck movements in local government areas that responded to the economic assessment survey.

That analysis showed that Lake Macquarie has an average of 350 mining-related truck movements per day. In comparison, the communities that qualified for Resources for Regions funding based on indirect mining impacts, Newcastle and Wollongong, had 550 and 1,250 mining-related truck movements respectively. Based on this analysis, the Lake Macquarie local government area is not eligible for Resources for Regions funding this year. However, unlike those opposite, this Liberal-Nationals Government listens to local communities and their suggestions to improve government processes and policies. That is why, following representations from the member for Lake Macquarie, next year consideration will be given to formulating an index that considers the combined impact of direct and indirect mining activity on a community. Listen to the bleating from members opposite. That lot opposite sat on the Government benches for 16 years without offering any form of recognition for mining-affected communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Keira will stop shouting.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** What do they do when we put something in place to deliver additional infrastructure for regional communities affected by mining? They whinge and whine. The hypocrisy of Labor is unbelievable. Next year we will look at the combined impact of direct and indirect mining-related activity. Communities such as Lake Macquarie that are impacted by mines as well as transport issues will have a great chance of securing funding in future years. As I said, it is important to remember that this lot opposite had their chance over 16 years. They were taking significant money in royalties out of mining-affected regions. In fact, they were using mining leases as little gifts to their mates.

That is how they treat regional New South Wales—mining leases for Labor mates. The rorts that went on are making great reading on a daily basis. If members want to talk about policy differences between Labor and the Liberals and The Nationals on mining and regional development we are happy to do it any day of the week. In fact, the shadow Minister for Regional Development in the other place when addressing the Building Australia Regional Summit in Armidale recently admitted there was a bit of an inadequacy in Labor's policy when it was in government. In a rare moment of honesty for Labor, he told the audience:

... one of the mistakes Labor made at the last election was not having a Resources for Regions policy.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** They do not care about agriculture or regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Tamworth and the member for Wyong will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Correct. Of course, with typical Labor hypocrisy, the shadow Minister went on to criticise this Government's policy, which is delivering for regional people and mining-affected communities. At the same time he revealed Labor's regional development policy. It was a 10-page PowerPoint presentation on regional development. Mind you, it was in size-36 font. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Unaccustomed as I am, I am happy to continue in this vein. In his presentation the shadow Minister highlighted some of Labor's achievements in office, including the decentralisation of the Firearms Registry to Lismore. That is news to the people of both Lismore and Murwillumbah—85 kilometres and an 80-minute drive away—where the Firearms Registry is located. Labor's policy approach to regional development, as you flick through the 10 pages of size-36 font—

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Put one near a national park gate.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** That is enough out of you, Grizzly Adams.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** The member for Toongabbie is on a weight gain diet apparently, Madam Speaker. He is on the sumo wrestler's diet. He has grown the beard and he is growing the girth as well. What is afoot here? On the ninth page of the document we find Labor's policy response. There are three headings. Members opposite should be interested in this. They are: jobs, marketing of regional communities and reconstruction of rural economies. That is a scary thought—the Labor Party reconstructing the rural economy. Crikey! They are broad headings because that is all there is. There is no other detail. With that great policy foundation it will be interesting to see how many times the Leader of the Opposition dares venture up to the Northern Tablelands ahead of the by-election on 25 May. I understand that the member for Marrickville and the member for Macquarie Fields are planning visits but there have been no sightings of the Leader of the Opposition. We are happy to visit as often as possible to explain this Government's strong regional development policy.

#### RETIREMENT VILLAGES RESIDENT CONTRACTS

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Fair Trading. How is the Government reducing the complexity and confusion faced by prospective residents when selecting a retirement village?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I warn the member for Maroubra that it is not too late to eject members from the Chamber.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I thank the member for Gosford for his question and commend him for his interest in assisting seniors in their decision to move into a retirement village. Looking around the House, I see that this side is full of reformers. It is great to be in a reforming Government. It is great to have a reformist Premier. It is something the Opposition never achieved. We all know this is a critical issue for many in our community, and one that is only—

[*Interjection*]

We are doing this as a favour for the Opposition. It will become more important over the coming decades. Prior to the 2011 election the Liberal Party and The Nationals made a commitment to the people of New South Wales to introduce a standard contract term for retirement villages. I thank the member for Albury for the important work that he did in Opposition at that time. Currently, when prospective residents are deciding which village to move into, they are faced with an overwhelming amount of information. This situation is not helped by the wide range of village contracts currently being used by the industry, which makes it difficult to compare contracts easily. As a result, many people make choices that do not best reflect their circumstances and which they later regret.

The O'Farrell-Stoner Government has rectified this issue by developing a set of standard contract terms in plain English, which will allow people to better compare and understand the differences in costs and

conditions between villages before entering into a contract. Our new standard terms will cover matters such as what residents rights are involved, entry costs and recurrent charges, the sharing of capital gains and departure fees, the settling-in period, services and facilities, alterations and additions, and repairs and maintenance. To further assist prospective residents the standard contract term will be accompanied by two disclosure documents: a general inquiry document and a disclosure statement. The general inquiry document will provide basic information about a village and some general information on what to look out for when choosing a village.

Once a prospective resident has selected a village that person will be presented with a disclosure statement that will provide key information about the individual premises at least 14 days before the contract is signed to help the prospective resident make an informed choice. It means the consumers will receive the right information at the right time, alleviating some of the stress that is experienced when making a life-changing decision. Operators will have six months to transition to the new documents before they become mandatory on 1 October 2013. These changes have been embraced universally by residents and industry stakeholders. Jan Pritchett, President of the Retirement Village Residents Association, commended the Government for achieving the milestone reform in two years. She stated:

We were pleased when the Liberals and Nationals made the promise of a standard contract for retirement villages. The standard contract and its associated documents should be very beneficial to prospective residents.

Illana Halliday, Chief Executive Officer of the Aged Care and Community Services Association, also welcomed the announcement. She stated:

We commend the work the Government has undertaken to assist prospective residents to better understand and compare costs and conditions. With the introduction of the new standard contract and disclosure documents, our members look forward to a more streamlined approach to processing applications.

The list goes on. Russell Westacott, Chief Executive Officer of the Aged Care Rights Service, said that the introduction of a standard contract was a momentous reform. He further stated:

We believe a standard contract will improve the lives of people thinking of entering into retirement living. We thank the Government for making this a priority in their first term.

John Dobson, President of the New South Wales Law Society, voiced his support for the Government's initiative. He stated:

I believe it is in the interests of both those looking to move into retirement villages and the operators of retirement villages to have a standard contract that sets out clearly the rights and obligations of each party.

The introduction of the standard contract terms is a genuine victory, not only for consumer protection but also for common sense. Members opposite will see that it is in plain English. It does not contain pictures, but someone can read it for them. For most people, this will make a huge difference to their lives when they are moving into a retirement village. It is another clear example of the Liberal-Nationals Government delivering on its commitments to the people of New South Wales. This is another reform delivered by an effective Government that is getting the job done.

**Question time concluded at 3.14 p.m.**

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

### **Report**

**Mr Matt Kean**, as Chair, tabled the report entitled, "Land Valuation System—Report on the inquiry into the land valuation system and the eighth general meeting with the Valuer-General", No. 2/55, dated May 2013.

**Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Matt Kean.**

## **STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Reference: Inquiry into downstream gas supply and availability in New South Wales**

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** I inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 299 (1), the State and Regional Development Committee has received a referral from the Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast to conduct an inquiry into downstream gas supply and availability in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's homepage.

## PETITIONS

### Northern Rivers Mining

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

Petition calling on the Government to declare the Northern Rivers region a mining-free zone, to revoke all current licences or leases that allow for mining activities in the area and not to grant any new such licences and leases, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

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

## PETITIONS

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

### Palliative Care Services

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

### Albion Park Aeromedical Services

Petition requesting the retention of aeromedical services at Albion Park, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

### Sydney Electorate Public High School

Petition requesting the establishment of a public high school in the Sydney electorate, 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**.

### Rooty Hill Railway Station Access

Petition requesting the installation of elevators at Rooty Hill railway station, received from **Mr Richard Amery**.

### Inner-city Social Housing

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### Pet Shops

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

### Slaughterhouse Monitoring

Petition requesting mandatory closed-circuit television for all New South Wales slaughterhouses, 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**.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled, "Management of the ClubGRANTS scheme: Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services—Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority", dated May 2013.

**SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER BILL 2013****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.**

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 1 May 2013*

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [3.18 p.m.]: I move:

No. 1 Page 7. Insert after line 35:

**18 Compulsory attendance at mediation and production of documents**

- (1) For the purposes of mediating a complaint or other dispute involving a small business, the Commissioner may, by notice in writing, require any person:
  - (a) to attend a meeting at a time and place specified in the notice, or
  - (b) to produce, at a time and place specified in the notice, to the Commissioner any document or thing described in the notice that is in the custody or under the control of the person and that, in the opinion of the Commissioner, would benefit the resolution of the complaint or dispute.
- (2) A person must not:
  - (a) without reasonable excuse, refuse or fail to do anything required of the person by a notice under subsection (1), or
  - (b) in response to such a notice, make a statement that the person knows is false or misleading, or
  - (c) alter, suppress or destroy any document or thing that the person is required by such a notice to produce.

Maximum penalty on summary conviction: 100 penalty units in the case of a corporation or 50 penalty units in the case of an individual.
- (3) A government agency is not required to produce any document under this section if there is an overriding public interest against the disclosure of the document for the purposes of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or if access to the document would otherwise be denied under that Act.

I am pleased to advise that the Small Business Commissioner Bill has been passed in another place, with a small amendment moved by the Christian Democratic Party and supported across the other place. The amendment will apply penalties for failure to attend mediation and/or failure to provide information relevant to the resolution of the complaint or dispute. This will be a great help for the small businesses of New South Wales participating in mediation and encourage big business to come to the table. I note the commitment made by my colleague the Hon. Duncan Gay in another place for the commissioner and me to keep an eye on how unfair contracts are dealt with under the legislation. I note the concerns raised and I will happily honour Minister Gay's undertaking in another place. I thank the Christian Democratic Party for its support throughout the process of securing this legislation. I acknowledge the support from all sides of the House for the bill.

**Question—That the Legislative Council amendment 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.**

**SERVICE NSW (ONE-STOP ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES) BILL 2013****Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 26 March 2013.**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.19 p.m.]: I speak on the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. In July 2012 the O'Farrell Government opened 18 new one-stop shops across New South Wales. The aim is to offer people a new, more streamlined and more convenient way of accessing Government services. The bill provides the legislative powers to make that happen. It empowers Service NSW to undertake customer service functions on behalf of State Government agencies and authorises the transfer of relevant information between Service NSW and those agencies. Those provisions of the bill have been devised in consultation with the Privacy Commissioner. Initially, Service NSW will provide transactions and services relating to driving, boating, Fair Trading licences, and births, deaths and marriages.

When a customer updates his or her details with a government agency through Service NSW the details will be updated simultaneously with other agencies. The Opposition does not oppose this bill. However, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. It is hard to argue with the principle of one-stop shops. If implemented correctly, they have the potential to save time and to make life easier. Nonetheless, I must question why it is taking so long to establish them. This was a central Liberal-Nationals election commitment. The Premier had four years as Leader of the Opposition during which to develop this legislation and to have it drafted. Why were he and his Government not raring to get this out the door on day one?

On 20 March 2012 the Government issued a big, bold press release with the headline "One-stop shops for government delivered". The problem is that they were not delivered and here we are debating this legislation today. People across New South Wales got excited and searched high and low for these one-stop shops. They scoured the State but could not find even one. Then, four months later in July 2012, the Government issued another media release. This time we were told that 18 one-stop shops offering 210 government services would be established across the State. The Premier even promised us concierges who would greet customers and wait on them hand and foot. Nine months later not one one-stop shop has been established.

The Government has promoted the benefits of one-stop shops; it has issued press releases about one-stop shops; it has not stopped talking about one-stop shops. The only thing it has not done is open one. The people of New South Wales have been offered only a forlorn website. Today is a great day because finally we are debating a bill that will lead to the establishment of these one-stop shops. Despite that, the website suggests that the first one-stop shop will not open until the middle of this year. That is not good enough and it is yet more proof of the glacial pace at which this Government makes changes. If it has taken this long to draft a bill dealing with one-stop shops it is hard to imagine how long it will take to deliver any meaningful infrastructure for the people of New South Wales.

The Opposition has a second concern about this legislation. We worry that one-stop shops are a code for cuts and closures. This Government has shut down services across the State: in fact, it has never seen a regional office that it did not want to close. It has already shut Department of Education and Communities State and regional offices resulting in the loss of 600 jobs. It has also shut NSW Trade and Investment offices in Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Broken Hill and Goulburn, and NSW Industrial Relations offices in Penrith, Coffs Harbour, Gosford, Wagga Wagga and Orange. It has merged the State's electricity distributors and killed off Essential Energy as the dedicated supplier to rural and regional New South Wales. When this Government introduces a bill such as this we must ask whether these one-stop shops are simply cuts in disguise. Is this simply a fantastic mirage designed to obscure the fact that jobs will be cut?

People across the State are desperate to know where these one-stop shops will be located. People in regional New South Wales are wondering whether there will be one in their town, in the next town or even within a 50-kilometre radius. They might have to be Burke or Wills to find one of these one-stop shops in regional New South Wales. Just as importantly, what offices will be closed to make way for them? What will happen to the local branch of Roads and Maritime Services that is so important to local residents? Where will people take their drivers licence test, or get their L-plates and P-plates? Where will they be able to register their car or their boat? The Government's legislation does not answer any of those questions. Its policy rollout has not only been laboriously slow but it has also left the people of New South Wales in a fog of confusion about one-stop shops.

The Government justifies its policy by saying that the queues at NSW Fair Trading and Roads and Maritime Services offices are too long. However, this bill will lead to an increase in the number of services to 210 that people can access and at the same time reduce the number of locations at which they can access them. If this process is not implemented correctly it will be a recipe for longer queues and absolute chaos. The only way that these one-stop shops will work is if specialist staff are on hand at each location. For example, every Service NSW centre must have trained motor registry and Fair Trading staff. The Government must guarantee that, but no such guarantee is included in the legislation. It must also guarantee that no area in New South Wales will slip through the cracks.

The Government intends to close the NSW Fair Trading office in my electorate of Blacktown on 31 May, but the Service NSW office will not open until the middle of next year. Does that mean the residents of any electorate will be forced to travel to Penrith or Parramatta to overcome that gap in services? The people of New South Wales also need a guarantee that they will not have to wait even longer for services because of the establishment of these one-stop shops and that, ironically, they will not be subject to an additional layer of bureaucracy. I note the Premier has said that Service NSW will conduct some transactions on behalf of other agencies, such as taking applications and fees for certificates from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages and then pass them on for processing. In other words, people with a problem will be handballed from office to office.

When people turn up at a one-stop shop they do not want to find out that their problem cannot be resolved. They do not want to walk into a Service NSW shop only to be told that they must go to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. They do not want to be given the run-around by the smiling concierge at the front door. It is critical that the Government be 100 per cent transparent about what these one-stop shops are meant to achieve, where they will be located, how they will be staffed and how they will interact with other government agencies. The Opposition does not oppose this bill. As I said, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The Opposition will carefully scrutinise the implementation and operation of these one-stop shops. I call on the Government to guarantee that their establishment will not be an excuse to cut jobs, because that will result in longer queues and the delivery of inferior services to the people of New South Wales.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [3.29 p.m.]: I support the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013, which is important legislation. It gives effect to the commitment made by the Liberal-Nationals Government to make New South Wales number one again. This bill will enable the new agency to act as a customer service agent for government services and New South Wales government agencies, including NSW Fair Trading. As Minister for Fair Trading I am well aware of the benefits that Service NSW will bring to the community. This Government is committed to delivering faster, simpler and more efficient access to services, and this legislation will deliver in that regard. Indeed, Fair Trading's shopfront at the McKell Building near Central Station will be converted into a flagship Service NSW centre over the coming months. In an early effort to support the Government's commitment to the new service delivery model, Fair Trading piloted the OneGov program in Penrith and Orange in 2011.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** A great trial.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** And a great local member. The OneGov program saw a range of government services from Senior's Card applications and fishing licences through to the purchase of national parks passes accessible through Fair Trading centres. Following a successful pilot, Fair Trading rolled out the program to its 24 centres in rural, regional and metropolitan New South Wales in early 2012. Within a year of coming to government the O'Farrell-Stoner Government had succeeded where Labor had failed for 16 long years. The launch of Service NSW takes the OneGov program and elevates it to new heights. As the roll-out of Service NSW continues, more than 200 government services will be available in one single location. Service NSW centres will be open for longer periods, making it easier than ever for the community to interact with the Government.

Service NSW will be augmented by a 24-hour telephone support service and a new central internet portal. I congratulate the Premier and the Customer Service Commissioner, Mike Pratt, on the delivery of this important election commitment. I also congratulate NSW Fair Trading and its Commissioner, Rod Stowe, on the active support given to Service NSW throughout its development and during the transition to the new service delivery model. The community can rest assured that the quality customer service they have come to expect from Fair Trading will continue, albeit in a slightly different form. With the progressive roll-out of Service NSW centres throughout New South Wales, Fair Trading will progressively cease to provide shopfront services. This does not mean Fair Trading will cease to have a presence in rural and regional areas.

Fair Trading will continue its delivery of dispute resolution, community liaison, and other services in each regional centre currently serviced. The New South Wales community stands to benefit considerably from Service NSW, which will revolutionise the way we interact with government. This Government has shown real leadership with this important reform and on committing to a course of action for improving the lives of the people of New South Wales and improving access to Government. In a little over two years we are achieving something that the Opposition could not deliver during its four terms on the Treasury benches. Service NSW will offer a faster, simpler and more efficient means of dealing with government. Every member of this House should support this legislation. I am proud to be a part of the Government that introduced it.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [3.33 p.m.]: I join with the Leader of the Opposition to speak on the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. While I note that the Premier has carriage of this matter, this legislation has a great deal of relevance for the Fair Trading portfolio. As such, I note the role that the Minister for Fair Trading has played in this process. The Opposition will not oppose this bill. However, it has some serious concerns about it and, more importantly, the proposal to accommodate some 210 government services into a single location. This is the largest change to the delivery of government services in decades. It involves consolidating entire departments with other departments, or sections with other departments. Tens of millions of dollars of assets are involved and thousands of government sector employees are affected. So it is somewhat strange that to date the Government has issued only two press releases about this matter, undertaken no visible community consultation and has had little presence in statewide or local media.

Overall there has been very little coverage of this issue, which is strange given the comments we heard earlier from the Minister and previously from the Premier about how proud they are of this legislation. If they were so proud of it they would have flaunted it about in the community so that they are aware of it. The Government has already demonstrated that it is willing to slash the Fair Trading services that people of this State rely upon. I would suggest that it is exactly as the Leader of the Opposition said earlier: it is about a great deal of job losses, particularly in the Fair Trading portfolio, and that is why the Government has been deliberately media shy in relation to Service NSW.

In the last budget \$13 million was cut from the Fair Trading budget, which came at a time when Fair Trading was undertaking an important new function of assisting the NSW Police Force enforce ban on bikies owning and operating tattoo parlours. The Government should rule out using the Service NSW restructure as an excuse to implement more job cuts to NSW Fair Trading, or any other affected department. In 2010-11 the Department of Fair Trading had 937 employees. Unfortunately, more recent data is not yet available. I ask the Premier: How many jobs does the Government intend to cut as a result of this process? In the past 12 months there have been reports of substantial cuts to the Fair Trading legal department, and compliance and enforcement. The Government should come clean and make public where the jobs are being cut and how many jobs are being cut.

The Government should be up-front: Is the ultimate goal of this process to cut costs and cut jobs? If so, the Government's rhetoric about improving service delivery will have been proven false. If Service NSW shopfronts do not have enough highly trained staff, customers will simply wait longer for inferior services. Anybody who has had to wait in line at a motor registry or at a Fair Trading office will say that waiting times for government services are already too long. Yet the Government proposes to increase the number of services available at one of these locations while closing the other one. It is important to note that, with the exception of Roads and Maritime Services functions, most additional government functions listed by the Government, such as national park passes, are already available through Fair Trading outlets. In regional or suburban centres where there is both a motor registry and a Fair Trading office, the Government intends to close one and convert the other into the Service NSW shopfront.

In Newcastle the Government intends to close the Hunter Street Fair Trading shopfront and convert the Newcastle Roads and Maritime Services shopfront into a Service NSW branch. In Penrith South the Government intends to close the Roads and Maritime Services shopfront and convert Penrith Fair Trading into a Service NSW shopfront. In Queanbeyan the Government intends to close the Roads and Maritime Services shopfront at the corner of Aurora Avenue and Aurora Place and convert the Fair Trading shopfront into a Service NSW branch. In Gosford the Government intends to close the Fair Trading shopfront at the Gateway Centre and convert the Roads and Maritime Services shopfront into a Service NSW branch. In Parramatta the Government intends to close the Fair Trading shopfront on Fitzwilliam Street and convert the Roads and Maritime Services shopfront into a Service NSW Branch.

I wonder what members representing the electorates of Newcastle, Parramatta, Gosford, Monaro or Penrith have to say about the closure of services in their electorates and whether they are even aware of what the

creation of Service NSW means for their local communities? One of the key outstanding issues with some of these closures relates to the timing of the closure of existing services. I am advised that for tranche two Service NSW outlets the closure of existing government services may actually precede the opening of a Service NSW branch by several months. This means that the local community will have to go without access to a particular government service such as Fair Trading or Roads and Maritime Services for months at a time. For example, the Government intends to close the Blacktown branch of Fair Trading at the end of this month but does not intend to open a new Service NSW branch in Blacktown until the middle of 2014. I am advised that something similar will happen in Hurstville.

I call on the Government to rule out closing services prematurely. It is simply wrong to ask residents in major suburban centres such as Blacktown to travel to Parramatta or Penrith to access Fair Trading services. A matter of key concern that I mentioned earlier is the potential for job cuts. The Government has made no guarantee that there will be adequate positions for all existing staff in affected departments, including Fair Trading, to move to Service NSW. I am advised that existing staff at Fair Trading, Roads and Maritime Services and other affected departments will have to apply for jobs at Service NSW. The question is: Is the goal of this process to cut employee numbers? If not, why would the Government not simply arrange for the transfer of all affected employees to Service NSW? Instead the Government is making existing employees apply for jobs. Any staff working in affected departments who are unsuccessful in securing a position at Service NSW will be declared excess employees under the Government's excess employee's policy.

The creation of Service NSW is accompanied by a series of other changes within the Department of Fair Trading. The massive structural reform process involved has received very little attention and the Minister for Fair Trading has had very little to say about it. The Fair Trading portfolio has several key areas, including Fair Trading investigations responsible for investigating and prosecuting dodgy businesses and those who engage in unethical business practices, and Fair Trading shopfronts and call centres responsible for assisting in customer inquiries. As part of this process the customer-oriented subsections of Fair Trading will be transferred from the Department of Finance and Services to Service NSW. Currently a major restructure of the investigative arm of NSW Fair Trading is being undertaken.

Sources within the department have said that Fair Trading investigators are being instructed to focus on prosecuting cases involving larger dollar values and some within the department are concerned that this is leading to certain cases considered to be small, including individual traders who are breaking the law, not being prosecuted. The Government should come clean about what is really happening at NSW Fair Trading, its goals for this process and just which employees are being cut. Most significantly, the Government should come clean as to why a Minister who is normally happy to speak in the media is suddenly silent on important issues that have an enormous impact on his portfolio responsibilities.

Government departments make an important contribution to the economy of rural and regional communities. They generally employ people in high income service positions and any reduction in the number of these jobs can have a detrimental impact on local economies. The bill provides for a government agency to be able to delegate to and enter into agreements with the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW to undertake customer service functions for the agency and it provides for the required information transfers between Service NSW and the relevant agency for this to occur. The Government has said that Service NSW will initially provide transactions and services relating to driving, boating, Fair Trading licences, births, deaths and marriages. However, those services will be expanded over time.

One customer-oriented department absent from discussions regarding Service NSW—and it is my hope that it continues to be so—is the Department of Housing. I am advised there is real concern within the Department of Housing about the potential for the service functions of that department to be merged down the track into Service NSW. This would be a poor decision, given the highly specialist nature of public and social housing and the social justice dynamic of the vulnerability of its clients. I would like the Premier to rule that out in his speech in reply. I call on the Government to rule out using this process to cut jobs and to guarantee that customers will not have to wait in line for hours on end for government services and that no government service will be prematurely closed in the months prior to the opening of Service NSW. The Government needs to guarantee to the people of this State that this process is truly about delivering better services and not about cutting jobs, removing experienced staff, creating longer queues and offering poorer service.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [3.42 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. In my inaugural speech I spoke about the importance of leadership, values, service and determination. The O'Farrell Government is determined to improve service for the people of

New South Wales. The object of the bill is to allow Service NSW to undertake customer service functions for all government agencies. Service NSW will undertake the customer service functions of government agencies pursuant to delegations from and agreements with those agencies. For example, agencies currently solely responsible for processing applications for a driver licence or birth certificate will need to give authority to Service NSW to do so on their behalf.

The Privacy Commissioner has been consulted in the drafting of the bill. The bill is facilitative in nature and allows government agencies to delegate and enter into agreements with Service NSW to undertake the customer service functions of the agencies. The bill defines customer service functions to include those functions relating to applications for and the issue of licences and other authorities; giving information about government services or legislation; receiving and making payments; the provision of other government services and other ancillary functions. It permits government agencies to delegate statutory customer service functions to the chief executive officer of Service NSW. The bill also allows the chief executive officer of Service NSW to enter into agreements with a government agency in relation to the exercise of customer service functions for the agency, including potentially from other States and even other countries.

The bill provides for information transfers, including between Service NSW and a government agency, for the purpose of Service NSW providing customer service functions for the agency. It also provides for the content of notices given by the chief executive officer of Service NSW in relation to the collection of information from customers. The bill allows the chief executive officer to enter into agreements with authorised persons to act as agent for the chief executive officer in the provision of those services. Mike Pratt, the chief executive officer of Service NSW, is widely respected in industry and service provision.

This is a very exciting development for New South Wales. Customers will be able to access more than more than 200 government services at one point of contact. In view of the various phone numbers and contacts for those 200 government services it is not surprising that customers find it difficult. They will now have one easy access portal for government services. We live in a digital age—I note that Acting-Speaker Ward uses an iPad. This bill provides opportunities for customers to better engage with government services. I bet the member for Bankstown buys her shoes online—

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** No, I do not.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE:** The digital age provides customers with many opportunities to engage with service providers, including the State Government. The online service will provide a telephone and internet portal that will enable people to contact services outside normal government trading hours. The one-stop shops will also provide extended hours of service from Monday to Friday and also on Saturday. It will be a great boon for families and small businesses to still be able to transact business with the Government of New South Wales across its 200 agencies through one convenient access point at the end of a working day. But this will require careful implementation, and I acknowledge that great thought and consideration has been given to it.

It will result in improved productivity and liveability for the people of New South Wales. I was fortunate enough to participate in the trial of the police assistance line—in fact part of Campbelltown police station was converted into a call centre. It is important to have such a trial to ensure that the service is rolled out without a hitch. This service will fit in with other government services such as the Opal card electronic ticketing system. It is all about making it easier for families and businesses to transact their business with the Government. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [3.48 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013, which has as its aim to enable Service NSW to provide one-stop access to customer services for New South Wales government agencies. The objects of this bill are as follows:

- (a) to enable Service NSW (by conferring functions on its Chief Executive Officer (the CEO)) to provide one-stop access to customer services for NSW government agencies and for other agencies or persons,
- (b) to facilitate the provision of information by and about customers for that purpose, and
- (c) to enact consequential provisions relating to access to government information and State records.

The introduction of this bill will provide for a range of government agencies to delegate and enter into an agreement with the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW. The said agreement will in effect allow for Service NSW to provide customer service support to the people of New South Wales on behalf of the relevant

agencies and will allow for all required information transfers between the agencies and Service NSW to occur. The introduction of this new Service NSW one-stop shop we will see a range of changes in the way the Government delivers front-line services to the people of New South Wales.

There are, however, some concerns as to how effective this amalgamation of services will be, especially when it comes to delivering front-line services to the people. In the past when the Government has tried to join agencies together there has always been resistance by one or two of the agencies within the organisation that do not want to join together. They have their own little empires and they want to keep it that way. I hope that the Government has considered that matter to ensure that all agencies will cooperate to ensure that it works. We do not want the people of New South Wales to pay the penalty for the project failing. The idea of bringing a range of public services together could help save time and make it easier for people to access government services, although what will happen when the number of locations is reduced, staff members are cut and wait times increase? And all in the name of cutting costs.

The one-stop shop setup the Government is proposing in this legislation will provide for a more convenient method for the people of New South Wales to update their details across several government agencies by allowing individuals to opt in and provide their information to one office, which would then be shared amongst all affiliated agencies, saving a large degree of time and trouble in the future. The introduction of this legislation would also allow for Service NSW to expand and enter into agreements with other jurisdictions such as other States, the Commonwealth or even other countries. The Government, however, needs to guarantee that amongst the 210 different services to be provided under one umbrella Service NSW must have the specialist staff necessary to facilitate each distinct service provided by it. Without the specialist support services the quality of services provided to the people of New South Wales will diminish and become inferior to what we already have today.

As the Government intends to run Service NSW offices out of the current Fair Trading offices and motor registries, where queues are already incredibly long at times, it is concerning to think how long these queues will be as the staff attempt to provide 210 separate government services out of a single building without the guarantee of job security. The Government needs to guarantee that the introduction of this policy will not be used to cut jobs from public sector workers throughout the State, which would only lead to longer queues, diminished service and several steps backwards from where we are today.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [3.52 p.m.]: I am delighted that the New South Wales Premier has announced the establishment of Service NSW, as reflected in the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. Others have already spoken on the enabling provisions of the bill, which allow Service NSW to undertake customer service functions for government agencies. My comments will be of a more general nature. Service NSW is a new and customer-focused government organisation that will become the main interaction point for customers of the New South Wales Government. Service NSW will make it easier to interact with the Government by bringing services together in an integrated government model. We need to align people, processes and technology in an integrated customer management system which brings together the business principles of alignment, agility and customer-centricity.

Service NSW will deliver a range of government services and transactions through a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week telephone service, an easy-to-use website, and initially 18 service centres across the State with extended opening hours. At last we appear to be moving New South Wales public service delivery into the second decade of the twenty-first century. Having spent considerable time working in the private sector before entering Parliament, I know that we are playing catch-up with the private sector. This move to simplify access to government services will save residents and businesses time and money. It will deliver solutions that are overdue and that should form part of best practice in delivering modern public services to both businesses and individuals. The provision of high-quality and dependable public services and their effect on quality of life is not reflected by purely financial measures.

Nine out of 10 people in New South Wales deal with government each year, with the number of transactions totalling 40 million. People quite reasonably expect easy and flexible access to government services, with consistency of information across channels of communication. Effective customer relationship management in a customer-centric model should allow a single contact from a customer to result in changed details being populated across multiple government departmental systems. I am pleased that the Premier and the Department of Premier and Cabinet are championing this change, as it should help to address structural barriers across government departments. Otherwise, legacy service delivery mechanisms, which have often operated as silos, would restrict cooperation, coordination and collaboration in delivering service.

For example, the Government Licensing System, or GLS, currently provides services across 120 types of New South Wales licences, but its website does not mention motor vehicle licences. These are handled through the Roads and Maritime Services DRIVES system. Happily, however, I understand that the Government Licensing System will soon provide website information about this related government service. Data is available which compares the costs of different service channels. This consistently reflects the low cost of online service compared with telephone service and the low cost of both these channels compared to in-person service. Evidence includes recent testimony before the Public Accounts Committee given by a director in Roads and Maritime Services. He indicated that while a face-to-face transaction costs Roads and Maritime Services about \$8 to \$10 to complete, an online transaction costs only around 17¢ to 27¢.

Self-service is largely conducted through technologies such as the internet, mobile devices, electronic kiosks, and telephone interactive voice response [IVR]. Around the world people are increasingly being encouraged to use these technologies to obtain government services, although they are still noticeably more common in the private sector than the public sector. On 31 August last year a Canadian research report was published by Kenneth Kernaghan of Brock University titled, "Anywhere, Anytime, Any Device: Innovations in Public Sector Self-Service Delivery". It refers to a considerable amount of evidence that people want self-service delivery but notes that there are four main categories of barriers to achieving self-service delivery. Those four categories of barriers are managerial and operational, political and legal, structural, and cultural.

Wherever reasonably possible we should be encouraging self-service. It saves the taxpayer money and it meets the increasing expectations of consumers, who are looking for self-service and adopting technologies that did not exist in the past. If that saves the Government money and therefore saves the taxpayer money that is a good thing. However, a real barrier to adopting such technology in the managerial and operational barrier category is public concern about privacy, security and identity management. This is a central concern regarding self-service delivery that warrants some further attention and some words of caution. We must ensure that the rapid expansion and uptake of online commerce and e-government services are accompanied by adequately addressing of cyber security risks.

I believe that governments generally need to be more agile and collaborative in responding to such public needs. Information and communications technology concerns were reflected in a motion passed at the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees meeting in Sydney last month. The New South Wales Public Accounts Committee also identified a need for better auditing of government controls in this area across New South Wales and Australia. There is a lack of public confidence and an unacceptable risk to personal, State and national assets. International cyber security risk concerns were articulated by President Obama in his 2013 State of the Union address. The appallingly low adoption rates for the Federal Government's new electronic health records system is also an example of recent evidence that governments need to do more in the area of cyber security.

However, those obstacles should not prevent innovation and technological action aimed at improving customer service experiences. As a service provider, the New South Wales Government must have its customers as its focus. That involves deeply understanding the needs of customers and directing resources and processes accordingly. Service NSW is a positive and welcome initiative. However, as we head into this new era of service delivery it is important to recognise that this legislation is just the start of the journey and not the destination. There will be challenges along the way, including the adjustment of public servants. It will not be an easy journey but it will certainly be a worthwhile one. The developing service delivery model of Service NSW will be monitored and measured carefully.

We will see who benefits from the changes and what feedback flows to generate further improvement. It will be crucial to have the right people with the right skills to deal with the change and the challenges associated with a customer-centric model. There will be training opportunities for existing staff as well as recruitment of other capable people into the public service. But courage, patience and perseverance will be required by those who lead and deliver the Service NSW vision. They have my support in doing so. I wish them well and look forward to witnessing a transformation in public sector service delivery.

**Mr ROBERT FUROLO** (Lakemba) [4.03 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. The overview of the bill has been discussed but I repeat it:

The objects of this Bill are as follows:

- (a) to enable Service NSW ... to provide one-stop access to customer services for NSW government agencies and for other agencies or persons,
- (b) to facilitate the provision of information by and about customers for that purpose.

I think many members who have spoken before me touched on issues that need to be understood. The Opposition does not oppose the bill but I would like to make a couple of points about it which I hope the Minister will take into consideration. This is not a new initiative. The previous Labor Government took steps in the same direction and the Federal Labor Government is well into a program of one-stop shops. But a couple of things in this model need to be seriously considered. One is the framework for determining locations. It has been foreshadowed that there will be around 100 Service NSW one-stop shops in New South Wales. It is not for me to determine whether or not that is the right number. However, the Minister and his department no doubt will be under considerable pressure from Government and Opposition members to locate one of these Service NSW one-stop shops in their community.

It will be important to have some rigour and transparency about the decision-making process for the allocation of these centres. We must ensure that centres are established in areas that have a genuine need and that the placement of these one-stop shops is not utilised for political purposes. It is important to have benchmarks or requirements as to where these centres will be located. The community and the Parliament need assurance that decisions are based on the needs of communities and not on political expediency. Eighteen centres have been foreshadowed in areas that well deserve a one-stop shop. I will be interested to see the process that is followed to determine the allocation of the remaining centres. I hope and trust that there will be rigour and some transparency in the decision-making process. Many people in New South Wales have experience of dealing with bureaucracies and call centres. I know from experience that it can be one of the most frustrating things that one can do.

Currently I am in an ongoing dispute with Telstra—the subject of some 30 phone calls. It has been my experience that I have spoken to somebody in the wrong section who cannot help me and who does not have contact with or an understanding of the section to which I need to talk. There is an inherent danger in a system where people act on behalf of other agencies or departments. While they might be gatekeepers and are able to provide superficial advice, they might not be able to help to resolve complex issues and the process will simply add to the frustration that people are feeling. People who are making phone calls might be put through to somebody who will not be able to solve their problem. They will then be put through to somebody else and they will be told that they will get a call back but that does not happen. They will ring again and get somebody different and the whole cycle will begin again. It is important that Service NSW and these one-stop shops do not become another layer of bureaucracy or another difficult area that customers and members of the public have to navigate.

When establishing these Service NSW one-stop shops it is important for benchmarking of current services to be undertaken as a way of measuring their success and performance. For example, we need to know how long it would take to renew one's licence by going to Roads and Maritime Services, standing in a queue and receiving the service that would be delivered by that organisation. When the new service is up and running we would then be able to benchmark its performance with the existing service to ensure we were getting value for money and that the people of New South Wales were getting an improved service for their investment. The benchmarking of existing services is an important way of ensuring that Service NSW and the one-stop shop system is an efficient and effective use of taxpayers' money. It is also worthwhile to put into the key performance indicators for the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW the improvements required in those benchmarks.

If, for example, it takes five minutes to get one's licence renewed today, one would expect to have the same time frame under the new system. If not, the chief executive officer needs to be held to account. One of the areas about which I am concerned is dispute resolution and oversight. If a conflict arises between an agency acting for another department and another agency as to who will be accountable for the provision of information or the failure to provide information, how will such a conflict be resolved? Customers care little about which agency is responsible; they only want the matter to be resolved. But it is important that there is a clear path for conflict resolution between Service NSW agencies and a host agency. Disputes must be resolved in a way that leaves the customer informed and not disadvantaged. As the member for Lakemba—one of the most diverse communities in New South Wales—I hope that employees of Service NSW one-stop shops have language aid services available to them.

As a former Mayor of Canterbury I recognise that the council employs language aides. They receive a small loading on their salary for being available to help translate inquiries over the phone or in person from people who speak a language other than English. It is important when these centres are established, particularly in areas that have a large non-English speaking background community, that special attention is given to ensuring that language aides or translation services are provided. It would be pointless to have a one-stop shop if a large proportion of the community who went to that service could not communicate their needs and could not

be assisted. I see great value in this service and this reform. I share the concerns raised by the Leader of the Opposition about job losses. I also recognise this is an opportunity to make government more efficient. I hope that in the process it becomes a better service as well. I look forward to seeing the outcome of this service.

**Mr TIM OWEN** (Newcastle) [4.10 p.m.]: I am very pleased to speak today in support of the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. The bill aims to deliver on our Government's election commitment to put customer service at the heart of government decision-making, which we have been doing throughout our two years in government. After 16 years of a Labor Government that was more interested in pursuing its own interests than those of the people it was here to represent, the bill will allow Services NSW to provide first-class customer assistance to the people of this State on behalf of other agencies by bringing services together in an integrated government model. People, particularly those in my electorate, have been telling us for two years that the old methods, involving fractured and isolated systems run by different departments, no longer work. People deserve reliable information that does not change from one day to the next, and access to services at convenient times such as on Saturdays and after 5.00 p.m. on weekdays.

Currently there are 394 separate State government agencies, authorities and trading enterprises delivering services. These bodies have no interaction with each other and are linked to more than 800 websites and, would you believe, 8,000 different telephone numbers. From a citizen's point of view, this makes contacting the Government a nightmare job that creates more problems for people than it solves. The bill will reduce that confusion significantly and simplify the process of registering the birth of a child, paying State fees, renewing a boat or driver licence and a wide range of other transactions by directing people to one central body. The urgent need for a one-stop shop to contact the Government was highlighted in the New South Wales Commission of Audit report released last year. The report found that under the former, Labor Government staff delivering government services to the citizens of New South Wales had been forced to make do with cumbersome structures, unnecessary barriers, poor data, unclear reporting lines and ineffective systems. It advised that immediate steps should therefore be taken to group or merge entities where appropriate to reverse the gross inefficiencies that had set in.

The bill does a number of things. It defines customer service functions to include tasks relating to applications for the issuing of licences, providing information about government services or legislation, and receiving and making payments. It permits government agencies to delegate statutory customer service functions to the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW and the sub-delegation of those functions within Service NSW. It provides for information transfers, including between Service NSW and a government agency for the purpose of Service NSW providing customer service functions for the agency. Finally, it allows the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW to enter into agreements with a government agency in order to exercise customer service functions for the agency, including potentially from other States or even other countries. We have looked at what we can do to roll a lot of council services into these one-stop shops.

Put simply, the bill is designed to make life easier for the people of New South Wales and I am very excited that one of the first 18 Service NSW centres will be opened in my electorate of Newcastle. Newcastle and the Hunter are home to more than 500,000 people who will soon have access to a first-class centre which is open six days a week, allowing them to complete their business with government quickly and efficiently. I have been briefed, as have a number of members, by Service NSW on what these centres will look like. They will be very easy places to complete work and they will become familiar places for people to go to. They will be well set out, well structured, well manned and very efficient.

Upon the arrival of customers, concierges will greet them and make sure they get what they need as soon as possible. For those not in the vicinity of the service centre, the new 24-hour-a-day call centre will enable customers to speak to a person, not a machine, every day of the year in order to tap into government services quickly. This is a first, and a fantastic outcome for the people of this State. On most occasions callers will have to inform government only once, and if specialist assistance is required the query will be passed on to the appropriate person. A new easy-to-use website will be rolled out to act as the single gateway to all information and web services across government. From the middle of this year Service NSW will provide more than 840 transactions and services, including Roads and Maritime Services licence and registration services, Fair Trading licences, Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing licences, national park permits, and Births, Deaths and Marriages transactions. More services will then be added over time to build Service NSW into a complete one-stop government service delivery model.

In this challenging fiscal environment we simply cannot afford to waste our resources on substandard services for the people of this State. I have had countless meetings with constituents in my electorate who were

having trouble changing a name, renewing a licence or applying for a business certificate. Often they would receive conflicting information from different government departments and would be unsure how to proceed. Therefore, I commend the Premier and the Government for doing what the Labor Government lacked the discipline to do: put the people of this State first by providing a valuable service that will have the skills and resources to service people's needs.

Businesses in the Hunter will also save a significant amount of time and money by carrying out the majority of their government transactions in one location in the city of Newcastle, thus ensuring greater productivity and a stronger economy. Extensive research conducted by this Government clearly showed that people wanted easier access to services, faster service, accurate and consistent information, and a single point of contact to "tell the Government only once". I am proud to stand here today and say that is exactly what we are delivering. I congratulate the Premier on introducing this important bill that will have an immediate and positive impact on the lives of people in this State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [4.17 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition members have indicated some concerns or things to watch while stopping short of opposing the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. We do not oppose the bill. Having one location where members of the public can pay fees, renew licences, drop off correspondence and put in submissions is quite commendable. I recall that when we were in government we announced a certain number of proposals in this regard but the detail was always a little more difficult than the principle highlighted by government members. Let me explain.

Central agencies such as Treasury and the Cabinet Office, and even the Premier's department, will often put up recommendations through Cabinet to bring in one-stop shops—nice buzzword—and amalgamate government departments. Before I refer to my electorate of Mount Druitt I note the comment of the Leader of the Opposition when he referred to the closure of the Fair Trading office at Blacktown. I make this point and draw it to the attention of regional and country members in this House: Watch this issue very closely. Country towns have relied heavily on offices of government departments. For example, I recall that when I picked up the Land and Water Conservation portfolio while I was Minister for Agriculture I found that both those departments had offices in many country towns. They had employees and extension officers and the like. We did not give the Department of Agriculture job to Land and Water Conservation or vice versa but we saved money in the budgets of both departments by amalgamating the services of both organisations into one building. In other words, we saved money on the building from which the two offices operated.

The initiative involves more than saving money on rent, leases or the sale of real estate. This new organisation will provide customer services to the public from a range of government departments. This type of approach has failed in the past. Although some view government departments simply as a public service and a one-size-fits-all model, departmental officers have individual expertise. For example, someone who works in Fair Trading will have different expertise from someone working for the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. It is easy to set up a one-stop-shop office so that people can drop off a cheque, fill out a form or ask for something to be fixed. However, the situation may be different when it comes to seeking advice from personnel at a one-stop-shop. People may not receive the same service they would have received were they to seek advice directly from an officer of the Department of Fair Trading, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages or Roads and Maritime Services.

I make that point for the benefit of those regional and country members who always argue about the importance of government departmental offices in their communities. I concede that those jobs are more significant as a proportion of the workforce than they are in the suburbs of Sydney. However, members should monitor the effect of the legislation very carefully. If the establishment of one-stop-shops, which can only be receiving agencies for departments, means the loss of two or three government department offices, then regional and country areas have lost out. I urge The Nationals and regional Liberal Party members to monitor the situation very carefully. I believe the idea is commendable, particularly for those country towns that may have a research station nearby but that do not have a government office. If this bill results in an office being established in the main street, it is a great initiative. However, if the establishment of a one-stop-shop results in the closure of two or three departmental offices, the town has lost a great deal.

That is an important point. The Leader of the Opposition said that the Opposition will monitor any trade-off regarding jobs. We all talk about jobs: teachers, nurses, police, front-line services and so on. The Government does not consider many of the organisations affected to be on the front line, and I am concerned about job losses in those organisations. I conclude with these comments. I accept that the concept of a single

office providing assistance to the public is commendable. However, it must be acknowledged that each department has its own expertise. I reiterate that if an office is established in a town that did not previously have one, that is a great plus for the region. However, if the establishment of a new office results in the closure of three or four government departments, it is a bad deal. I urge members opposite to keep an eye on the operation of this legislation: it is worth watching.

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [4.22 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I support the Service NSW (One-stop Access to Government Services) Bill 2013. Before I commence my contribution I acknowledge the presence in the advisers gallery of Shoshana Wall and Chief Executive Officer Glenn King. Shoshana and her team have always been extremely helpful and enthusiastic about this great initiative in the briefings and meetings I have had with them in my office. I am pleased we have hardworking and dedicated public servants in our State such as Shoshana, who is doing an excellent job. This initiative has been personally pioneered by the Premier of our State, and I congratulate him on his reform agenda and for remembering that the manner in which people interact with government services is not just a function but a key focus of government.

This initiative embodies one of the key reforms proposed at the last State election. While those opposite were only interested in helping their mates, we on this side of the House are committed to helping the people of New South Wales. As public servants we are obligated to ensure that people can access government services easily and people receive the information they require. However, for so many years there has been a culture that the business of government is more important than the interface provided to the public. The private sector knows the importance of good customer service. Indeed, yesterday I was honoured to meet with Professor Brett Whitford, Executive Director of the Customer Service Institute of Australia, to discuss this very issue. Professor Whitford is an Australian expert on customer service, and I appreciated his positive perspective on moves by the Government to ensure that we do not see ourselves as a monopoly but as a service provider, committed to meaningful engagement with the people of our State.

The bill establishes a framework for a government agency to be able to delegate to and enter into agreements with the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW in order for Service NSW to undertake customer service operations for the agency and provides for the required information transfers between Service NSW and the relevant agency for this to occur. It is our responsibility to make sure that citizens, businesses and taxpayers get the best possible service and results from the Government they own and fund. So many people have a *Yes Minister* view of government, where the object is to stagnate rather than to adapt and change. It is well and truly time for the barriers to be broken down and the silos of power to be taken away and to establish an approach of how government can help rather than defer, delete and deplete.

Why should the people of New South Wales not expect the same level of service from their Government as they do from the businesses with which they engage? Just because governments are monopolies in certain areas does not and should not give them a licence to behave like monopolies. People should not have to put up with the run-around from this website, to that phone line, to this regional office, to the missing blue form in order to access the most basic service. Some bureaucrats need to be reminded that they are employed to serve the public and are not the Sir Humphrey Applebys of the former, Labor administrations. There are 394 separate State government agencies, authorities and trading enterprises delivering services. Currently these services are provided through call centres and shopfronts that often fall short in terms of sharing information. We have more than 800 websites and 8,000 different telephone numbers in the State Government. As part of the Government's commitment to building a strong economy we also need to give business more efficient access to the services they need.

This bill will help with this process if for no other reason than to save business time, which will save business money. Some existing customer services—for example, Roads and Maritime Services, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the Office of Fair Trading and the Office of State Revenue—have attracted high commendations through their dedicated staff making innovations within their own sphere of services. However, by combining these services in a one-stop-shop we can reduce delays, confusion and customer frustration. The Government is committed to using all the tools of the customer service trade to deliver this streamlined model. These reforms seek to modify all the traditional communication portholes, including one easy-to-use website with live chat and better functionality, a 24/7 phone info line answered by real people and extended hours for one-stop shops in regional and city locations.

The bill defines "customer service functions" to include functions relating to applications for the distribution of licences, giving information about government services, and receiving and making payments; permits government agencies to delegate customer service authority to the Chief Executive Officer of Service

NSW; allows the chief executive officer to enter into agreements with a government agency in relation to customer service functions; provides for information transfers, including between Service NSW and a government agency for the purpose of customer service provision; provides for the content of notices given by the Chief Executive Officer of Service NSW in relation to the collection of information from customers; allows the chief executive officer to enter into agreements with authorised persons to act as agents for the chief executive officer in the provision of customer service functions; and requires the Privacy Commissioner to be consulted prior to any regulations affecting privacy issues being made.

I am extremely pleased that the State's very first Service NSW centre will be situated in Kiama on the site of the old Roads and Traffic Authority building, making access to government transactions easier for local residents and businesses. The centre in Kiama will test the design and systems as well as generate real-time customer feedback in order to continually improve service delivery as future sites are rolled out later this year. The Service NSW centre will open for extended hours, with a concierge to greet customers and self-help kiosks. Initially, Service NSW will provide transactions available at Roads and Maritime Services, Fair Trading and Births, Deaths and Marriages. This will build over time into a complete one-stop government service centre.

I am delighted to advise the House that I have requested that driver testing continue to operate during the time the former Roads and Maritime Services office is closed. This will be conducted out of the Kiama council administration buildings. Given that some transactions can be completed online, there will be customer service staff on hand at the Kiama Library between the hours of 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., Monday to Friday, from Friday 24 May until Friday 28 June to assist customers during the temporary closure. I acknowledge the support of Kiama Municipal Council, and in particular my friend the mayor, Councillor Brian Petschler, in assisting during the temporary closure and for trying to minimise inconvenience to customers.

In examining the key provisions of the bill, I note that clause 5 defines "customer service functions", which include functions relating to applications for and the issue of licences and other authorities; giving information about government services, legislation and other matters; receiving and making payments; the provision of other government services; and other ancillary functions. Clause 7 allows the holder of a statutory customer service function who has a power of delegation to extend that power to the chief executive officer of Service NSW. Any such power so delegated or sub-delegated to the chief executive officer may be extended to a member of staff of Service NSW, subject to the terms of the delegation or sub-delegation to the chief executive officer.

Clause 8 will allow the chief executive officer of Service NSW and a government agency to enter into an agreement for the chief executive officer of Service NSW to exercise customer service functions of the agency. The clause allows such agreements to relate to statutory customer service functions subject to delegations pursuant to clause 7, as well as the non-statutory customer service functions. Clauses 7 and 8 are facilitative functions. They do not require but rather enable agencies to enter into such arrangements with Service NSW. For a number of functions, Service NSW will process the entire transaction for the agency. For other functions, for example, applications for certificates—

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

## **WENTWORTHVILLE RAILWAY STATION EASY ACCESS**

### **Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [4.30 p.m.]: It is my privilege to support the 10,000 or more petitioners that have asked that the Legislative Assembly request the New South Wales Government to provide access lifts and/or ramps to the platforms at Wentworthville railway station. The most common question I am asked when I am at Wentworthville station is, "When can we get lifts for the station?" Whilst Wentworthville station has ramps on either side, there is still a long set of stairs to get onto the platforms, which does not suit many of the residents of Wentworthville. It is a changing suburb. We have a raft of older people who have lived there for many years and they often have mobility issues. We also have a raft of new families who have young children. Often the parents have prams, bags and small children to handle while navigating the stairs.

The demographics of Wentworthville show that 6.4 per cent of the residents are four years old or younger and 8.4 per cent are 70 years old or older. About 1,280 residents of Wentworthville use the train as their usual method of travelling to work and 463 residents of Wentworthville need assistance with their core

activities. Wentworthville station has become a commuter hub with many people walking or travelling by bus to use the train. It is important that the Government provide public transport for western Sydney, and rail is one of the best sources of travel. A safe and convenient rail system is necessary. It has been a year since 300 newly trained officers from the Police Transport Command came on board. That number will increase to more than 600. The Government is currently rewriting timetables to coordinate buses and trains to ensure public transport is more convenient.

It is also identifying the important interchanges that will service demand at peak times and is predicting where demand will be in the future. This petition addresses commuter accessibility of train stations. We have done many things to upgrade rail. The Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, is in the House. I commend her for the four-year \$770 million Transport Access Program that will address these issues. Sixty projects have been completed under the program, but Wentworthville does not have lifts or ramps to access the station. The whole community is backing this important issue. Many people have requested that there be better access. Peter Simpson, who is a member of the Holroyd Access and Disability Committee, stated:

As a resident of Wentworthville for the past 24 years I find it disturbing I am now, being more reliant on my wheelchair, I have to take a bus to Parramatta station to access trains for commuting as Wentworth station, 10 minutes down the road is still not accessible for people with disability, parents with prams or those not so mobile and cannot negotiate stairs.

It is a difficult issue to solve because there are many competing interests to obtain public transport infrastructure moneys. We acknowledge those difficulties. However, the strength of the 11,000-odd people who have signed the petition clearly indicates a need for lifts and/or ramps to Wentworthville station. I thank the more than 10,000 people who signed the petition. I thank the Wentworthville Business Community Committee for organising the petition. I thank the local businesses in Wentworthville shopping centre for attaining the signatures. I join with the more than 10,000 petitioners to ask the Legislative Assembly to request that the New South Wales Government provide access lifts or ramps to the platform at Wentworthville railway station.

**Mr NATHAN REES** (Toongabbie) [4.35 p.m.]: I support the member for Parramatta in his remarks regarding the petition that is being debated in the Parliament this afternoon for an easy access upgrade to Wentworthville railway station. I tender my Wentworthville return ticket for Parliament's edification and *Hansard*. I use Wentworthville station, so I declare my interest at the outset. It is approximately 100 metres from the edge of my electorate. The member for Parramatta and I have bumped into each other on occasion at the station. We need access to lifts. The member for Parramatta and I have lost count of the number of times we have helped mums with their prams or elderly people with their shopping climb the steps.

The demographics have changed extraordinarily quickly over recent years. I am not familiar with how often the relevant departments review the priority lists for the access upgrades, but the number of mums with kids and prams has increased enormously in the 10 years that I have lived at Wentworthville. It has had a significant impact on the access issues that this petition seeks to address. When I was Premier a commuter car park was opened. That has brought additional patronage to the station. Wentworthville is adjacent to Pendle Hill, which also has not received an easy access upgrade. I gently remind the Minister for Transport, for whom I have a high personal regard, that that was an election undertaking by the Government.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** Pendle Hill wasn't.

**Mr NATHAN REES:** We can have that discussion off line: I have the press clipping and quote. The easy access upgrade for Pendle Hill is just as important for Wentworthville because of the number of aged care facilities that are in close proximity to its station. The demographics of these two areas are demanding these upgrades. I acknowledge the difficulties with managing transport budgets. It is always difficult, but the area of Wentworthville has seen extraordinary changes in the number of people using the station who are elderly, disabled or young mums and dads with prams. The station is also next to the shopping centre. Many people who jump back on the train after shopping first have to carry a load of shopping up the stairs.

The upgrade is overdue. It is the wish of us all for every station across Australia let alone New South Wales to have an easy access upgrade. Regrettably, they are extremely expensive. If my memory serves me correctly, it costs \$5 million for one lift. I recognise the impost on the budget and understand those sorts of constraints, but I give my undertaking to the Parliament and to the people of Wentworthville, many of whom live in my electorate and many of whom live in the electorate of Parramatta, that I will work with the member for Parramatta and the Government to do what we can to expedite the provision of this facility. Again, I take the opportunity to suggest that Pendle Hill is at least as worthy to receive an upgrade, given that around half a dozen aged care facilities are in close proximity to Pendle Hill railway station.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN** (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.40 p.m.]: I am pleased to make a contribution to this discussion, which has been brought forward by the efforts of the member for Parramatta. I acknowledge his efforts in collecting the petition signatures and I thank each and every one of the 10,000 people who signed the petition. I acknowledge that easy access is a very important and critical issue for people who want to use railway stations. If I can make a confession to this Chamber, the member for Parramatta has been painfully persistent in bringing this issue to my attention on a number of occasions. I hope he does not mind me putting it that way. Certainly I had been made well aware of this issue before the petition arrived, but as the 10,000-signature petition has been received in the House I am pleased also to make a contribution to this discussion. I acknowledge the comments made by the member for Toongabbie on this issue.

I think every member of Parliament appreciates how much easy access is needed. However, I make the following points. When we came to government, nearly two-thirds of all railway stations did not have easy access. I inherited a system where only 124 out of 307 stations had easy access. On average, the former Labor Government managed to upgrade two stations a year. Since we have been in government we have managed to upgrade about 16 stations already. I appreciate how difficult it is for people who are elderly, who have a disability, or who are manoeuvring prams or carrying shopping bags to use public transport. I thank all members who have contributed to this discussion. I am sure every local member wants to see easy access upgrades in their communities.

I give the following assurance to the member for Parramatta and to all members who have participated in this discussion today: I will take on board the comments made and I will take on board the fact that 10,000 people felt strongly enough about this issue to sign the petition. When we came to government we established the Transport Access Program because in the first couple of meetings I had with the relevant people who looked after such upgrades around the network I found six different pots of money sitting in six different parts of different departments and agencies. We pooled that money and we gave it a funding boost; we now have a fund of \$770 million over four years to dedicate not only to upgrading railway stations but also to upgrading interchanges and wharves.

We have managed to accelerate the Transport Access Program. Depending on whether it is ramps or lifts and depending on the work we are doing, upgrades can cost anything between \$100,000 to tens of millions of dollars. I certainly will take on board the comments made by all members who are participating in this discussion. I acknowledge the work done by the member for Parramatta. I also acknowledge the contributions made by members opposite who have spoken and who are yet to speak, because I appreciate how important providing easy access is to the community. No doubt the painful persistence will continue. I assure members that I am definitely taking on board the comments made today.

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [4.43 p.m.]: I support the 10,000-signature petition for the installation of elevators at Wentworthville railway station. I heard what the Minister said and I thank her very much for her kindness and her understanding of what people need at railway stations. I firmly believe that the installation of elevators and/or ramps at our railway stations should be undertaken as a priority, especially when there is such an outcry for assistance from our constituents who are suffering with limited mobility and require our help through the implementation of mobility friendly access—constituents who may be elderly or disabled, or who may suffer a mobility impairment and find it quite troublesome to traverse the platforms when they use our rail network.

Not all that long ago in my electorate of Cabramatta, when Labor was in power, we fought the good fight for the installation of elevators at Cabramatta railway station. Our fight was successful and we received the necessary funding for the elevators, which help facilitate the needs of my constituents who suffer a range of mobility problems. At Canley Vale railway station we fought to have a commuter car park built. I thank the current Minister for Transport for graciously increasing our funding, which enabled us to undertake a large overhaul of the station, including the beautification of the station, and the installation of a bus interchange and a walkway between the station and the station car park, which provides a safe walking path for commuters returning to their vehicles.

I am currently negotiating with the Minister for Transport for the installation of a lift at Canley Vale station. The Minister has indicated to me that as long as it fits within the budget for the new car park she has no objection to the installation of a lift. We are hopeful that those negotiations with the Minister and the department will be fruitful, and that we will be successful in having a lift installed at Canley Vale railway station. It is great to see 10,000 constituents of Parramatta standing tall to show their support for the installation of mobility friendly access at Wentworthville station. I commend them for taking a stand for their community.

I can only hope that this great State will one day have disabled friendly access at every train station without exemption to ensure that not a single person who uses our public transport system is left out, stranded or made to struggle. I hope that the voices of the 10,000 individuals of Parramatta who are calling on the Government to install appropriate mobility access at Wentworthville station are heard and that their needs are met. From what the Minister said earlier, I am quite confident that this will happen. I commend this petition to the House and I hope our friends in Parramatta receive the assistance they require.

**Discussion concluded.**

## **COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS**

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### **PAUL HARRIS SAPPHIRE PIN RECIPIENT GEOFF MARLOW**

#### **WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CUSTOM CAR AWARD RECIPIENT JUSTIN HILL**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [4.46 p.m.]: I inform the House that Forster resident Geoff Marlow has been presented with one of Rotary's highest awards, the Paul Harris Sapphire Pin. Geoff has recently turned 91 and has given decades of service to Rotary. Geoff settled in Forster in 1952 and for years managed a boat shed on Wallis Lake. He helped organise the 1960 Rotary District Conference, which was held in Forster. After selling his business, Geoff worked as an architectural draftsman designing houses, motels and a hospital. With his wife Dorothy he raised three children—Anne, Paul and Robert. Sadly, Dorothy passed away in 1999.

I further inform the House that Justin Hills from Taree has won the title of World's Most Beautiful Custom Car in the Sacramento Autorama competition in the United States of America. Justin won the title from a field of more than 450 cars, ranging from hot rods to classic models. This was the second time Justin had entered the Autorama, the first being two years ago when he won his division class with a 1949 Buick. It was during that trip that Justin found a 1960 Dodge Phoenix for which he paid \$12,000. Justin faithfully restored the Phoenix from its bare shell to its original state. He took 12 months to finish the restoration, which he did at his Taree-based business, Hills and Co.

#### **NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER RUGBY UNION NSW COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS TITLE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [4.47 p.m.]: The valiant efforts of the Newcastle and Hunter Rugby Union representative side, which secured a sixth straight title at the NSW Country Championships, deserves three cheers. Newcastle defeated Illawarra 28-18 in the final after coming back from 13-3. We congratulate the team and coach, Dan Beckett. Novocastrians hope that they can make it seven Caldwell Cups—the Holy Grail of country rugby—next year. We acknowledge four of the players who were chosen in the New South Wales Country Cockatoos training squad: Lewie Catt, Va Talaileva, Ben Harriss and Paul Dan.

## **COROWA COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [4.47 p.m.]: I recognise community achievements in the Corowa shire. I congratulate the Corowa Friends of the Library on celebrating 20 years of service to the Corowa Library. The group supports the library by organising talks by authors, fundraising events, international evenings and community outreach programs. Congratulations to Corowa Tourism on the great success of the Australian Billy Cart Championships held on Easter Saturday. A record number of entrants took part and more than 3,000 people lined the main street for a wonderful day of family entertainment. I recognise and congratulate Max Maclean on being awarded life membership of the Corowa Rowing Club for his 66 years of service to the club. Well done, Max, you have contributed to a great club for all age groups.

## **TRIBUTE TO GYAN SINGH**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.48 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the unfortunate passing of a constituent and friend of mine, Gyan Singh, on 19 April. Gyan was an important and respected member of the Fijian Indian community, as could be seen by the large number of people who attended his funeral service on 20 April. He was the founder of Shree Sanatan Dharam Sabha of New South Wales and served as president of that organisation. He was closely identified with the Hindu temple in Lyn Parade at Prestons. He left behind his wife, Rukma Wati Singh. He had two sons and three daughters, 14 grandchildren

and, what I am told is described as, an abundance of nieces and nephews. I first met him in 1997 and knew him for 16 years. He was a good man who added positively to our community and to south-west Sydney. He will be missed.

#### **CLARENCE ELECTORATE AWARDS RECIPIENT CAMILLE STEWART**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS** (Clarence) [4.49 p.m.]: I congratulate Camille Stewart on receiving the inaugural Casino Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year Award and also for being chosen as the Richmond Valley Council's Young Outstanding Woman of the Year. I also acknowledge the enormous amount of community work she has done while studying a dual business and law degree. I wish her every success with her studies.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [4.50 p.m.]: I am pleased to report to the House that last week the Blacktown City Council presented the keys of the city to the A-League's newest team, the Western Sydney Wanderers, at a reception at Blacktown International Sports Park, which is in my electorate. I am pleased to say that the Wanderers are closely associated with Blacktown because of their presence at Olympic Park. On behalf of the community I congratulate the Wanderers, through Chairman Lyall Gorman and Coach Tony Popovich, on a successful year in which the team won the Premier's Plate. That award is the most recognised in the football world both here and internationally. The Wanderers' success will give new confidence and encouragement to the young people of western Sydney not only to support their new team but also to take part in the world's most popular and successful sport.

#### **TRIATHLETES TRISTAN AND STEPHANIE HARRISON**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [4.51 p.m.]: Sporting talent abounds in Orange and today I draw the attention of the House to the success of brother and sister triathletes Tristan and Stephanie Harrison in January. Tristan and Stephanie competed in qualifying events in an attempt to earn selection to represent Australia at the ITU World Triathlon grand final to be held in London. Last Friday afternoon the siblings received the great news that they had places in the Australian team confirmed for this prestigious event, which will be held in September. Tristan, who is 20, will compete in the 20 to 24 age group, and Stephanie, who is 17, will compete in the 16 to 19 age group in an event that attracts more than 5,000 competitors from across the world. I congratulate them on their selection and wish them every success in London. Both triathletes are members of the Orange Piranhas Cycle and Triathlon Club, which is now the strongest triathlon club in the Central West and which will have 24 representatives in this Sunday's Australian Iron Man event at Port Macquarie.

#### **HOLROYD CITY FEST 2013**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [4.52 p.m.]: Holroyd City Fest 2013 was held on 13 April in the Merrylands central business district. The day culminated in a spectacular circus-style street parade and extravaganza showcasing community acts. African, Brazilian and Southern acrobatic performances were offered to entertain the crowd, and local food and market stalls satisfied the lovers of fine food. Cooking demonstrations were held by MasterChef contestant Jay Huxley and a football skills session was offered by the Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club. I congratulate Holroyd City Council and the major sponsors on holding a truly amazing event.

#### **SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [4.53 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the numerous awards won by Alison Hopkins and her brother Brendan from Wingham for their chickens at the 2103 Sydney Royal Easter Show. Brendan entered 11 birds and won Champion Bantam Old English Game Crele in the bantam single, hard feather poultry class and best male with the same bird. In Alison's first show she won Champion Bantam Old English Game in the ginger class and won first prize with her cockerel. Alison also won first place with the Australian Pit Game and second with the Old English Game ginger cockerel. Barry and Aileen Tisdell from Dolly's Flat have continued their two decades of successes at the Sydney Royal Easter Show by bringing home 17 ribbons and three medallions. Barry and Aileen won a major prize for light breed trio soft, large champion white silkie and champion overall. They were also pleased that their Wyandotte large bantam won best Wyandotte and best heavy breed female. Of the 74 birds Barry and Aileen took to Sydney, they sold 62, with their champion Wyandotte fetching \$300 at auction.

### CHINESE ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN SYDNEY CELEBRATIONS

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [4.54 p.m.]: I congratulate the Chinese Association of Western Sydney on hosting the Chinese New Year and Australia Day Celebratory Dinner on 20 January 2013. I acknowledge Mr James Chan, Mr Hung Ly, Mr Michael Chan, Mr Pho Quang Hang and the members of the secretariat of the Celebration Preparation Committee for the time, effort and hard work that went into organising the successful event.

### RETIREMENT OF DAVID HICKS

#### ALBURY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [4.54 p.m.]: I recognise and congratulate David Hicks, North Albury fire station's deputy captain, who has retired after more than 36 years of service as a firefighter. David fought all the most memorable fires in Albury, was part of the first New South Wales task force to help fight the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009 and trained many younger firefighters. I thank him for his service. I congratulate Brooke King, a nine-year-old year 3 student at Lavington Public School on winning a gold medal and three silver medals in the swimmer with a disability section of the New South Wales Primary Schools Sports Association State Swimming Championships held in Sydney in April. Well done, Brooke. I hope she continues to have success in the future. I congratulate Albury High School student James Mitchell on being selected for the prestigious Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. James completed three essays as part of the application process and will join other year 10 and year 11 students in visits to sites of military significance in South-East Asia to learn more about the Anzac legacy.

### TRIATHLETE AARON ROYLE

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [4.55 p.m.]: I acknowledge and offer my best wishes to Maryland triathlete Aaron Royle. Aaron, who won the International Triathlon Union world under-23 title last October, is spearheading a three-man Australian team in the seven-round World Triathlon Series, which started in Auckland in April. I recognise the talent and commitment required to compete in such endurance events, and wish Aaron and fellow Aussies Ryan Bailey and Cameron Good, from Sydney, the very best as they swim, cycle and run against the world's best.

### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE NINETY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [4.56 p.m.]: I congratulate the Armenian Genocide Committee on its commemoration of the ninety-eighth anniversary of the Armenian genocide at events held on 23 and 24 April. The 23 April event was held at the Willoughby concourse at Chatswood and was attended by a large number of members of Parliament. The 24 April event was held at Parliament House and again a number of members attended. We heard Charles Mahtesian, a distinguished guest from Washington, speak about genocide.

### LIVERPOOL INDIAN COMMUNITY HOLI CELEBRATIONS

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.57 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the activities of the Indian community in Liverpool, especially those held to celebrate Holi. The celebrations were held in Liverpool at Lighthorse Park on the banks of the Georges River on the morning of Sunday 7 April. A number of the participants in the event were constituents and residents that I already know, including Mayasandra Sridhar, Manjunath Yalandur; Shreenath Chandrashekar; and Rajesh Venkataramaiah and, of course, the Kaliyanda family. Holi is a traditional Indian festival involving the use of colours—often thrown on other people. This is also sometimes referred to as Varsha Pratipada, which is the Hindu spring, and is often celebrated as the beginning of the new year. On this occasion there was also discussion of religion and philosophy before the celebrations began. This event was another practical demonstration of Liverpool's multiculturalism which is very much a strength in our community. I was delighted to be able to attend the event.

### RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL AWARD RECIPIENT CHERIE HOLDSWORTH

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS** (Clarence) [4.58 p.m.]: I congratulate Cherie Holdsworth on being named Richmond Valley Council's Outstanding Woman of the Year Over 25. I acknowledge her commitment to the Casino Beef Week celebrations, and her wonderful communication and organisational skills in dealing with everyone involved with the event.

### **BRING IT ON FESTIVAL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [4.58 p.m.]: The Bring It On Festival 2013 was held at the Fairfield Showground on 14 April 2013 during National Youth Week. The festival attracted more than 12,000 people and it is now one of the largest youth festivals in the country. The festival provides youths with a positive environment in which to celebrate their talents and to express their creativity. It included a sports hub, health, careers and education precincts, and stages in various locations showcased local musical, dance, DJ and rapping artists. I thank the Fairfield City Council, the Youth Advisory Committee, the Fairfield Local Area Command and all the generous sponsors who contributed to the successful day.

### **ORANGE HISTORIC COTTAGE RELOCATION**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [4.59 p.m.]: This morning Rotary Club of Orange President Mick Doyle, president-elect Len Banks and the Orange and District Historical Society President Phil Stevenson watched as a historic cottage was moved from the Waratah Sports Complex to the Botanic Gardens. Many believe that the cottage was the birthplace of iconic Australian poet Banjo Paterson almost 150 years ago. The historical society and Rotary have combined to preserve the cottage as an important part of the history of Orange in time for the 150th anniversary of Paterson's birth next year. I was delighted to announce a Community Building Partnership Grant of \$15,000 last month to assist with the relocation of the cottage and its restoration. I congratulate the Orange and District Historical Society and the Rotary Club of Orange on the potential they see in this project and urge members to come to Orange to see it when the renovations are complete.

### **CANLEY HEIGHTS LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [5.00 p.m.]: I congratulate Canley Heights Chamber of Commerce President Thanh Nguyen, Tiffany Nguyen and the organising committee for hosting a successful Lunar New Year celebration on 8 February 2013. I also recognise the great contribution that the Vietnamese community has made to trade and commerce in south-west Sydney, New South Wales and Australia.

### **MONA VALE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.00 p.m.]: I recognise and congratulate the members of Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club surfboat crew Mona Vale Black on winning their third consecutive open men's surfboat title at the Australian Championships held at North Kirra Beach. This victory by the now illustrious crew of James Davison, James Morison, Wes Dose, Sam Funch and sweep Bryce Munro has secured Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club as one of only three clubs to have won this event with the same crew over three consecutive years since the Australian titles began in 1915. This is an incredible achievement by a fine group of passionate and dedicated surf lifesavers who have done Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club and the entire Pittwater community proud.

### **MOUNTIES CLUB FORTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.01 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the forty-fifth birthday celebration dinner of the Mounties Club on Saturday 6 April. Known for many years as the Mount Pritchard Community Club, Mounties has grown enormously from a small shed to a large and substantial enterprise. The expansion of the club has not significantly altered the primary focus of its endeavour, which is the community. The club returns a vast amount of money and resources to the community across a range of activities and enterprises. The amount now involved in this way far exceeds the amount mandated by government regulations. This contribution over 4½ decades reflects extremely well upon those who are involved with the club by serving on the board or helping in club activities over that time. On the night of the celebration we heard interesting anecdotes and stories from people such as the club's current president, Kevin Ingram, and from Cath Penning, a central figure in netball in Liverpool. Cath's stories highlighted the importance of the club to sports in the Liverpool and Cabramatta area. It was a pleasure to be invited to the event.

**Community recognition statements concluded.**

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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### **TRIBUTE TO FATHER SUPERIOR ANTOINE TARABAY, OLM**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [5.02 p.m.]: I am delighted to congratulate and commend Bishop-Elect Father Antoine Tarabay of St Charbel's parish for his recent appointment as the new Bishop of the

Diocese of St Maroun in Australia. In this capacity Father Tarabay will become the spiritual leader of all Maronite Catholics in Australia. This is a tremendous honour and one for which Father Tarabay is most deserving. I wish retiring Bishop Ad Abikaram all the best for his retirement and thank him for his 12 years of service as leader of Australia's Maronite Catholic community.

As members of the House are aware, there is a large Lebanese Maronite community in Sydney and in particular in Bankstown. St Charbel's serves many people in the greater Bankstown area and many Maronite Catholics come from all over Sydney to attend mass at the church. Father Tarabay has demonstrated excellence in pastoral service through his work as rector of St Charbel's monastery, church and college in Punchbowl. I cannot think of a more worthy person to lead Australia's Maronite Catholics. I am honoured to have come to know Father Tarabay since his first appointment in Bankstown in 2002. Father Tarabay is a well-respected leader inside and outside the Maronite community. Along with many in my community, I consider myself lucky to have come to call Father Tarabay a friend.

Father Tarabay was born on 15 November 1967 to a family of seven children in the village of Tannourine, in the mountains of northern Lebanon. Father Tarabay took his first vows in 1985 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1993. Father Tarabay has extensive experience as a scholar, studying at the Lateran University and in the Vatican in Rome. Father Tarabay has served as rector of St Charbel's Parish, principal of the college and Father Superior of the monastery since 2007. I remind the House of the impressive religious diversity and devotion of the greater Bankstown community. People in Bankstown may belong to different faiths but we are united in our dedication to our faith. Upon news of his appointment, Father Tarabay said the following:

King David's Psalm 116 came to mind: "What shall I return to the Lord for all His goodness to me?" I truly have so much to thank the Lord for everything He has done for me.

Father Tarabay also extended his thanks to his family, friends and fellow clergy within the parish and throughout the Diocese of St Maroun. Father Tarabay's statement demonstrates his humble nature—attributing his success to his loved ones and to God. Father Tarabay has served as rector of St Charbel's Monastery and as the spiritual leader of the local community of Maronite monks since 2007. He also serves as the principal of St Charbel's College. In this capacity he has overseen the religious and academic education of countless young Australian-Lebanese Maronites. During his time as principal, St Charbel's has gone from strength to strength and is well known in Bankstown and greater Sydney as an excellent educational institution.

Father Tarabay has worked to instil in his students a love of learning and the importance of timeless values such as service, acceptance and compassion. He has also set up a Maronite youth centre and encouraged young people in the community to be involved in the church and as volunteers in the community. In his time as the rector Father Tarabay has also been involved in broader community initiatives and has done a lot of work for charity. I acknowledge Father Tarabay's past and ongoing contribution to the Maronite community and the Australian community. To Australia's Maronite Catholics I offer my congratulations. I sincerely congratulate Father Tarabay on his appointment. I am sure he will embrace the new challenges ahead with the same exceptional fortitude and talent that he has displayed throughout his outstanding career.

### **TUMBARUMBA2KOKODA PROGRAM**

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [5.06 p.m.]: More than 90 residents of the town of Tumbarumba have walked the Kokoda Trail in recent years. Since 2007 the town has run a significant program that takes local high school students to the trail. The first link in this chain is probably Joseph Muggleton, a local Tumbarumba lad who fought with the 2/12<sup>th</sup> Battalion and died on the Kokoda Trail at Buna. It was New Year's Day 1943. His grave at the Bomana War Cemetery has now been visited by many residents of Tumbarumba. Other soldiers also have connections between the timber town and the awe-inspiring trail. During Tumbatrek this year the Premier and I walked alongside students from Tumbarumba High School, their teachers and members of the Rotary Club of Tumbarumba. They told Mr O'Farrell all about the Tumbarumba2Kokoda program, or T2K, and their own preparations to walk the Kokoda Trail this year. The Premier, in Parliament, later had this to say:

The young students whom I met on the day were wearing Abuari t-shirts. I am now the proud owner of an Abuari t-shirt, which I will wear. Abuari is a village on the Kokoda Track near Eora Creek that I remember well from my visit in 2008.

The Premier said that the T2K program is a great initiative by the Rotary Club of Tumbarumba and a life-changing experience for the students who have completed it. Students were wearing Abuari T-shirts because

the T2K program has formed a close link with this village over the course of several visits. Rotary has helped to promote schooling and, in return, villagers assist with the T2K program as porters. In the words of the T2K organisers:

We believe that education is paramount to success in life so we encourage students to stay at school and maximise their educational opportunities.

This is the objective for both communities. Tumbarumba is a town of 3,300 people bordering the Kosciuszko National Park. It is famous for its timber industry, for farming and, increasingly, for grape growing and wine production. It is a great place to live, work and raise a family but, like all smaller communities, it can be difficult for young people to engage in stimulating activities and dramatic opportunities. The T2K program taps into this need like a shot of adrenalin.

This year 13 students from years 11 and 12 at Tumbarumba High School were on the trek. Their ages ranged from 16 to 18 years. Accompanying the students were three teachers from the school and three non-teachers, including one of the organisers, Bruce Wright. This was Bruce's seventh Kokoda trek, having gone on four previous occasions with T2K and several times with Rotary and the community. With others, he has helped build a school at Abuari and has assisted with other projects in the region. Training for the 2013 walk began on 9 September last year. Their training motto is: Hills, hills and more hills. Tumbatrek was another step on this fitness journey and also an opportunity for fundraising to ensure that the journey to Kokoda would be affordable for all students who were keen to go. The group set out from Tumbarumba on the evening of 12 April and returned home on 28 April.

They spent two nights in the remote village of Abuari. There is no running water, no sanitation, no electricity and no communication devices. Everything one sees and uses has been carried in on someone's back. Students join in with village life, eating local foods and sitting on the split bamboo flooring. The weather at this time of year hovers around 32 degrees and 99.9 per cent humidity. According to Bruce the sweat literally drips "off your elbows and the edges of your pants" within 10 minutes of starting to walk. Anzac Day was celebrated in the little village of Nauro, where students conducted the ceremony. One can imagine the extra significance felt by the students towards the end of their own personal journeys along the trail. The motto for T2K is "We meet the challenge." Part of the philosophy of the program is that any motivated Tumbarumba student will be assisted to participate in the trek. According to Bruce Wright:

We don't say "You can go, but you can't". We find the money if someone lacks it. We have good corporate friends who will come up with the cash.

Students represent a cross-section of the Tumbarumba community. Participants include asthmatics, diabetics and others with health conditions. I enjoyed my brief time with the students on this year's Tumbatrek and I know the Premier said he loved the experience and would return to do it again. I regret I was not able to return the favour of making morning tea for the students halfway through their Kokoda trek, but I look forward to seeing photos of their journey and hearing their stories now they are back home. I salute the trainers and mentors who planned the expedition and prepared their students for the challenge. I also wish to thank the organisers, the Rotary Club of Tumbarumba and, in particular, Bruce Wright and Grant Harris. I, for one, am very pleased that they continue through the valuable T2K program to meet the challenge of assisting our youth.

### **GOLD TRAILS PROJECT**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [5.10 p.m.]: I am pleased to inform the House of an exciting tourism project, most of which falls within the electorate of Burrinjuck. Recently I represented the Minister for Tourism and Major Events at the launch of the Gold Trails website and the unveiling of associated interpretive signage. The launch was part of the Lambing Flat Festival held each year to mark Young's turbulent goldmining past and the infamous anti-Chinese riots of 1861. My close association with the Gold Trails tourism project started in 2009 when I was approached by the Young and District Chamber of Commerce with a request for funding. I was able to obtain a grant from the then tourism Minister to assist with seeking expressions of interest from local communities to participate in the further development of a tourism route to celebrate our goldmining past.

From this small beginning, the Gold Trails project has grown to include attractions in 30 towns and cities across 17 local government areas, including two national parks. Within the electorate of Burrinjuck we have the Boorowa, Harden, Upper Lachlan, Weddin, Yass Valley and Young local government areas now

actively participating in the Gold Trails. Gold Trails is an innovative project that has been developed by the Regional Gold Trails Committee, ably led by its chairman Brad Thorsby. The committee has undertaken a massive amount of work at the local level to bring this project to fruition.

Following the establishment of the Gold Trails concept I have supported the committee in relation to the 150th anniversary of the Lambing Flat Riots and in their application for a Federal Government tourism quality grant, known as T-QUAL grants. Most recently I supported the committee's application to the State Government for Regional Tourism Product Development Program funding. Early last year I took great pleasure in announcing two grants totalling \$250,000 from this program. This funding was provided to improve visitor experiences and develop new tourism attractions encouraging visitors to further explore this historic area of regional New South Wales. This included the development of a digital history of gold in regional New South Wales and the establishment of an interactive website and interpretive signage.

A 140-page interactive downloadable Gold Trails Smartphone pocket guide was also developed with this funding, which allows visitors fingertip access to a massive amount of historical information when they are at the specific attractions. The official launch of the website at Blackguard Gully, near Young, was held at the site of one of the major Chinese camps on the goldfield, where Chinese miners were brutally expelled from the goldfields during the 1861 riots. The Gold Trails project gives visitors the opportunity to discover New South Wales's rich vein of heritage associated with the quest for gold.

Beginning in 1851 the discovery of gold in this State and the subsequent rush for riches had an immense impact on the central and south-west regions of New South Wales. New settlements were established, new immigrants arrived, businesses were established, flourished and sometimes collapsed, community and racial tension heightened, and crime flourished. Many people who are now an integral part of our history came to the public's attention—names like Ben Hall, Frank Gardiner and Johnny Gilbert. The Gold Trails project taps into this era's rich vein of human drama. It highlights the greed and avarice of bushranging, the quest for riches and racial tensions, along with displays of great courage and arrant cowardice. It is a fantastic tourism experience, and one I would commend as worthy of exploration to everyone.

The attractions encompassed by the Gold Trails stretch from the original gold workings of the 1890s at Peak Hill near Parkes to the goldfields of Kiandra and Tumut in the south. The Burrinjuck electorate lies astride the heart of the Gold Trails. Grenfell, the birthplace of Henry Lawson, is also the site of the stunningly rich reef mines of the Emu Creek goldfield and holds the annual Henry Lawson Festival and Grenfell Gold Festival. There are the historic goldfields of Tuena and Trunkey Creek in Upper Lachlan shire and in the village of Gunning the bushranger Thomas Whitton gunned down John Kennedy Hume, the brother of the famous explorer Hamilton Hume.

Harden Shire has the Burrangong goldfield along with the Currawong property of James Roberts, who sheltered Chinese miners fleeing from the Lambing Flat Riots in Young. The annual Harden Gold Trails Festival commemorates the Battle of Wallendbeen with a great deal of excitement and fun. Young's annual Lambing Flat Festival is another great highlight of the Gold Trails, and in November last year the village of Jugiong commemorated the 150th anniversary of the murder of Police Sergeant Parry, who died heroically defending a gold shipment against the Ben Hall gang. Yass Valley was the site of many bushranging activities and Johnny Gilbert's grave is one of the many attractions in this area.

In the village of Collector, Constable Samuel Nelson took on odds of three to one and was shot down in the street by John Dunn, a member of the Hall and Gilbert gang. Gundagai, then located on the Great Southern Road to Melbourne, was a key outpost in the protection of the gold shipments headed towards Sydney and also the gateway to the rich Adelong goldfields. I have only lightly touched on some of the many attractions of the Gold Trails in the Burrinjuck electorate. It is well worth a visit, or five, and is a great credit to all the local residents who have worked so hard to bring it to fruition. I congratulate all those who have been so closely involved in the Gold Trails tourism project, particularly Brad Thorsby and his very capable committee. Their efforts in promoting the Gold Trails project in the local area have been absolutely fantastic. The project is highly valued by all who live in the local area.

#### **BAKER AND PROVAN ENGINEERING SERVICES**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [5.15 p.m.]: Recently I was pleased to tour a manufacturing facility that services the transport industry. Based in the St Marys industrial area, Baker and Provan is an Australian-owned company that has been in operation since 1957. Baker and Provan provide specialist

engineering services and production of heavy equipment and technologies to a range of industries including rail, mining and defence. One example of the engineering works that Baker and Provan undertake was the Anzac ship fast rescue boat cranes contract for the Australian Defence Force, which involved the production of 16 crane systems.

Baker and Provan was selected on the basis of previous performance. The company conducted design, analysis, reliability and maintainability studies and provided technical documentation and shock and vibration qualification testing to Royal Australian Navy standards, as well as ongoing maintenance and logistical support. Baker and Provan was originally established in 1946 to operate as a toolmaking firm. From about 1975 the company began concentrating on larger capacity engineering and conventional machining, fabrication, project work and machine building.

In 1989 the company entered the defence market with the manufacture of slewing arm davits for the Australian Navy. This involvement has continued with the supply of other equipment and the company now has the capacity to both supply original equipment and provide all aspects of support throughout the life of the machinery. During the past decade considerable effort and investment have been made to improve manufacturing capacities, build an effective structure to support complex projects and acquire the skills required to operate a highly efficient service organisation.

A 4,800 square metre factory in St Marys now supports four divisions and provides employment for more than 60 local people in western Sydney. Other products that Baker and Provan manufacture include filters for use on marine diesel engines, which provides a clean air supply to marine diesel engines, modest fuel savings, increased reliability of ship diesel engines, reduced pollution emissions from ship diesel engines, elimination of costly and unnecessary maintenance, very quick payback on investment and proven technology tested in the field to great success.

Manufacturing is an important part of our economy. Total production of the manufacturing industry has increased 37 per cent from 1991-92 to a peak of \$116 billion in 2007, the year the Howard Government left office. The level of manufacturing production fell by 6 per cent in 2008-09. Overall, capital expenditure by the manufacturing industry decreased by \$4.1 billion, or 20 per cent, in 2008-09—thanks to the Federal Labor Government. In New South Wales manufacturing production accounts for 32 per cent of total manufacturing output, or approximately \$35 billion, and provides over 300,000 direct jobs. Manufacturing requires intense capital investment and a constant need to be abreast of a rapidly changing market that is globally competitive.

Companies such as Baker and Provan have invested large sums of financial capital into renewing equipment and accommodating new and emerging technologies, and on employee training and research and development. It is a major investment that involves hundreds of millions of dollars, and often billions of dollars. They need leadership from governments that provides economic certainty and gives them the confidence to take a punt and invest. Manufacturing accounts for more than \$10 billion in western Sydney. In May 2012 manufacturing was the second-largest employer in western Sydney, employing more than 87,000 people. Governments need to ensure that there is significant investment in infrastructure, such as rail, roads and freight terminals, to provide connectivity for the efficient movement of products and employment for the workforce.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is proactive and supportive of business in many different areas by decreasing the payroll tax threshold for small businesses to make it easier to employ new staff. The Government will continue to examine areas in which red tape may be reduced. Through the Deputy Premier's Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services provides helpful information and resources to businesses that want to invest in New South Wales. The department is spearheading the drive to identify potential overseas markets so that New South Wales exports can increase. New South Wales is open for business.

Government procurement policies should reflect the need to ensure that local manufacturers are taken into consideration when major purchase decisions are made and tenders are let. The previous Government purchased on price in the hope of getting something cheap, and that caused enormous problems with rolling stock. The current Minister for Transport had to fix those problems so that the rollout of the Waratah trains could proceed. Baker and Provan in my electorate is a company that is ideally placed to support the construction of new rolling stock for train carriages in this State. I support its endeavours because it has exemplary expertise in that specialised area. As the Government is committed to ensuring that double-deck and single-deck trains will continue to operate on the rail network, I encourage the engagement of New South Wales manufacturing companies whenever possible.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.20 p.m.]: I join the member for Londonderry in congratulating Baker and Provan on being one of the manufacturers that has continued to operate in western Sydney for approximately half a century. As a qualified participant in the manufacturing industry for a large proportion of my working life, mainly in the steel manufacturing industry, I know that the companies that survive are those that adapt to meet challenges. Baker and Provan deserves commendation and the support of members of Parliament. As a member of the O'Farrell Government, I am proud to state that by providing payroll tax incentives and investment in infrastructure, the Government is demonstrating its ongoing support for large and small businesses and, more importantly, for the many manufacturing companies that employ so many people across western Sydney.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [5.21 p.m.]: On 4 April 2012 the Football Federation of Australia announced the formation of a new A-League club in western Sydney that would play in the 2012-13 season. On 21 April 2013, one year later, the new club, the Western Sydney Wanderers, made a grand final appearance before 42,102 people at the Allianz Stadium in Sydney. The Wanderers played against the Central Coast Mariners and went down two goals to nil. The Western Sydney Wanderers' inaugural season has been a remarkable story—some say it has been a fairytale—that has captured the imagination of western Sydney, the country and the world's sporting community. There are so many achievements of the team to highlight that my private member's statement would require a considerable extension of time to mention them all.

The club was established from the ground up with initial community consultation forums held at Mount Pritchard, Parramatta, Rooty Hill, Penrith, Castle Hill, Campbelltown and Bankstown. At those meetings, questions were asked about the future of the club's culture, style and values—essentially, the club's ethos. Further points of discussion included what the club's shirt should look like, its logo, its colours and, of course, its name. Discussion also concerned where in the vast geographical area of western Sydney its home ground would be. The club proudly has four homes in western Sydney: the training and club offices at Blacktown International Sports Park, the W-League Women's team that plays at the Campbelltown Stadium, the Youth League at Penrith Stadium, and the A-League team at Parramatta Stadium. The club certainly has galvanised the region by its presence. Since its inception 12 months ago, the Wanderers have been part of more than 130 community engagements that include school visits, coaching clinics and multicultural festivals. That is a truly amazing effort by all concerned.

As a club that has been established by the people and for the people, all the feeder associations play an integral part in supporting the game day half-time activities at the Parramatta Stadium. Many young players have also had the chance to be ball boys and ball girls throughout the season. By all accounts, the children involved had the time of their lives. Game day activities could not have been possible without the valued contribution of hardworking volunteers. Their enthusiasm and support were appreciated by the club's staff who also did an outstanding job of ensuring that each game was a memorable experience for all the fans on game day. Game day would not be the same at the Parramatta Stadium without the Red and Black Bloc, which is otherwise known as the RBB. From that cold night on 25 July 2012 at Cook Park, St Marys—when the club first set out to play in a trial game against the Nepean Football Club—through to the grand final, the Red and Black Bloc has stood with the team every step of the way.

The Red and Black Bloc has set a new standard in the way that fans interact on game day. Whether it was by singing, chanting or doing the eightieth-minute Poznan, the Red and Black Bloc has set the bar very high for other clubs' fans to follow. In the front, back and somewhere in between of newspapers, the increase in coverage of the Wanderers and the A-League as a whole certainly is a pleasure to see and read. Support from local western Sydney newspapers has been outstanding. The six-page wraparound sections in the *Fairfield City Champion*, the *Liverpool City Champion* and the *South West Advertiser* demonstrate how proud the community is of the Wanderers. The football culture is nothing new: After all, soccer is the world game. However, the Wanderers, and the community they have inspired, are nothing short of remarkable. Kids are now choosing to wear their Wanderers shorts, not foreign football shirts, at weekly soccer training sessions in local parks. Houses are flying black and red banners, kids are proudly wearing Wanderers gear when they attend school Mufti Days, and young children are singing Wanderers chants at home and at school. There is a new culture identification: When fans see others wearing the club's emblem that states "Who do you sing for?", they make the obvious reply, "Wanderers!"

The club's successes are extraordinary for an inaugural club and include winning the Premier's Plate, making it to the grand final and furthermore securing a spot in next year's Asian Champions League, and the

club achieving the longest winning streak—10 games in a row. I pay tribute to the coaching staff, particularly the direction of Fairfield local Mr Tony Popovic and Ante Milicic. Their vision and belief in the club were demonstrated by the successful achievements in the club's inaugural season. I acknowledge the efforts of the club's staff—in particular the club's chairman, Mr Lyall Gorman, and the club's executive assistant, Fiona Gibson—for their tremendous work in making the Wanderers inaugural season memorable. In conclusion, I thank all the players for the exciting brand of football they played during the season under the leadership of Michael Beauchamp. I sing for the Wanderers!

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I congratulate the Wanderers on an excellent inaugural season. I can only say: Go the Jets in 2014.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.26 p.m.]: As a member of the Parliamentary Friends of the Western Sydney Wanderers, I endorse the comments made by the member for Fairfield and, on behalf of every other member in this Parliament, I congratulate the Western Sydney Wanderers club on its success. As I look around the Chamber, I notice the many members who represent electorates in western Sydney and who are part of the Parliamentary Friends of the Western Sydney Wanderers. What an extraordinarily successful season the Wanderers have had. I congratulate Tony Popovic and Lyall Gorman.

Only a few months ago when the Parliamentary Friends of the Western Sydney Wanderers inducted members into the group, no-one could have imagined the way that the team players would thrill crowds or that they would be the winners of the minor premiership in its inaugural year. We take our hats off to the players and the supporters. At one of the games I noticed a supporter's banner that simply stated, "Football has come home." As the father of someone who for many years has played soccer across western Sydney, the statement rang true to me. In this country western Sydney has been the home to football, particularly soccer, for many years. I congratulate the Western Sydney Wanderers for all they have achieved for soccer in New South Wales.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Newcastle and I acknowledge that the Parliamentary Friends of the Jets have a bit of work to do.

### ROYAL NATIONAL PARK WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

**Mr LEE EVANS** (Heathcote) [5.28 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the call for Australia's first national park to be placed on the World Heritage List. Sydney's heritage-listed Royal National Park, which is affectionately referred to by local people as "the nasho" or just "the royal", was established in 1879. It is the world's second-oldest national park. It was renamed the Royal National Park in 1955 after a flying visit by Queen Elizabeth II included a trip to Wollongong. It features unique heritage attractions along with fascinating plants, birds and animals. It is perfect for bushwalking, cycling, surfing, picnicking or whale watching. This diverse park offers everything from beaches to rainforest. The first priority for its establishment was people rather than native plants and animals.

The Royal National Park was created as the "lungs" of Sydney—a place where Sydneysiders could enjoy themselves in a natural environment. But in many cases it was the soft countryside of Mother England and not the rugged Australian bush that city residents sought. Mudflats and mangroves were replaced with grassed parklands and some 3,700 ornamental trees were planted. Buildings, roads and exotic landscaped gardens were installed. Areas were set aside for the acclimatisation of exotic animals for farming in Australia. Native trees were extensively logged. Military exercises were carried out in the park and deer, rabbits and foxes were introduced for sport—they still live in the park and are serious pests.

Over the years Audley was developed into a small village of amusements and was surrounded by pleasure gardens, which can still be seen today in the extensive lawns, boat hire facilities and causeway. A dance hall built in the 1940s still stands. The Royal National Park was also made gradually more accessible. Training walls were used to make the Hacking River more navigable, roads were developed throughout the park and a rail link was set up between Loftus and Audley. Sydney residents became increasingly interested in conservation around the turn of the twentieth century and the continued logging in the Royal National Park was heavily criticised. By the 1930s conservationists were lobbying the State Government for a national parks authority. In 1967, some 30 years later, the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] was created and it took over the management of the park.

For many thousands of years the Aboriginal people of the Dharawal nation have lived in the area of the Royal National Park. The park protects their rich and ongoing cultural heritage, including many Aboriginal sites

and artefacts. One can learn more about Dharawal culture by joining a discovery tour in the park. An Aboriginal Discovery Ranger will demonstrate how people used to live in this ancient land—getting food, medicine and other necessities from their local environment. One can also arrange a guided tour of the rock engravings at Gibbon near Bundeena settled over millennia by the Indigenous people of the Dharawal tribe and rich in evidence of the cultural continuity of these Aboriginal people and their artistic and spiritual expression. The landscape is richly bequeathed with their dreaming, sacred and ceremonial sites, burials, middens and occupational sites as well as rock art and engravings.

The First National Park group was formed in 2010 to promote the listing of the Royal National Park, the Heathcote National Park and the Garawarra State Conservation Area onto the Australian Government's nomination list for World Heritage to eventually gain World Heritage listing. First National Park contracted the eminent conservationist Dr Geoffrey Mosley to prepare its submission to the New South Wales Government. These reserves are conserved lands of great cultural significance and exceptional beauty, and their biodiversity and geodiversity are certainly worthy of such appreciation and recognition. The document titled, "The first national park: a natural for world heritage", which all members have received, is a speculative guideline to some of the things First National Park may say in its report to the Government.

The lands reserved as the Royal National Park, the Heathcote National Park and the Garawarra State Conservation Area represent an extraordinary story of natural antiquity, diversity, beauty and human attachment. It is an environment in which key aspects of Australia's exceptional natural and cultural histories are protected and presented to a wide spectrum of the public. I encourage all members in this place and in the other place to support the call for the Royal National Park to be listed on the World Heritage List. New South Wales needs to lead the way to entree this proposal of listing the Royal National Park as a World Heritage listed site.

#### **TRIBUTE TO GARRY MURRAY**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES** (East Hills) [5.33 p.m.]: Tonight I bring to the attention of the House the great community work of Mr Garry Murray. I also offer my congratulations to Garry on receiving a community service award in recognition and appreciation of his outstanding contribution to community. I commend him for his longstanding commitment to the Panania RSL Sub-Branch—commonly known as the Diggers. His service to that club has spanned over three decades. He performs RSL funeral services, visits the sick and needy, organises quotes, lodges applications for financial assistance, delivers fruit and sweets and is always there for a chat or support for those in and around the area.

Mr Murray deserves praise for the time and effort he gives to the community in his roles as President of Panania RSL Sub-Branch and Welfare and Pensioner Officer. Each year he organises the Anzac Day and Remembrance Day parades and services and he has been instrumental in managing and overseeing the construction of the newly built Panania War Memorial. I thank Mr Murray for his continued dedication to the community and I wish him all the best for a long, happy and healthy life. Garry has been a good friend to me and an asset to the East Hills community.

#### **HOUSING NSW TENANT RONALD KING**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.35 p.m.]: Tonight I draw to the attention of the House the difficulties and injustices imposed upon a constituent of mine, Mr Ronald King, by Housing NSW, a component of the Department of Family and Community Services, and its insurance brokers, Marsh Pty Ltd. Mr King is a 70-year-old pensioner and he has been a tenant of social housing for some time. He currently lives in a block of units in the suburb of Miller. These flats have historically been owned and managed by the Housing Commission, the Department of Housing and then Housing NSW. Currently they are being managed by Wesley Mission Community Housing.

The particular problems at issue here commenced at about 5.00 p.m. on Monday 29 October. At that time a large truck with a shipping container drove past the front of the unit block in which Mr King lives and it came into contact with the powerlines strung across the street. Those powerlines were connected to the power pole owned by Housing NSW that was in front of the unit block and that supplied power to that block. Two blocks of units were immediately deprived of power and it was not restored to the two blocks until 7.00 p.m. on 31 October. This meant a complete blackout for a total of 50 hours. A number of issues arising from this have angered Mr King and other residents. At no time during the blackout were any of the residents contacted either by Housing NSW or by the relevant power company, Endeavour Energy, to be advised when power would be restored, what the holdup was or why repairs had not been expeditiously completed.

To quote Mr King, "We were simply fobbed off as unimportant and of no consequence." Residents made inquiries of Housing NSW but were given trite and non-responsive answers. Mr King's characterisation of this was "quite pathetic and unacceptable". Endeavour Energy and police turned up within 1½ hours to deal with safety issues. However, that did not resolve the issue of restoring power. Housing NSW had been called straightaway and a job number created with a four-hour time frame to repair the wires. A housing contractor turned up at about 9.00 p.m. who took some photos and left. There was no sign of contractors at all the next day. A meeting was apparently held at 9.00 a.m. the day after at a Fairfield office between Housing NSW and the power company. It took until 5.00 p.m. that night for work to commence and it only took about 1½ hours to be completed. One tenant with serious medical issues had to be accommodated in a motel. The slow response to repairs understandably infuriated residents.

The lack of power is self-evidently grossly inconvenient but it goes further than that. Whilst the power is off the food stored in fridges and freezers goes off. To those who work in this building and to the officials dealing with the problem that might simply be categorised as inconvenient; to aged pensioners it is a significant financial blow. Mr King, for example, lost about \$115 worth of food in his fridge and freezer. Similarly other residents also lost their food. This is a significant sum of money for Mr King. Mr King and other residents lodged claims against Housing NSW to be reimbursed for their losses. Mr King's form was receipted by the Miller office of Housing NSW on 13 November 2012. He subsequently received a letter dated 16 November from Housing NSW acknowledging receipt of his insurance claim and saying it had been referred to the department's insurance broker, Marsh Pty Ltd. The letter also nominated a particular person at Marsh who could be contacted. Mr King then waited and waited.

After 4½ months—during which time it seems to me he exercised exemplary constraint—he finally felt compelled to contact the nominated person at Marsh Pty Ltd to see what progress, if any, had been made. He had, of course, by that time heard absolutely nothing from anyone about the claim. When he contacted the nominated person she could not find a file and said she would phone him back. She did, saying that his file had only arrived that day at the office by fax at her request. Neither my constituent nor I know who is to blame for the delay of 4½ months—Marsh Pty Ltd or Housing NSW. Whoever is at fault, it was unacceptable. He received a letter of acknowledgement from Marsh dated 18 March. On 3 April I made written representations to Housing NSW and to the relevant Minister. A letter eventually issued from Marsh Pty Ltd offering to resolve the matter for Mr King. I understand that other residents also received letters from Marsh Pty Ltd at about the same time.

The letter from Marsh to Mr King was dated 9 April 2013. However, there are a number of problems with the letter. First of all, it has the wrong address for Mr King. It had to be handed to him by another resident of the unit block to whose address it had been incorrectly addressed. Understandably, Mr King is dismayed at the level of incompetence and lack of attention to detail. The difficulties do not end there. The letter and associated documentation refer to the incident occurring when a truck hit the pole. That is not what happened and there is no dispute that that is not what happened.

There appears to have been precious little rigour applied to the consideration of this claim by any of the relevant authorities in this matter. Moreover, the documentation refers only to a power outage on 29 October last year when, in fact, it extended until 31 October. The lack of attention to this sort of detail is reflected in the fact that all these months later the only offer of reimbursement that has been made by Marsh is \$50, less than half the damage sustained by Mr King. Someone in the department needs to look at this and get it resolved properly. It is not just Mr King. Other residents have had to wait just as long. I understand one resident lost six months worth of insulin medication that had been kept in his fridge. These matters need to be resolved.

### **TRIBUTE TO KURT FEARNLEY**

**Mr TIM OWEN** (Newcastle) [5.40 p.m.]: Tonight I honour a truly inspiring Australian—a man who has been embraced by the people of Newcastle for his determination, guts and humility. The man I speak of has won a raft of sporting accolades including Olympic and Commonwealth gold medals, world sporting records, an Order of Australia medal and in years gone by has been named 2009 Young Australian of the Year, New South Wales Institute of Sport Athlete of the Year, New South Wales Sports Federation Athlete of the Year, Commonwealth Athlete of the Year with a Disability—and the list continues to grow.

The man I refer to is Kurt Fearnley, one of Newcastle's and Australia's most outstanding athletes and a true gentleman. Recently Kurt competed in the London Wheelchair Marathon and took out the top gong, as we all know, coming less than a week after his fifth place in the tragic Boston Marathon. His victory in London did

all Novocastrians proud. The New South Wales Minister for Sport and Recreation, Graham Annesley, summed it up best when he said, "Kurt Fearnley is a person who possesses champion qualities in both sport and life." A product of the New South Wales Regional Academy of Sport program, Kurt has put wheelchair sport in the spotlight during a stellar career around the world. I know Kurt very well and he is a man I have come to respect and admire from afar. Kurt always gives freely of his time in service to the community.

Kurt is an ambassador for almost as many charities as he has won medals, so it is no surprise he is a man most Novocastrians look upon with great admiration and fondness. Kurt is linked with groups such as Movember, beyondblue, Earth Hour, International Day of People with a Disability, Day of Difference Foundation, Australian Volunteers International, Don't DIS my ABILITY and the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance. In fact, the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance is hosting a fundraising ball tomorrow night and I believe one of the auction prizes is lunch with Kurt and me. I imagine it will attract some very high bids and it will not be about me, I am sure. After listening to Kurt describe his childhood I am reminded of an African proverb I am sure many members would be familiar with: It takes a village to raise a child. Kurt has been quoted as saying:

I had my Mum and Dad and my four brothers and sisters sitting around me constantly telling me I can do anything. And then I had Carcoar, which is a town of 200 people, and every person also in that town telling me I can do anything and if you have that enough around you, you're going to be determined. If you're told constantly from when you're a kid that everything is possible, I don't think there's any other alternative but to start to believe that.

He continued:

The town had got together and raised \$10,000 and they bought the chair and they ... paid for the trip and they said if he needs anything else you know we're going to make sure that he ... gets that opportunity. So it's a town of 200 people and within a week I had 10 grand sitting there, so it was nice now that I know that Carcoar have this ... bond I guess, or they know that they're the reason that I'm here.

For that reason I believe the community of Carcoar—in the electorate of the member for Bathurst, Paul Toole—should be recognised in this House this evening for its long-time support of Kurt Fearnley in his early years, and for providing him with the inspiration and means to realise his potential. As a qualified physical education teacher, Kurt travels throughout New South Wales teaching high school children in small and large communities. I hope that Kurt continues to impart on these young adults the same words of encouragement and support that his home community offered him all those years ago. After all, one could not ask for a better role model than Kurt Fearnley. He knows better than most the impact that words of encouragement from those around one can have and what they can do to one's life.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Hear, hear! He is a damn decent guy as well.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ARTIST PAUL JACKSON**

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [5.44 p.m.]: I acknowledge a special individual in my electorate of Rockdale, Mr Paul Jackson, an artist. Paul Jackson, a painter with special gifts, was born in Auckland, New Zealand. From an early age he was inspired by artists such as Picasso, Raphael, Michelangelo and Rembrandt. Following recognition of his talent and ability, Paul managed to exhibit publicly at Auckland University at the age of 19. He furthered his passion as an artist and exhibited his works at the Auckland City Gallery between 1970 and 1976. Paul then migrated to Australia where he won the Australian Maritime Art Award in 1985. It was at this exhibition that Paul first encountered the work of Joanna Braithwaite, who became the feature of his 2013 Archibald portrait. Mr Jackson was a finalist in the prestigious Archibald Prize in 1983. This is the seventh year he has been selected, amongst other outstanding artists, as a finalist—a truly remarkable feat—and I congratulate him on his artistic prowess.

The Archibald Prize was first awarded in 1921 and has been held every year since. J.F. Archibald's aim was to foster portraiture, as well as support artists, and perpetuate the memory of great Australians. The Archibald Prize is awarded to the best portrait preferentially for a man or a woman distinguished in art, letters, science or politics, painted by any artist resident in Australasia. The competition is judged by the trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, with the finalists able to display their work at the gallery as part of an exhibition. It is one of Australia's best-known art competitions and is internationally recognised for its exceptional standards and talent.

Paul Jackson was awarded the People's Choice award in 2006 with a painting of actor Garry McDonald entitled *All the World's a Stage*. The People's Choice was first awarded in 1988 and is voted for by the public visiting the exhibition. In 2009 Mr Jackson won the Packing Room Prize with a portrait entitled *Flacco's*

*Chariot*. Flacco was a fictional character played by Paul Livingston, a well-known comedian and writer. The Packing Room Prize was first awarded in 1991 and is so named due to the practice of proffered artwork being chosen by the gallery staff who receive, unpack, and hang the entries.

This year Paul entered the competition with his portrait of New Zealand artist Joanna Braithwaite entitled *Jo*. His portrait is based upon past animal characters that Joanna herself had painted. The use of animals in both their works was designed to be a metaphor for the human condition which is a characteristic of many of Paul's works. It is reported that Paul's paintings present a distorted realism, using his considerable skills in precision painting, which he has masterfully utilised in *Jo*. Paul declared an interest in the interplay of social and environmental dynamics and this portrait appears to symbolise that interest. Paul's attention to detail is unsurpassed and the painting is vibrant and colourful. The very high standard of Paul's painting earned him his position as a finalist, but there can be only one winner.

On Friday 22 March the Archibald Prize 2013 was awarded to Del Kathryn Barton for her portrait *Hugo*. Congratulations are extended to her. I recommend that all members of the Chamber visit this outstanding exhibition, which is open at the Art Gallery until 2 June 2013. Paul spends the majority of his time working from his studio in Arncliffe in the electorate of Rockdale, where he continues to produce many fine paintings. We in Rockdale are privileged to have such a flourishing artistic base. Art and creativity are vital to any sense of community. They enable us to express ourselves and give a voice to the voiceless. I appeal to those in the arts to continue their great work, not just for themselves but also for the community. Again I congratulate Mr Jackson on his efforts and wish him the very best for future Archibald exhibitions.

### CASTLE HILL ANZAC DAY SERVICES

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET** (Castle Hill) [5.49 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the Castle Hill RSL, the Castle Hill sub-branch and all the members of The Hills community for once again putting on a fantastic Anzac Day service in 2013. This year was a special year in The Hills district for Anzac Day, with a dedication service held at Wrights Road for our new war memorial. As a result of the incoming North West Rail Link and the Castle Hill train station, the memorial was moved from Arthur Whiting Park in Castle Hill to Wrights Road. The council, in cooperation with the State Government, has built a beautiful and moving memorial at Kellyville Plaza. The dedication service on Anzac Sunday was attended by the Premier, who officially opened the war memorial. It was also attended by my friend the member for Hawkesbury, the Federal member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke, and the mayor, Dr Michelle Burn. Many people in the community attended this great service. The new memorial was dedicated by members of the military. Following the service many members of the community and members of the sub-branch attended a lunch and community gathering at the Castle Hill RSL club.

On Anzac Day we have a great dawn service in The Hills district. This year more than 10,000 people attended the service. I believe it was the most well attended Anzac Day service in New South Wales outside Martin Place. I am happy to be challenged on that. It is moving to attend a service at 6.00 a.m. on Anzac Day and to see so many young people embracing and remembering those who have served in the military and who died for our country so that we can enjoy the great privileges we have today. As the youngest member of this place, I remember when I was at school hearing people say that as the World War I Anzacs passed away Anzac Day would lose its significance and slowly die across this great country. However, the number of young people attending services each year is increasing. This year I watched the service at Gallipoli, where more and more young people attend the service to remember the sacrifice of those who went before us. It is a great and moving thing for our country, and it says a lot about the great people across our great country.

In particular, I mention the work of the Castle Hill RSL, which is the cornerstone in The Hills district. Castle Hill RSL provides many great services and helps various charities, but all its work goes unrecognised in the local community. I particularly thank the President of the Castle Hill RSL sub-branch, Don Tait, OAM, the President of the Castle Hill RSL, Warren Glenny, all the members and directors of the RSL, as well as the member for Baulkham Hills, who braved the cold on Anzac Day to represent the Premier at a number of Anzac Day services. As I said, it is a fantastic tribute to see so many people in The Hills district attending services on Anzac Day.

Preparations are already afoot for the 2015 celebrations of Anzac Day and services. We expect more than 20,000 members of our community to commemorate 100 years of Anzac Day in 2015. The RSL has already established a committee that is working to ensure that local community groups get involved in various activities. Our art societies are running an art show, and various cultural groups are already engaging in what

will be a phenomenal celebration of the sacrifice of the soldiers who have gone before us. As a local member of Parliament it is moving to see the Anzac spirit abound in the local community, particularly in The Hills district.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.54 p.m.]: I join with the member for Castle Hill in thanking the Castle Hill sub-branch for its dedication ceremony. I was proud to attend the ceremony with the member for Castle Hill, the Premier, local representatives, the Federal member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke, and many other organisations. I attended eight Anzac Day ceremonies in the preceding week at Windsor RSL, The Hills district sub-branch, Galston, Kenthurst Rotary, the Annangrove Progress Association, concluding with the service at Glenorie RSL on Anzac Day. I spoke many times about the sacrifice and courage of those who served in various confrontations on our behalf, and a quality of life unparalleled around the world that we now enjoy through their legacy. Our legacy is to ensure that we remind future generations of the sacrifice that was made on our behalf. Lest we forget.

### COOGEE ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [5.55 p.m.]: For years the eastern suburbs, including my electorate of Coogee, have been at the mercy of developers attempting to profiteer through overdevelopment. Most developers seek to maximise their gains by flouting good planning principles and proposing developments that far exceed council guidelines. These developments are then flogged off at a rapid rate, leaving in their wake residents who are forced to deal with the devastation of their local community. This, of course, is of immense concern to both me and my constituents in Coogee. The majority of my constituents and I have no problem with development. We all need places to live and to work. But this is an important point to make: We have a problem with overdevelopment and poor planning.

At the moment there are two proposals that exemplify this problem. The first is the site of the Bronte RSL Club in Macpherson Street, Bronte. The financially troubled RSL has agreed to sell its current site to the developer Winston Langley Burlington so that the club can continue its operations. Winston Langley Burlington plans to build a supermarket, small retail stores and high-rise units, along with a much smaller club, all in what is now a small local commercial village. The development will see hordes of delivery trucks sharing the road in the mornings with schoolchildren from Clovelly Public School, which is surely a recipe for disaster. Adding a large supermarket to a neighbourhood shopping village makes things worse. The road infrastructure in the area will not cope with the new traffic, increasing congestion and demand for on-street parking.

The proposal flouts the planning restrictions in the area, with the front of the building exceeding current restrictions by 7.5 metres, the middle of the building doubling the current height restriction, and the building more than doubling the allowable floor space ratio. It is about as out of the character for the area as one can get, and it causes far more problems than it solves. Make no mistake about it—the developer is not swooping in to save the day for the RSL by buying the site and developing it. It is no saviour. This is Bronte, which is one of the most sought-after areas in Sydney in which to live. One could build a garden shed in Bronte and sell it for a million bucks. This proposal is about maximising profits, without any regard for the amenity of the community or, indeed, the local RSL. The development is so egregious that a grassroots campaign has sprung up to oppose it. I commend the campaign's coordinator, Dr Stephen Lightfoot, for his efforts in organising opposition to this monstrosity.

The second development of concern lies further south in my electorate, at the Inglis Newmarket Stables in Randwick. If one thought the Bronte RSL proposal was bad, one should see what is in store for the Inglis site. It involves rezoning a five-hectare site currently used for the iconic Inglis Newmarket Stables to permit a range of dwellings, shops and offices. It sounds nice until one realises that we are talking about buildings up to 30 metres tall, nine-storey towers with 800 new dwellings. The site is in the middle of a heritage conservation area, listed by Randwick City Council. Add this to the fact that no frequent public transport runs past or near the site, and one has a recipe for parking pressure and congestion in an area that is already well over capacity. The proposal provides almost half the number of car parking spots required by the current Development Control Plan. In a letter to me one of my constituents said:

[this development is a] grotesquely inappropriate and overblown proposal which will cram literally thousands more people into what is already the most densely populated urban area in the whole of Australia with the obvious sole justification being the enormous profits that those selling the site and those developing it plan to make as a result.

The ambiguous plans for the site also have not assisted the community in understanding how things will change. This deliberate obfuscation belies the transparency that should be an integral part of the planning and major

development process. Of course, this transparency was eroded by the previous Labor Government, which was the architect of the infamous part 3A laws and whose Ministers introduced a level of planning system corruption never before seen in this country. This culture has led to developers thinking it is okay to come into communities and build extravagant, inappropriate, profit-seeking monstrosities and then flog them off as quickly as possible, leaving the ruins behind for the communities to pick up.

Both sites have the potential to see great development that will benefit the community, but I guarantee that these two applications do not fit the bill. For these developers, consulting with the community to achieve greater outcomes is anathema. Far from doing this in consultation thus far, the developers cynically and disingenuously made minor amendments to the proposals just so they could say that they had changed. Make no mistake: Had this Government not been elected in 2011, these applications would have been signed off under the notorious part 3A by a Labor planning Minister. [*Time expired.*]

### ORGANISED DOG FIGHTING

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.00 p.m.]: I inform the House this evening of some disturbing occurrences in the Hawkesbury area. It has been widely reported in the *Hawkesbury Gazette*, the *Rouse Hill Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and on the *Alan Jones Breakfast Show*, the Steve Price program on 2GB, and by Dicko and Sarah on radio station 2UE that family dogs are being stolen from their owners' backyards for use in illegal dogfighting activities. Dogfighting is an abhorrent and cruel activity, and it has been reported that family dogs are being stolen to blood ferocious animals in training to fight other vicious dogs. This heinous activity is nothing less than sickening and anyone involved should be jailed. Talkback radio programs have been inundated with calls from residents across the north-west of Sydney, as has my office, complaining of dogs being stolen from their backyards in recent weeks. Indeed, one 2GB program assistant notified Alan Jones that when they were walking recently through the streets of the inner west, someone asked whether they had seen a Staffordshire bull terrier as it had been stolen from their backyard.

Apparently Staffies are the dog of choice for this grotesque behaviour, but several other lesser-known breeds have also gone missing from Londonderry, Box Hill, Nelson, south Windsor, Riverstone and Doonside in the past four weeks and disappeared without trace. Family dogs do not just go missing, especially in large numbers as has been reported. From time to time our pets may wander and, sadly, some will be involved in traffic accidents. However, large numbers of loving family dogs just do not go missing without a trace. Social media has been abuzz with claims of six dogs taken just days ago from a single street in Nelson, in Sydney's north-west. Nelson adjoins Rouse Hill, which gives members some idea of how close to Sydney metropolitan areas this abhorrent behaviour has reached. It now appears that more than 20 dogs in the immediate Hawkesbury area have gone missing, presumed stolen. Far too many dogs are reported missing for this to be considered a coincidence.

This is not the first time the suggestion of organised dogfighting rings has reared its ugly head in Hawkesbury's semirural areas. When a dog disappears one can usually assume that it has escaped and run away; when six dogs in one street disappear, we have a real problem. Apparently, the dogs are targeted by thieves who stalk them in nearby parks and outside homes before stealing them. These spineless, gutless thieves who steal family pets usually prefer breeds of dogs such as Staffies, but will take other family pets to bait and blood the more ferocious fighting dogs before they get into a ring or pit. Not only are these dogs that are trained to fight enduring unimaginable injuries and death, but stolen family pets used in that training have their limbs ripped off and suffer enormous amounts of torturous pain prior to being killed. It is sickening stuff. Josephine Rowan from Nelson was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* as saying that she thought her terrier cross Chihuahua, named Rastice, had run away until she discovered that her neighbours' dogs were missing also. Josephine said:

It is hard to believe people can do this to an animal. It is horrific and it is infuriating, they should be thrown in a cage with the animals.

I could not agree more with Josephine's comments. RSPCA NSW spokesman Lukas Picton said recently that the organisation was alerted to the concerns via text and Facebook messages. Mr Lukas said:

Dogs being used as bait for these illegal rings is not unheard of and is quite disturbing.

He said that it is obviously an illegal activity, both from the perspective of cruelty to animals and gambling. Police have confirmed that the thefts are being investigated. I encourage all residents to remain vigilant and to report any suspicious behaviour by anyone seen stalking family pets or to pass on to authorities the name and

identity of anyone who may be involved in this barbaric and disgraceful activity. Blacktown, Castle Hill and Windsor police stations are keen to hear from any member of the public with evidence that may lead to a conviction of these disgraceful members of our community who are involved in illegal organised dogfighting.

### WEST DAPTO ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [6.05 p.m.]: One issue is constantly raised with me in the Dapto and West Dapto areas: traffic and congestion. West Dapto is developing into a major metropolitan suburb. Over the next 20 years I expect that, as growth continues, Dapto and West Dapto will have a population catchment that requires its own electorate. The eastern side of Dapto, separated by the F6, is now mainly an established suburb. The Dapto central business district is modernising and West Dapto is continuing its growth spurt. Shortly, a series of villages will be developed towards the very western edge of Horsley and across to Kembla Grange. The influx of new housing and businesses will place even more pressure on the Dapto central business district and West Dapto's existing local road network. In January 2010 the former New South Wales Labor Government provided Wollongong City Council with a \$26.1 million interest-free loan under the NSW Local Infrastructure Fund. This funding has been used by Wollongong City Council to upgrade existing local roads and to build new road links.

For a long time much community debate in Dapto and West Dapto centred around Bong Bong Road and the notorious Fowlers Road Bridge. In my view, the council was wrong to shelve the Fowlers Road Bridge option. Abandoning the project made the task of developing the rest of West Dapto more difficult. The local community is very cynical about the council's infrastructure promises. The council has used the \$26.1 million grant and an additional \$14 million in Commonwealth funds to establish a local road network of choice for West Dapto residents. Under the expanded local road network, works will transform West Dapto Road and Shone Avenue, extend Fairwater Drive to connect it to Cleveland Road, and extend Cleveland Road to the Princes Highway. The overall objective of these road network improvements is to flood-proof traffic access to West Dapto in the event of substantial and sustained rain events and thus provide a road network choice for local residents to use instead of concentrating all traffic movement on the one trunk of Bong Bong Road.

I am not convinced that many West Dapto residents are aware of the improvements to the local road network. I have published a special edition of my regular newsletter, the "Shellharbour Courier", to help local residents understand the improvements that have taken place, and other planned projects. But more needs to be done. I urge Wollongong City Council to apply for funding under the just expanded Resources for Regions program to complete the new link between Fowlers Road and Fairwater Drive. I also believe the council should apply for additional funding to complete the upgrade of West Dapto Road. As the Wongawilli coalmine operates and contributes royalties to the New South Wales Government, these road projects should be put in the box seat for funding under the expanded Resources for Regions program, which now includes the Wollongong local government area.

The West Dapto Initial Access Strategy will require up to \$72 million in investment. Wollongong City Council simply cannot undertake this capital investment alone. Therefore, I urge the council to apply for funding under the Resources for Regions program and the Port Kembla \$100 million lease funds. The Port Kembla lease proceeds could also fund new on-and-off ramps at Kanahooka Road, Fowlers Road and Emerson Road, which would dramatically ease traffic congestion in the Dapto central business district and West Dapto, and improve access to the F6. I hope the New South Wales Government will consider these important infrastructure initiatives under both funding opportunities.

### BARANGAROO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [6.10 p.m.]: This evening I again raise my ongoing concerns regarding the former New South Wales Labor Government's sale of Barangaroo to Lend Lease, particularly the lack of transparency and the possibility of corruption in the process. The Supreme Court recently heard a dispute between the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and Lend Lease over the size of the final value share payment to be paid by Lend Lease to the Barangaroo Delivery Authority. The chief executive officer of the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, John Tabart, was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying that the dispute is "very serious", indicating that a decision in favour of Lend Lease will result in the Government not only not receiving a fair price but also possibly failing to recover the cost of the public works and transport infrastructure associated with it. We know that that figure is many hundreds of millions of dollars. The case is being heard in open court. However, the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and Lend Lease have both urged the court to keep secret the details of what the New South Wales Government is to receive from Lend Lease.

Community group Australians for Sustainable Development has sought to discover the details of the Barangaroo South tender process and of the competing tenders. Lend Lease and the Barangaroo Delivery Authority are vigorously opposing disclosure. It is a disgrace that not only has the New South Wales public been denied fair value for this land but also both the former Labor Government and, it seems, the current Liberal Government, have refused to provide transparent details of the deal. As I have outlined previously in this House, at the very least the Government has been underpaid around \$1 billion for the Barangaroo site. That money could have been spent on education, hospitals, transport infrastructure and much more. The Barangaroo Delivery Authority's continued resistance to disclosing information in the public interest makes a mockery of the O'Farrell Government's election promise of transparency and accountability. Without transparency and open access to government information, we are in danger of seeing more Eddie Obeids and Ian Macdonalds emerge.

Speaking of Eddie Obeid, why is the Government not investigating the possibly corrupt actions that led to this dud deal with Lend Lease? The people of New South Wales deserve answers. Why did Eddie Obeid pressure then Premier Iemma and planning Minister Sartor to approve a gross overdevelopment of Barangaroo? Why, when Sartor refused, was he replaced with Kristina Keneally, who promptly approved that overdevelopment? Why did Keneally, as planning Minister, take control of Barangaroo from the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority—which had successfully negotiated a fair price for Darling Quarter—and give it instead to the newly created Barangaroo Delivery Authority? Former Minister Sartor said that this was completely unnecessary as the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority already had the necessary structure in place to handle Barangaroo.

It was only an appeal to the Information Commissioner that made the deal on Darling Quarter public. That deal demonstrates again that the value of the Darling Quarter—which is landlocked and bound by the Western Distributor—was significantly more than Lend Lease paid for Barangaroo, which is a better, higher-value property. Was the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority seen as an impediment to a process that was to result in the sale of the Barangaroo South development rights to Lend Lease at what has emerged as being half its market value? The fact is that the Barangaroo Delivery Authority did not attempt to take account of the market value of Barangaroo when considering tenders and negotiations for the site.

What is the connection between Keneally's compliance with Obeid's lobbying and Lend Lease Ventures' \$25-million investment in the company Better Places, which obtained a contract to install electric vehicle charging stations at Barangaroo? Is it a coincidence that Ben Keneally owns more than three million shares in this company and that Talal Yassine, a member of Eddie Obeid's Terrigals faction, also owns more than three million shares? What was Paul Keating's involvement in the process? When he was chairman of the Barangaroo Design Excellence Review Panel, as well as a chairman of the Lazard Investment Bank, he made no secret of championing and lobbying for Lend Lease's design for Barangaroo. Is it just coincidence that Lend Lease is a favoured client of Lazard? The Lazard Investment Bank was also credited with brokering the Lend Lease investment in Better Places—another coincidence? Is it again coincidental that Lend Lease had, only a short time earlier, been selected as the preferred tenderer for Barangaroo? As chairman of the Design Excellence Review Panel, what role did Paul Keating have in a decision to ignore completely the true value of Barangaroo?

Why has the Crown Casino bid for a gaming licence in the Lend Lease hotel at Barangaroo not been subject to a competitive tender process? The Government talks about competition and transparency but there was no tender and no competitive process. How much extra value does the licence create for the Lend Lease Barangaroo project and will Lend Lease be asked to pay more for this extra value? We have heard nothing of this matter, of the huge windfall that it will create for Lend Lease, with no additional money for the taxpayer. I will be referring this matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I call on the Premier to investigate and make public all aspects of the deal, including the value received for the development and the leasing rights, versus the true market value of those rights. I call on the Premier to investigate the roles of Eddie Obeid, Kristina Keneally, Paul Keating and the Barangaroo Delivery Authority in achieving a \$1 billion windfall for Lend Lease and an equivalent loss to the taxpayers of New South Wales.

#### ORANGE LINEN SERVICE

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [6.14 p.m.]: I wish to register the anger and disappointment of many of my constituents in the Orange electorate about the decision by HealthShare to take the Prince of Wales laundry work away from the Orange Linen Service and to redirect that work to laundries in Parramatta and Newcastle. The move will see the volume of work at Orange drop by about 30 per cent. It will also mean a reduction in positions at the Orange Linen Service and an increase of positions outside the region. The decision was purportedly made on the basis of the high cost of trucking linen between Orange and western Sydney. There was

no consultation by HealthShare with me, as the local member, before the decision was made. I found out about the change through the media. There was similarly no consultation by HealthShare with the chief executive officer of the Western NSW Local Health District or the chair of the local health district board. This is an unfortunate state of affairs.

When I finally got to meet the management of HealthShare to discuss this issue, the answers that I was given to the many questions I had were unsatisfactory. HealthShare failed to provide any analysis to show that the Orange Linen Service could not be made more competitive by using local private freight operators. One thing that Orange does particularly well is run freight between Orange and western Sydney. HealthShare has been unable to provide me with any analysis to demonstrate that Orange is no longer a cost-effective option for carrying out the Prince of Wales laundry work. I can only conclude that this analysis has not been carried out.

HealthShare has similarly been unable to show me the cost difference between freighting laundry between Newcastle and Sydney, and Orange and Sydney. I doubt that trucking linen between Newcastle and Sydney using HealthShare could be much cheaper than trucking linen between Orange and Sydney using a private operator. Despite my request, HealthShare has also failed to produce the business case for moving the Prince of Wales work out of Orange. HealthShare should produce this material. It has also failed to produce any regional impact statement with respect to the decision to move work out of Orange. In short, HealthShare has been unable to properly justify its decision. The issue here is not whether the Orange Linen Service should be made more competitive; the issue is that the Orange Linen Service should be given a chance to compete. It has been denied the opportunity to do so, without proper explanation.

I thank the Minister for giving the undertaking that no employee of the Orange Linen Service would be forced to take a redundancy as a result of the decision. That is a positive for employees of the linen service and removes uncertainty. However, the issue of work being taken from Orange and allocated to other cities remains. Constituents at both ends of the political spectrum have expressed concern to me about this decision. HealthShare has made it clear that it is not open to exploring options to keep the Prince of Wales' work at Orange. Being presented with a *fait accompli* does not amount to proper consultation. A representative of HealthShare even tried to tell me—without the hint of a smile—that taking work away from Orange is a positive thing for the Orange Linen Service. I find this reasoning illogical and do not agree with it. Unfortunately, the arguments that HealthShare is putting forward to support its position have not been backed by objective evidence. Orange deserves much better than the treatment it has received from the management of HealthShare. There are many people in Orange who remain justifiably aggrieved by this decision.

#### **ASIA-PACIFIC FRIENDSHIP GROUP SOLOMON ISLANDS VISIT**

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE** (Wagga Wagga) [6.19 p.m.]: I recently visited the Solomon Islands in my capacity as chairman of the New South Wales Parliament Asia-Pacific Friendship Group—of which you, Madam Acting-Speaker, are the deputy chair. It was my first visit, at the invitation of Sir Trevor Garland, the Honorary Consul for the Solomon Islands in New South Wales. I met with the Prime Minister and the Speaker, Sir Allan Kemakeza, who has been a visitor to this place. I also met the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Health. The New South Wales Parliament is twinned with the Solomon Islands and for a number of years we have facilitated inter-parliamentary visits. At each election the Solomon Islands Parliament has a changeover of between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of its members. It is important that the integrity of the parliamentary system remain in order to assist those new parliamentarians.

I visited the Parliament and had some in-depth discussions with Sir Allan. I also had the opportunity to visit the main referral hospital at Honiara. It was built about 30 years ago by the Taiwanese, who have a strong relationship with the Solomon Islands. That hospital, whilst it has provided good infrastructure, is really in need of some investment. I will be talking to the Taiwanese about opportunities for New South Wales or the New South Wales Parliament Asia-Pacific Friendship Group to assist the Taiwanese to ensure that funds are allocated to improve that facility.

Whilst I was there we also took the opportunity to look around the main island of Guadalcanal. It has an amazing history. It was the scene of fierce battles in the Second World War about supremacy of the sea and air and its strategic location was important. During our visit we stopped at a small hospital and at that hospital I met Sister Irene, who is a sister of the Daughters of Our Lady of Peter. They manage the Good Samaritan Hospital. We had a tour of that hospital. Whilst we were on tour of the hospital Sir Trevor diagnosed a baby called Grace with ventricular septal defect. Basically, in layman's language, that means a hole in the heart. I thought that baby Grace was about three weeks old; she was in fact 3½ months old.

Since I returned I have taken up the cause of baby Grace to try to get her to Australia for an operation. Through interviews with ABC National I have managed to raise about \$6,000 so far. There have been many offers to fundraise from people who have been involved with the Solomon Islands, from friends and from parliamentarians. I need to raise \$30,000. Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children [ROMAC] is the international arm of Rotary and it has come to our aid. The Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children has managed to have Grace medically assessed and her cardiac reports sent to the paediatricians and cardiac specialists in Sydney for assessment. This little baby is in a critical condition so she has been placed on the priority list.

I still need to raise the money because that will ensure that Grace and her mother receive the very best treatment and it will help Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children meet those costs. It costs about \$120,000 for each baby to be looked after. There were 20 children on the list and Rotary has managed to reduce the list to eight children. I am advised that Grace has been prioritised and that passports have been approved as well. I raise in the House a concern I have about the Federal Government's cutbacks to AusAID. AusAID was contributing \$100,000 to the Solomon Islands and the Solomon Islands was matching that with \$50,000. That funding has been cut. That funding would have helped to provide treatment for 10 heart patients at St Vincent's Private Hospital. In fact, that \$100,000 was treating 40 patients from the Solomon Islands.

I note that the bureaucracy has grown by 500 employees administering the AusAID program, but sadly \$100,000 of funding has been cut—funding that would provide for Grace and others the desperate medical attention they need. I seek support from members and appeal to the Federal Government to replace that \$100,000 of funding to the Solomon Islands. The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands said that they have the money to match the funding and they want to see the program reinstated. It is important aid for cardiac patients such as Grace and the 40 other patients that are treated each year in New South Wales.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 6.24 p.m. until  
Tuesday 7 May 2013 at 12 noon.**

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