

ASSENT TO BILLS .....	20964
AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT .....	20975
BANKSTOWN FIRE STATION .....	20954
BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE EVENTS .....	21020
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE .....	20950, 20965, 21011, 21012
CAMDEN ELECTORATE SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS .....	20959
CAMPBELLTOWN ROAD UPGRADE .....	21022
CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT (SUPERVISORY LEVY) BILL 2013 .....	20997
CEBIT AUSTRALIA 2013 CONFERENCE .....	20966
CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN) BILL 2013	21011, 21013
CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION .....	20971
CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY .....	20976
CUSTODY NOTIFICATION SERVICE .....	20956
EDUCATION AMENDMENT (SCHOOL PROVIDERS FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL 2013	21018
ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NORTHERN TABLELANDS .....	20964
ENERGY SERVICES CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT (DISTRIBUTOR EFFICIENCY) BILL 2013	20985
GAMBLING ADVERTISING .....	20971, 20972, 20973
GOULBURN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS .....	20952
HELLO KOALAS SCULPTURE PROJECT .....	21019
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER-GENERAL .....	20975
KIAMA STUDENT LEADERS FORUM .....	20950
LANE COVE CITIZENSHIP AWARDS .....	20961
LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE .....	20975
LOCAL LAND SERVICES BILL 2013 .....	20984
LOCAL LAND SERVICES .....	20972
McAULEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROSE BAY WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY .....	20962
NATIONAL CUTTING HORSE ASSOCIATION FUTURITY .....	20958
NEPEAN AREA DISABILITIES ORGANISATION .....	21021
NORTH WEST RAIL LINK .....	20968
NORTHERN TABLELANDS BY-ELECTION .....	20978
NSW JUSTICES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE .....	20961
OATLEY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY EVENTS .....	20960
OUR LADY OF LEBANON COLLEGE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY .....	20958
PARRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL CENTENARY .....	20957
PETITIONS .....	20976
PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT BILL 2013 .....	21000
PLEDGE OF LOYALTY .....	20964
PORT KEMBLA RSL CLUB .....	20951
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS .....	20950, 21018
QUESTION TIME .....	20965
RAIL SERVICES .....	20974
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE .....	20969
REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS .....	20965
RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS .....	20963
STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (STAFF DIRECTORS) BILL 2013	21018
STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2013 .....	20995
TAREE TAFE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE .....	20955
VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2012-13	20975
WEE WAA DAFT PUNK ALBUM LAUNCH .....	20953
WESTCONNEX MOTORWAY .....	20965
YMCA NSW YOUTH PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATIVE IVANA ZARIC .....	21018



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 28 May 2013

---

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

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

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

---

### KIAMA STUDENT LEADERS FORUM

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [12.11 p.m.]: This afternoon I am pleased to present my private member's statement on the topic of the Kiama Student Leaders Forum. I start by acknowledging students in the gallery, whose names I will read onto the record shortly. When I was growing up in Bombaderry I was interested in politics and public affairs. Like many young people who had that interest—I see the member for Liverpool sniggering—when I had that interest I often wondered whether other leaders in our community had an interest in what we had to say. Were they interested in the views of the leaders of tomorrow? Did they have at their heart the thoughts of younger people when they were considering complex legislation and issues confronting the State Parliament? When I became a member of Parliament and had the great privilege of representing my electorate on 26 March 2011 I was intent on ensuring that the question I asked myself as a teenager was one that the young people of my electorate would not be asking. I wanted them to know that at the forefront of my mind were their concerns, the fact that we are dealing with their future in this place every day of the week.

The challenge to leaders is to create more leaders and not more followers. Every year I have had the privilege of hosting the Kiama Student Leaders Forum. It has been the date I look forward to most with great interest because I get to hear from young people first-hand and they get to see a little of what I do in this place on their behalf. Today we had the opportunity to tour the Parliament and to look at some of the historical aspects of this building: from this Chamber, where people in the gallery sat earlier today, and learned about some of its history; to the Legislative Council, the other place. We also saw some of the historical artefacts that adorn this building, such as the scissors used to cut the opening ribbon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge—which was cut early by De Groot—and looked at the old Legislative Council Chamber neighbouring this building. Later today young people will be able to put forward their ideas and to come up with concerns as if they were Premier for a day. I hope that senior Ministers will be able to join us later and discuss their portfolios, as well as listen first-hand to the views of young people who have travelled to this place today.

I place on the record the people who have come to Parliament today. By putting these names onto the record their names will be inscribed as having been in this place for all time, as *Hansard* is the lasting record of the Parliament. The students from Nowra Anglican College are Matthew Berendsen, Ashleigh Butler, Lachlan Dash, Nicholas Day, Aaron Driver, Nicole Giffard, Megan Hamaty, Sarah Hawkes, Samuel Hockey, Abbie Macdonald, Samuel Mackaness, Elizabeth Patterson, Elizabeth Poulton, Nicholas Shaw, Katie Williams and Alex Birrell. Students from Bomaderry High School—my old school; it is wonderful to see them here today—are Molly Kirkpatrick, Francesca Banks, Patrick Jones, Jack Fishpool and Jack Hind, the SCC Coordinator. Those from St Joseph's Catholic School are Huen Armstrong, Jaimie Clarke, Maddison Foye, Madi Sampson, Elise Constable, Chelsea Mathews, Sarah Weir, Cohben McMahon, Adrian Meta, Chloe Wilson, MaryAnn Hernandez, Bell Marzano, Samuel Burdock, Vanessa Markulic, Elise Jenkins and their teacher Helen Sara. Those from Kiama High School are Kate Sinclair, Jake Ashley, Dominic Littrich, Patricia McGee, Declan Wall,

Samona Larkins, Lily Gore, Rachael Malin, Conor McCammon, Michael Swain, Dylan McGillivray, Sam Hornsey, Imogen Bakewell and Ebony Gibb. I thank them all for being here today as part of the Kiama Student Leaders Forum.

In the past we have had debates on everything from issues surrounding the need for improved ambulance services to changes to L-plate driver laws. As I said earlier today in the Legislative Council Chamber, some of those changes have come about. I am sure we will be debating subjects such as youth mental health and youth homelessness. Those topics are frequently raised. I tell young people who are listening to this speech today as leaders of tomorrow: I hope you take this opportunity to speak up. I hope you take the opportunity to question the members of Parliament and the Ministers who come before you. The people you see sitting in this place are servants of the public; it is not the other way around.

It is our job to serve you and to ensure that your interests are front and centre of the Government's agenda; and it is part of my commitment to you, as residents of my electorate, to make our electorate the best place to live. We all know that Kiama is the best place to live, contrary to the views of other members in this place, and to make it even stronger by ensuring that your views and concerns are front and centre. I take this opportunity to thank Paul Ell from my office, who has been working studiously to make this event come about. I also thank Sam, who is here today assisting in the formation of this work. Paul Ell in particular has made a huge contribution to this forum over three years. I have no doubt we could not have put this forum together today without him—but, most importantly, you, the future of our community.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.16 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I also extend a warm welcome to the students from the Kiama electorate and congratulate them on their involvement with the Kiama Student Leaders Forum. They have a wonderful local member in Gareth Ward. I hope their visit to Parliament House truly is inspirational for them and that they will feel they want to make a contribution for the better for their communities. I am the fifth generation of my family to be in public life. It is wonderful to be involved in looking after public interests rather than your own private interests.

#### **PORT KEMBLA RSL CLUB**

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [12.17 p.m.]: I welcome the students from the Kiama electorate who are attending the Student Leaders Forum. I know that many of them are future Labor leaders.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Future Labor leaders have not been born yet.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** Off you go, Gareth. It is with great sadness that I inform my colleagues of the current closure of the doors of the Port Kembla RSL Club—which is based on Military Road in my electorate of Wollongong—due to financial troubles. The RSL club is a great old club. Again, it is a victim of the downturn in the economy and the privatisation of the port. It is important that I raise this issue, having attended a meeting on Saturday. The Port Kembla RSL Club goes above and beyond local watering hole status. The club opened in 1959 and has more than 2,000 members. The sub-branch of the RSL is one of the oldest in Wollongong and houses a large collection of memorabilia from war times provided by the people of the Illawarra. Pictures, medals and wartime nostalgia adorn the walls in memory of the fallen and those who returned from war.

Out the front of the club stands an amazing cenotaph in recognition of our fallen heroes. I am pleased to say that I attend the dawn service on Anzac Day at the Port Kembla RSL each year. And on the odd occasion I have been known to play two-up on the day, when it is legal. Unfortunately, I was never terribly lucky. I am probably not too good at throwing money away. The club also has another facet to it. I am proud to say the Port Kembla RSL, unlike many RSL clubs, has a heated rehabilitation pool which is utilised by many pensioners, injured, disabled and low-income earners requiring rehabilitation. It is also used by wheelchair-bound people as there is a special machine capable of lowering the person into the pool. I am also pleased to say that in a round of Community Building Partnership grants under the Labor Government I was able to secure for the club a substantial amount of money to refurbish the pool lining and upgrade the changing rooms. I saw the completion of the amazing renovations first-hand. I was inundated with calls and letters of thanks from local and other people who utilised the pool. They all stated how important the use of the pool was for their health and wellbeing.

The RSL club also owns and operates a local first-class butchery—Port Kembla Quality Meats—which I can assure all members does sell top quality meats. On Saturday 25 May 2013 I attended a meeting convened

by Terry Wetherall of the RSL and attended by sub-branch members and supporters including sub-branch president Jim Lyon, Bevan Firmore, Roy Wheeldon and Darcy Martin. The meeting was held to ascertain the support of the community before attempts were made to resurrect the club. The meeting was attended by more than 100 people, who were all in unanimous agreement that every effort should be made to see the club reopen its doors. Suggestions were taken from the floor as to what could be done to see the club start trading profitably as soon as possible. Many people put forward ideas. I understand these suggestions will be presented to the administrators for their consideration. I encourage the administrators to come to an arrangement with the people who are proposing options for the club to trade out of debt. I call on the ANZ Bank, the main creditor, to come to the table and discuss the issues.

This club is only in debt for \$900,000. It might seem a lot of money to many but it is not an astronomical amount: with assistance, this club could trade out of that debt. I call on the Government and the ANZ Bank to support the community and provide assistance to see that this iconic club is reopened. The debt is relatively minor in today's terms. It is not insurmountable. In fact, it is a drop in the ocean if it means re-employment of local staff, the pool being reopened for those in need and the club reopening its doors. That pool was made available to anybody in the community who needed to use it. I will continue to support the fight to reopen the Port Kembla RSL Club and I will do all I can to seek assistance from this Government. I congratulate the sub-branch on its efforts to date. A financing arrangement for \$900,000 over 30 years can be arrived at. I think the Government could, in light of what is happening with the Illawarra, assist in some way. I call on everybody to play their part in achieving that end.

### **GOULBURN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Ms PRU GOWARD** (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [12.22 p.m.]: I have recently had the pleasure of informing the successful applicants within my electorate of the 2012 Community Building Partnership Program. For each granting round, my office receives a large number of applications. As I am sure many of my colleagues in this Chamber can attest, the process of breaking down each application, highlighting worthy recipients and sharing the allocated money is no easy task. For 2012 community groups and organisations in Goulburn applied for over \$1 million worth of funding across 37 grant applications. It was a tall order to allocate a share of only \$200,000 to a variety of projects but in the end we were able to offer partial funding for 27 applications.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the recipients of the funding and highlight some of the fantastic projects taking place across the Goulburn electorate. Southern Youth and Family Services received a grant of \$15,000 towards the construction of a recreation room at the Warooga Youth Refuge in Goulburn. The refuge is a small building and there is no recreation space for the young residents. The funding will see an extension to the existing building so a recreation room can be established housing gym equipment, games, additional computers and other equipment that will assist the residents in their personal and social development during their stay at the refuge.

Upper Lachlan Shire Council received a grant of \$15,000 to partially fund a replacement roof for the Taralga Community Services Centre. Taralga is a wonderful town. Replacement of the roof will ensure a safe environment for the many users of the facility and, it is hoped, attract more members of this isolated community to use its facilities, providing ongoing social benefits to the wider community. St Stephens Anglican Church, Mittagong, also received funding to replace the church roof. Goulburn Mulwaree Council received \$14,000 towards the construction of a new amenities block at the Marulan soccer fields. The existing amenities block is over 50-years old and is in a state of disrepair, which resulted in the block being closed. Council currently has to hire portaloos for sporting and community events. The new amenities block will include toilets, change areas, lighting and landscaping to ensure that it is easily accessible for all members of the community.

Upgrading amenities seemed to be a common theme in the applications received: Goulburn Police-Citizens Youth Club received \$14,000 towards the upgrade of its bathroom facilities; Moss Vale Soccer Club received \$13,000 towards new change rooms and training facilities at its home ground; and Riversdale Goulburn, which I mentioned in my statement last week, received \$10,000 to upgrade its lavatory block to make it accessible for the disabled and mobility impaired. The Highlands Theatre Group has been allocated \$14,000 worth of funding towards the construction of a facility that will provide it with a workshop in which to create and store the sets required for its productions, and an extensive wardrobe department. Anyone who has been involved with local theatre will understand the difficulties in storing the production assets. The Goulburn Agricultural, Pastoral and Horticultural Society received a grant of \$10,000 towards the purchase of a

prefabricated transportable building for use as an administrative centre and file storage area for the society. The establishment of this office will be a great boost to the society, which shares an office with another community group that requires the society to pack up and remove all its equipment when it is not occupying the site.

Other groups to receive funding towards their projects include: the Berrima Courthouse Trust for landscaping of the courthouse forecourt; Challenge Southern Highlands for upgrades at the Welby Garden Centre; the Goulburn and Mittagong Country Women's Association branches for upgrades to their respective association rooms; the Exeter Village Association Inc. for a digital projector and motorised screen for the Exeter Village Hall; the Goulburn Rodeo Club for the construction of a meeting and storage facility at the Goulburn recreational area; KU Children's Centre, Moss Vale for playground renovations; Moss Vale and District Basketball Association for renovations of the Moss Vale Basketball stadium; the Berrima, Mittagong and Bundanoon Scout branches for much-needed repairs to their respective halls; Southern Tablelands Cycling Club to produce materials providing information on local cycle trail options; the Legacy Club of Goulburn Inc. for driveway repairs at Legacy Lodge; the St Vincent de Paul Society for upgrades to the Vinnies centre at Moss Vale; the Goulburn Uniting Church for the development of a water tank irrigation system for the Goulburn community garden; and Wingecarribee Family Support Service for the construction of a shed to provide storage for a community toy library.

All of these projects will build connections between people, enhance the liveability of our region and strengthen our communities. I can guarantee that not a cent will be wasted. As you can see, there are many exciting projects taking shape in the Goulburn electorate. I am looking forward to receiving the next round of Community Building Partnership applications in September this year.

### WEE WAA DAFT PUNK ALBUM LAUNCH

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES** (Barwon—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales) [12.27 p.m.]: Over the years the Barwon electorate has developed a national reputation as a leader in a range of fields including agriculture, tourism and community spirit. These are just a few of the areas in which Barwon is known across the land. However, it is safe to say that Barwon has never been famed for being the global epicentre of French electro-pop—until now. The recent experiment by Sony to launch the internationally acclaimed duo Daft Punk's latest album in Wee Waa was certainly a gutsy, if somewhat confusing, move. It perhaps goes without saying that Wee Waa, a vibrant village of 2,000 people, was perhaps not the obvious choice for the French musical giants who have racked up millions of album sales and have a cult following across the world.

Like many river-based communities, Wee Waa has enjoyed the boom, and sometimes the bust, of agriculture. It was a big player during the heady cotton boom of the 1980s, when the population soared, cash flowed and business was good. However, in more recent years the community has been stung by an economic downturn due to factors such as drought, a shift in young workers from farming to mining, low commodity prices and water cut-backs. But there is one thing that a town such as Wee Waa never loses and that is its fantastic community spirit and positive outlook. When the internationally acclaimed act Daft Punk, a French duo specialising in electronica, chose Wee Waa for their international launch, no-one was really sure what to expect. While there is no doubt that many people are still trying to figure it out, the eccentric duo went looking for the most random place they could find to reflect the theme and title of the album *Random Access Memories*—and so Wee Waa was chosen.

For the community, the prospect of holding an international event at their annual agricultural show created a logistical headache. For a town in which the automatic teller machines are known to run dry after a weekend, the idea of catering for an influx of thousands of Daft Punk fans from around the world was a daunting prospect. However, the decision proved to be a stroke of marketing genius. While the music world scratched its head in confusion, Wee Waa and Daft Punk were on the front pages of news outlets around the world. Wee Waa became an international tourist hot spot. The 4,000 tickets to the show sold out in 26 minutes and were sold as far afield as Paris and New York. Music fans took to the internet to find out more about this curious place called Wee Waa. Leaving from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, ticketholders organised car convoys to drive to the show.

The Wee Waa community got busy organising a welcoming party for the tourists as well as the organisation of the Wee Waa Show—a huge job in itself. Despite most locals never having heard of Daft Punk, the town immediately got into the thick of things. The main street went into Daft Punk overdrive, with the local butcher selling Daft pork sausages and the local baker producing Punk pies. The quirky duo's signature robot

helmets adorned local shop windows. Prior to the event, Sony held a clock tower rally featuring 1,000 robot helmet wearing locals. Promotional videos featuring locals welcoming the group to Wee Waa received hundreds of thousands of hits on YouTube.

Despite rumours of the group making a last-minute appearance at the launch proving to be false, the event was an incredible success. If one scans music blogs online, one sees it is obvious that Daft Punk fans were thrilled with the opportunity to get out of the city, to see some of our countryside and to experience something they consider surreal. The fans raved about the road trip, the friendliness of the locals—many of whom opened their homes to fans—the space, the stars, the bonfire after party and all the things those of us who live in regional New South Wales take for granted. Many of the visitors enjoyed the experience so much that they expressed a desire to return to see more of regional New South Wales. Our country communities are amongst the most gracious hosts in the world and, judging from the online reports of fans, the opportunity to get out of the city and to have a new musical experience was welcomed. I congratulate Sony Music and Daft Punk on this initiative.

I also congratulate the Wee Waa community on facilitating this fantastic event. The Narrabri Shire Council and its hometown hero, Mayor Conrad Bolton—a closet Daft Punk fan—are to be commended for seamlessly organising the logistics of this large event. I say to the people of Wee Waa: You put on a wonderful show and it seems your great community spirit may have resonated with visitors even more than Daft Punk's new album. I note that the Minister for the North Coast is in the Chamber, and perhaps Wee Waa should be challenging Byron Bay on running events. Instead of hosting events on the North Coast, perhaps some could be held a little further inland.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.31 p.m.]: I commend the member for Barwon for drawing the attention of the House to the visit to Wee Waa by Daft Punk. When we heard that Wee Waa was going to host the Daft Punk concert, many of us felt it to be an unusual decision. However, the member has shown us that the decision was a good one. I commend those mentioned by the member for Barwon who were involved in making the concert a success. Each year the community of Byron Bay hosts a number of music festivals. A popular festival is the Byron Bay Bluesfest, with 25,000 people attending each day. Wee Waa has had a huge success with the Daft Punk concert and both Byron Bay and Wee Waa look forward to continuing to host great musical events in the future.

### **BANKSTOWN FIRE STATION**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [12.32 p.m.]: Last week I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the \$1.4-million upgrade of the Bankstown fire station. The upgrade provides Bankstown Fire and Rescue officers with more modern and spacious facilities. The facilities now include additional training rooms, fitness rooms, new amenities and a double fire engine bay. The refurbishment has been welcomed by the 24 officers stationed at Bankstown. It was an initiative of the Labor Government, with the tender being announced just prior to the March 2011 election. I acknowledge Commissioner Greg Mullins, Deputy Commissioner Jim Smith, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Rosemary Milkins, Assistant Commissioner Jim Hamilton, and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher. They presided over the upgrade and helped coordinate the official proceedings for the opening.

Bankstown fire station's historical roots date back to 1913, when the council first inquired about the feasibility of establishing a fire brigade in Bankstown. However, it was not until 1916 that the first temporary station became operational. The station was fitted with a horsedrawn carriage and equipment for emergency calls, including a hand pump, a 1,000-foot harness, four scaling ladders, two chemical extinguishers and a telephone. At that time the station was attended only by a captain and five firefighters who were on partial pay. In 1917 the fire brigade board purchased pre-existing premises and adapted them for its use as a fire station, and the Bankstown fire station is still at the same location. In 1972 the fire brigade board erected a new fire station on the existing site, completed in 1975. The recent refurbishment has modernised the 1975 facilities and has furnished Fire and Rescue officers with up-to-date resources.

Over the years the Bankstown fire brigade has been instrumental in protecting both Bankstown and the broader region. It is fitting that the facilities provide a more comfortable workplace for officers. It is important to recognise that Fire and Rescue officers often face confronting situations from house fires and apartment fires, to chemical spills and motor accidents. In Bankstown last year a fire resulted in the tragic death of a young woman. The resolve of our Fire and Rescue officers is tested daily. In the last financial year Bankstown fire brigade responded to 2,114 fire and emergency incidents.

Officers also attended 541 community safety education programs. Safety education is a significant component of the Fire and Rescue officers' work. This work is done primarily through school programs. Fire and Rescue officers attend preschools and present the Pre ED program, which teaches and demonstrates important fire safety messages such as "Get Down Low and Go, Go, Go" and "Stop, Drop, Cover and Roll". For primary school students, Bankstown Fire and Rescue officers teach a Fire ED program, which delivers a more advanced message. The program teaches students about behaviour and survival skills in case of a fire. The Fire and Rescue officers at Bankstown fire brigade also present the Rescue ED program to local high schools. This program teaches students about the consequences of dangerous driving by providing visuals of a range of crash scenes and case study examples.

The Bankstown fire brigade has also been instrumental in helping to coordinate an annual Bankstown Community Safety Expo and is a formal member of the Bankstown Community Safety Committee. I acknowledge the hard work and tireless efforts of the Bankstown fire brigade, in particular Zone Commander Greg O'Connor; and inspectors Kevin Baxter, Phil Tucker, Tim Fox and Mick Wren; as well as station officers Adrian Fisher, Brian Dorrington, John Paul and David Cross. These senior officers and their teams do an outstanding job in serving the broader Bankstown community. Fires have a challenging job. The courage, tenacity and spirit of the Fire and Rescue officers, both in Bankstown and across our State, are exemplary and I commend them for their heroic efforts and their bravery.

### **TAREE TAFE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [12.37 p.m.]: In April last I had the pleasure of attending the annual Taree TAFE Awards of Excellence. Taree TAFE College has a strong tradition of education in the Manning Valley. A purpose-built nurse education and training facility will soon be built there. Rhonda Edling did a wonderful job as the Master of Ceremonies. There were addresses from Elizabeth McGregor, the Institute Director of TAFE NSW North Coast, and David Rogers, Leader of TAFE Services, Taree. David is well-known on the mid North Coast as being a great rugby man, and nowadays he serves as a referee.

Many community awards were presented at the ceremony. Juanita Vernon received the Masons award; Yvonne Witschge received the award for outstanding contribution to the community; Ean Buckland was awarded Lanai's Memorial Award of Retail Excellence; and the Greater Taree City Council Aboriginal TAFE Student Award went to Eden Davis. The two TAFE-delivered vocational education and training [TVET] students of the year were Kayla Edwards, Year 12, and Tyler Hughes, Year 11. Bradley Benbow, Certificate III in Outdoor Power Equipment, was the TAFE NSW statewide winner of the Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers Award and Christopher Moriz, Certificate III in Automotive Medical Technology, won the Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers Award of Excellence.

In horticulture, Rajvinder Kaur was awarded International Student of the Year for Certificate III in Horticulture. In agriculture, Cassandra Brewer received the Andy Thomson Award of Excellence for Certificate III in Agriculture; Brittany Hetherington received the Award of Excellence. In information technology, Saowarose Phattanathong received the Award of Excellence for Diploma in Information Technology (Networking). Kaleib Fitzsimmons received the Award of Excellence for Certificate IV in Digital Media and Technology. Phillip Battishall received the Award of Excellence for Certificate III in Information, Digital Media and Technology. Des Clarke and Ba Thanh Nguyen received the Award of Excellence for Certificate II in Information, Digital Media and Technology. In engineering, Kieth Haywood received the Award of Excellence for Certificate III in Engineering—Fabrication Trade. Matthew Talbot received the Award of Excellence for Certificate III in Engineering—Mechanical Trade. Thomas Searl received the TVET Achievement Award for Certificate II in Engineering.

In community services, Kim Bird, Susan Bryan and Tuihana Carter received the Award of Excellence for Diploma of Children Services. Amanda Buchanan received the Award of Excellence for Certificate III in Children's Services. Justin Davis and Kelly McGregor received the Award of Excellence in Clinical Placement for Diploma of Nursing. Deborah Ward received the Award of Excellence for Certificate IV in Aged Care. In business administration, Aine Beard achieved first place for Diploma of Business Administration. Alicia Wilkinson achieved first place for Certificate IV in Business Administration. Bronwyn Chaplin achieved first place for Certificate IV in Legal Services. Alexa Toohey achieved first place for Certificate III in Business Administration. Brittany Cooling achieved first place for Certificate III in Business Administration (Medical). Kathryn Kennedy achieved first place for Certificate III in Business Administration (Legal). Lesley Crump achieved first place for Certificate II in Business. Bethany Murphy and Ndabezinhle Nyathi achieved first place



for Certificate IV in Accounting. Holly Pilotto achieved first place for Certificate III in Financial Services. Joanne Cooper and Robert Locke achieved first place for Advanced Diploma of Management. Marilyn Cutting achieved first place for Diploma of Management.

Carolyn Milligan achieved first place for Diploma of Business. Narelle Riley achieved first place for Certificate IV in Business. Leni Alexander and Anne Harvard achieved first place for Diploma of Human Resources Management. Rebecca Jones and Darren Wilson achieved first place for Certificate IV in Human Resources. Louise Brown achieved first place for Certificate IV in Marketing. Benjamin Grace and Trent Nelson achieved first place for Diploma of Project Management. Kylie Gleeson and Rodney Oberg achieved first place for Certificate IV in Project Management. Michael Mephram achieved first place for Certificate IV in Frontline Management. Nqobile Khumalo received the Award of Excellence for Certificate IV in Frontline Management. Tracey Kendall achieved first place for Certificate III in Retail. Trudy-Ann Hatton achieved first place for Certificate II in Retail. It was a wonderful night and a great honour to acknowledge the achievements of these students who received the highest awards. These students can now use their qualifications in the community. I congratulate them all.

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [12.42 p.m.]: As the Minister for The North Coast, I commend all those Taree TAFE students for their awards of excellence and join the member for Myall Lakes in congratulating them. This country has a skills shortage across a range of industries. It is heartening to hear that students, young and old, are increasing their skills to gain meaningful employment to assist themselves and the economy.

### CUSTODY NOTIFICATION SERVICE

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [12.42 p.m.]: Today I address an issue of great importance and urgency. It is an issue that strikes at the heart of our commitment as policymakers. On the 30 June 2013 a crucial, life-saving service will be discontinued because governments in this country cannot be shaken into action. I am speaking of the Custody Notification Service [CNS], which is a 24-hour legal advice and RU OK? phone line for Aboriginal people taken into police custody, operated by the Aboriginal Legal Service [ALS]. This vital service will end in a matter of weeks unless funding is found urgently. I note that the Attorney General is present for this statement.

In June 2012 the New South Wales Government informed the Aboriginal Legal Service that it will not fund the 24-hour phone line, even though an Aboriginal person's access to legal advice through the Aboriginal Legal Service was written into New South Wales legislation. Under New South Wales law, the police must contact the Aboriginal Legal Service every time an Aboriginal person is detained in a New South Wales police station. The Aboriginal person is given the opportunity to talk to a qualified Aboriginal Legal Service lawyer and is advised of his or her rights in custody, as well as his or her legal situation. The lawyer can talk to police on behalf of the detained person, contact family and friends, and ascertain whether the detained person is okay. The Custody Notification Service was created as a result of a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody to ensure that the rights and welfare of Aboriginal people in custody are maintained.

The Custody Notification Service operates in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. It receives an average of 300 calls per week and provides more than 15,000 instances of legal advice and health and welfare checks to vulnerable Aboriginal men, women and children every year. Phil Naden, Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service, said that threats of self-harm or suicide are common. Aboriginal Legal Service lawyers are skilled at assessing and acting upon threats of self-harm and suicide and they notify the police, where appropriate, to ensure the safety of the person in custody. One Custody Notification Service lawyer has said that someone in detention threatens suicide at least once a week. With rates of Aboriginal incarceration already deplorably high, we simply cannot afford to let this service cease. Mr Naden noted:

Without the phone line, it is very likely Aboriginal over-representation will increase.

Two decades after the landmark Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody most of the 339 recommendations for reform still have not been implemented. The Australian Institute of Criminology report noted that a recent major review of deaths in custody found that a spike in the number of Indigenous deaths in Australia is in line with almost a doubling of the number of Aboriginal people being locked up. Since the Custody Notification Service began operating in 2000, I am proud to say, there has not been a single death in custody.

This service is a rare example of the positive and effective reform that resulted from the royal commission. Starting from 1 July 2013, the Custody Notification Service needs an annual funding commitment of \$500,000 for three to five years to continue its crucial lifeline service. The annual cost of this basic and invaluable service is equal to holding a few young people in detention for one year. This Government found \$300 million in tax breaks for the poker machine industry, \$19 million to allow hunting in national parks—and chooses to support big developers by way of tax gifts, incentives and exemptions—but it cannot find \$500,000 for this service.

**Mr Greg Smith:** Are you going to condemn the Feds for abolishing it?

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** I acknowledge the interjection from the Minister. I do condemn the Federal Government for abolishing it, but I understand its argument. As a result of the deaths in custody report, it is written into New South Wales legislation that the New South Wales Government is required to provide this service. My argument is that there is a disagreement over funding. I hope that the New South Wales Government can work with the Federal Government or, alternatively, will seek to fund the service. Under the current system there is no funding for the Custody Notification Service. It is important to recognise the injustices in our legal system that have been visited upon Aboriginal people over many generations, including the stolen generation, the unforgiveable and continuing gap in health, education and social outcomes of our Indigenous population, and the disproportionate rate of incarceration. We need to resolve the issue and secure funding support.

I implore Premier O'Farrell and the Attorney General to recognise the requirement of this service as it was legislated under a New South Wales Act. I am concerned that the Federal Government has ceased funding, but on an objective analysis the State Government should make a significant contribution. We cannot allow this service to fail. I particularly recognise the 187 staff of the Aboriginal Legal Service who stepped up when the Government failed to do so and took a pay cut so that the service could continue. The inspirational decision of these dedicated administrative, field and legal staff is especially noteworthy given that Aboriginal Legal Service staff wages are already substantially lower than those offered by comparable legal organisations. I call on the Attorney General and Premier O'Farrell to address this issue with urgency.

#### **PARRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL CENTENARY**

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [12:47 p.m.]: I support the Parramatta High School Centenary. Parramatta High School has a distinguished record of student achievement and strong traditions. The school is proudly focused on preparing students as leaders. Established in 1913, this year the school marks 100 years of proud traditions in history and public education. To recognise this significant milestone the school will host a number of special events. On 3 May 2013 the school welcomed Premier O'Farrell to a special assembly in recognition of a New South Wales Government grant of \$10,000 to support its centenary celebrations program. The special assembly was organised by Principal Domonique Splatt. The Premier was welcomed by school captains Pinar Akin and Ali Al Zaidi. Premier O'Farrell was also greeted by Johanne Provins, the Parramatta High School Parents and Citizens President; executive staff; and Parramatta High School Deputy Principals Andrew Gokel and Paul Taylor. School captains Pinar Akin and Ali Al Zaidi were the masters of ceremony for the special assembly. The Parramatta High School string ensemble opened with Pachelbel's Canon in D, which was directed by Ms Carina Dingwell and accompanied by Ms Julie Piper.

The national anthem was played by the Parramatta High School band, directed by Nathan Henshaw. The Parramatta High School stage band performed *Signed, Sealed, Delivered*, with vocals by student Brooke Shaw. Broadsword highland dancing was performed by Ashley Ryan from year 12 and Greer Ryan from year 8, accompanied by Warrant Officer Class 2 Andrew Iverson on bagpipes. The school song was performed by the stage band and the string ensemble, with Ranjeev Kirupairajah and Lianna Pokonia. Principal Splatt outlined how 2013 marks the centenary of Parramatta High School. She stated that the school has an auspicious history and a creditable record. For instance, it hosted the first visit by a Premier of New South Wales and the first visit by a Governor of New South Wales. It was the first co-educational metropolitan high school in New South Wales, with first headmaster Tommy Atkins. Principal Splatt added proudly that she was the first female head of the school. Many notable and successful people—alumni—have graduated from Parramatta High School in its first 100 years.

Principal Splatt recognised in her address some of those who have left their mark, including Gordon Champion, the first Public Defender of New South Wales; Harry Hopman, the first Parramatta High School tennis champion, who went on to become the captain of the Australian Davis Cup team; the McKean sisters—

Heather and Joy—who are the first ladies of Australian country and western music; Richie Benaud, captain of the first undefeated Parramatta High School cricket team and a member of the first undefeated Ashes cricket team, in 1948; Dr Phillip Chapman, Australia's first National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientist and member of the astronaut program; Sir Cyril Ambrose Walsh, High Court Justice, who is acknowledged as the most awarded student at the University of Sydney; Parramatta High School's first and only Olympic representative, David McKenzie, in fencing; and Lilian Whiteoak, the first Dux of Parramatta High School. She later returned as a teacher in 1917 and went on to become headmistress of Fort Street Girls High School.

Following the formal assembly the Premier enjoyed morning tea with Parramatta High School staff and members of the Parramatta High School Parents and Citizens Association, including President Johanne Provins, Katrina Bowles, Jennie Wragg, Lesley Ryan and Linda Bradley. I acknowledge also head teachers Ms Begg, English; Mr Paleologos, mathematics; Mrs Harrison, science; Ms Kougelos, human society and its environment; Mrs Walters, personal development, health and physical education, relieving; Mrs Smith, languages and English as a second language; Mr Ralph, technical and applied studies; Mr Wise, administration; Mrs Bedwany, teaching and learning; and Ms Jones, teaching and learning. Principal Splatt said that the school's motto, "Fax mentis incendium gloriae", was chosen by Tommy Atkins in 1915. The most commonly accepted translation of this motto is, "Knowledge is the pathway to glory". The school has fulfilled this motto throughout its proud history, with many former Parramatta High School students going on to glorious careers and great achievements.

### **OUR LADY OF LEBANON COLLEGE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr TONY ISSA** (Granville) [12.52 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the fortieth anniversary of the opening of Our Lady of Lebanon College and commend the Sisters of the Holy Family for their dedication, commitment and hard work. I acknowledge also the many people who have shared the wonderful journey, both old and young, families and staff—and, in particular my wife, Sue, who was one of the first students at the school. The school has many cherished memories from its 40-year history. The Sisters of the Holy Family laid the foundation of the primary school on 31 January 1973. When the school opened its doors 115 students were taught under the building of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Harris Park—as I said, my wife, Sue, was one of those students. Just five years later the pioneering sisters acquired two housing blocks to accommodate the primary school and the convent. Construction was completed in 1982, with the official opening held on 26 June 1982.

In 1980 the sisters lodged an application to establish a secondary department, which was officially opened in 1986. Our Lady of Lebanon School, which would become Our Lady of Lebanon College, was unique for many reasons. From its humble beginnings in 1973, with 115 students being taught in leaking buildings under the church, it has grown to be a major high school, with around 1,200 students from kindergarten to year 12 and six modern building blocks. The college's motto is "To know, love and serve", and it has followed these principles through the tireless work, commitment, dedication and support of the Maronite community.

In 1960 the Maronite community requested Monsignor Peter Ziade for the school, and without this request the Sisters of the Holy Family would never have landed on Australian shores. I am honoured today to acknowledge the college. The college is more than an educational institution; it is a cultural way of life, a spiritual wellspring, a tightknit community and a very loving family. I thank the sisters, although there are too many to name. However, I mention Sister Juliette Ghorayed and Sister Constance Bacha for laying the foundation and Sister Madeline de la Croix and other principals who have followed—Sister Constance Bacha, Sister Irene Bou Ghoson, and Sister Marlene Chedid, the current principal. I thank also the many people who have been part of the Our Lady of Lebanon College community.

I was honoured to attend as a guest the fortieth anniversary of the opening of Our Lady of Lebanon College on Wednesday 22 May 2013 together with Dr Geoff Lee, the member for Parramatta. I thank the sisters for always including me in the special events that take place at the school. I have always been honoured to be a part of them. Indeed, I attend the yearly mass of the year 12 students with the new school captains of both the primary school and the high school. The college is part of the community, and I am pleased today to acknowledge its fortieth anniversary and the contributions of both the Sisters of the Holy Family and Our Lady of Lebanon College.

### **NATIONAL CUTTING HORSE ASSOCIATION FUTURITY**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [12.57 p.m.]: Today I inform my colleagues, the New South Wales Parliament and the State generally about a fantastic equine event that is about to kick off in Tamworth.

Starting tomorrow, 29 May, and continuing until 9 June at the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre in Tamworth, the 2013 National Cutting Horse Association Futurity will celebrate a fabulous 40 years. This iconic cutting event is steeped in Australian history and tradition, both of which have been preserved while the event has grown to be the largest indoor equine event in the Southern Hemisphere. The event will no doubt generate thousands of visitors to Tamworth and inject millions of dollars into the local economy. The futurity is a National Cutting Horse Association event for three-year-old horses that have never been shown working with cattle in a competitive environment. They have spent the past 18 months training for their debut in the show arena, which has created great excitement and anticipation.

Cutting involves a horse and rider extracting one cow from a particular herd and keeping that cow away from the herd to show the judges that they are in control. When that is done the horse and rider then release the cow and pick another from the herd—all within 2½ minutes. It is an action-packed program that will see some of the best horsemen and horses from throughout Australia and the world flock to Tamworth to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the National Cutting Horse Association Futurity. The Australian Equine and Livestock Event Centre is world class and holds its own on the world stage. This spectacular \$38 million venue sits on a 22 hectare site on the New England Highway at the southern end of Tamworth. It is an iconic landmark that includes a superior stadium on two levels and a theatre-style selling ring that encapsulates excitement and keeps crowds close to the action. One part of the action that people are looking forward to watching is the celebrity cutting event, which will take place on Friday 7 June.

Six celebrities will participate in the event including Colin Friels, the Australian actor; James Blundell, the Australian country music legend and a great singer; Emm Hall, an announcer from FM 92.9; Sophie Clapburn, from the Sunny Cowgirls, who seriously rock and who do country music proud; Ian Hindmarsh, the rugby league great; and yours truly. We have had a bit of training and I am privileged to advise the House that I will be riding BJ from the movie *Australia*, which starred Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. I am sure members remember the famous scene in which BJ galloped down the wharf. BJ is owned by Roger Grant and lives in Tamworth. I have had a few practice rides, expertly guided by Frank Green, who trained BJ, and Phil Elliott from Koobah Performance Horses. I am certainly looking forward to the event.

I congratulate Glenn Morgan, executive officer of the National Cutting Horse Association, for taking this event to the next level. It is an iconic event and we are looking forward to welcoming the thousands of visitors, not only to watch the celebrity event but also to browse the trade stores and to see the great John Farnham, who is well and truly entrenched in the association family. I wish everybody involved in the event the very best. I am certainly looking forward to it. I congratulate Tamworth on once again showcasing our city as the equine capital of Australia.

#### **CAMDEN ELECTORATE SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [1.02 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the student leaders from my local high schools who last Thursday visited our Parliament to participate in a leadership forum. The students have been elected as leaders of their schools and are the future of our community. I hope that their experience on the day will help them to grow in their role as leaders. They are a glowing example of their schools and they have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to their school community. I am sure their schools, families and the wider community are very proud of them.

Becoming a leader is about character and displaying the self-discipline necessary to be the best you can and always aiming to lead by example. These school leaders are experiencing their first leadership roles through their education, which is about learning and teaching—and they go hand in hand. Without a teacher who is passionate about his or her students and who leads those students no-one learns. Teachers are leaders in the classroom and their students learn from their leadership and encouragement. The teachers who encouraged these young adults to come to the Parliament showed them that leadership is also about representation. The students who visited were great examples of that for their respective schools. It was wonderful to give them the opportunity to observe the workings of this House and be able to form their own opinions and, hopefully, to take that experience into the next phase of their life.

I am sure most of us here today would never have thought as young adults that we would become a member of Parliament and a community leader. To be elected to this House is truly a privilege. I do not take it for granted, and each and every day I relish the opportunity to be a leader in my community and to represent it in this House. I hope the visit gave the students an insight into a career path they may not have considered. Their experience is similar to ours in that they have been elected by their peers and school staff to be leaders of and to

represent their school. They attend official functions on behalf of their school community and take part in many activities within the school while providing leadership. They are setting an example to younger students and encouraging them to become leaders in the final years of their education.

I acknowledge the schools whose students visited Parliament and thank them for giving those students the opportunity to sample a little of their Parliament: Macarthur Anglican School, Camden High School, Broughton Anglican College, Elderslie High School, Mount Annan High School, Magdalene Catholic High School, Eagle Vale High School, and St Gregory's College. Of course, the visit would not have been the success it was without the students themselves. I thank them for their interest and extremely positive contribution on the day: Tynan Williams, Katherine Harris, Kian Parkes, Alec Bush, Sophie Pastor, Frances Martin, Lachlan Young, Tennille Vitagliano, Isabella Wisniewska, Adam Antonelli, Olivia Fryer, Matthew Thorn, Scott Cislowski, Kendal Shallcross, Louie Bendtsen, Jessica Grech, Jason Rasdall, Robbie Mouhajer, Edward Thomas and Thomas Bent.

The student leaders were given a rare opportunity to speak with Government leaders, who engaged them in candid discussions and allowed them to ask questions openly. I acknowledge and thank the Speaker, Minister Roberts, Minister Berejiklian, Minister Annesley, Minister Dominello and Minister Piccoli for the time they spent with the students. I was highly impressed with the number and content of the questions the students asked the Ministers and me. I also thank the member for Londonderry for kindly allowing the students to take in the twelfth floor view from his office as we took a behind-the-scenes tour of Parliament.

I trust these students have taken away with them an experience that will add a little to their education. Learning and leadership are two of many aspects of our lives. We must use our experiences to build our character, and I am sure that the student leaders with whom I had the pleasure of sharing my experience will use the day to do just that. The students were true ambassadors for their schools and the wider Camden community. They are of the highest calibre. It was a privilege to get to know those young people from my electorate who are our next generation of leaders. I cannot speak highly enough of them. Like their schools, their families and the Camden community, I am extremely proud of them.

#### **OATLEY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**Mr MARK COURE** (Oatley) [1.07 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a couple of community events that have occurred over the past week or two. The first is the thirteenth Mortdale Community Services Fair, which was held last weekend and which raised \$8,000. The fair featured 56 stalls and attracted thousands of people from the local area. Mortdale Community Services, a wonderful organisation, has been operating since 1971 and assists the aged, families, mental health services and the general community. On Sunday I had the privilege of being the area coordinator for the Red Shield Appeal for the second year. So far we have raised a little more than \$17,000. I congratulate the members of Lugarno Lions Club for their help with the barbeque and Penshurst West Public School for allowing us to use the school hall as a counting house. I thank the students who helped and the school principal for allowing us to use the school hall.

I thank Mortdale Community Services for volunteering to assist with the collection on the Sunday and I also thank the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] for providing 20 people to help. As I mentioned, we collected almost \$20,000, and hopefully by Friday, once the collection is finished and it is all tallied up, we will have reached that figure. I thank each and every one of the more than 130 school students who were involved, along with parents, friends, neighbours—the entire community. To raise almost \$20,000 this year was certainly a great outcome. Other community events I attended over the past two weeks included Australia's Biggest Morning Tea events organised by the Chinese Australian Services Society and the Pole Depot Community Centre. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea and I was fortunate to attend events organised by both those organisations. Almost 100 people attended each event and a lot of money was raised as a result.

As chair of the New South Wales Parliamentary Diabetes Committee, on 23 April this year I held a diabetes forum at Mortdale RSL in conjunction with the Australian Diabetes Council. The forum was attended by members of the public and representatives from community organisations. Attendees included those wanting to simply know more, those already diagnosed with diabetes, and carers, including aged care facility staff. It was a pleasure to see so many people throughout my electorate come together to take an interest in their health. If even one person's health was improved as a result of the forum it was certainly a successful event.

The Australian Diabetes Council supplied several health care professionals to discuss issues such as healthy eating, food labels and a new policy regarding diabetes and driving. The forum is part of an ongoing

program of education, reform and diabetes screening sessions that the Australian Diabetes Council holds to help the community manage and even prevent the onset of diabetes. I note that last year the member for Campbelltown also held a diabetes forum in his electorate. These are just some of the many community events that I had the privilege of attending as the local member.

### **LANE COVE CITIZENSHIP AWARDS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [1.11 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge several outstanding members of my local community of Lane Cove. On 15 May this year Lane Cove Council presented the annual Lane Cove Citizenship Awards, which recognise the contributions to the wider community made by people in the municipality. Award winners were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, yet all of them provided a unique contribution to the Lane Cove community. These efforts ranged from increasing community awareness about local issues to helping establish new facilities for seniors.

I first recognise the achievements of Mr Ted Donnelly, AM. Mr Donnelly was presented with the Lane Cove Citizen of the Year award for his work in founding the Lane Cove Men's Shed and in recognition of his work as president of the Australian Men's Shed Association. Men's sheds provide much to the local community. They are far more than just a place for men to develop their woodworking and carpentry skills; they help create a sense of community and they provide an outlet for members to socialise and develop their trades, cooking and computer skills. Members help other worthy community groups by constructing items that are supplied to local organisations, such as toys for day care centres or furniture for refugees. In the majority of instances they do this free of charge.

The key goals of the Australian Men's Shed Association include the promotion of men's health programs, encouraging social inclusion of men within their local communities and highlighting the benefit of meaningful activities for males within their communities. These are admirable goals and a reflection of the principles inherent in Ted Donnelly. It is because of these principles, as well as his dedication to helping others through the Australian Men's Shed Association, that Ted Donnelly is such a worthy recipient of the Lane Cove Citizen of the Year award. Many other residents received recognition for their service on the night of the awards. The winner of the Outstanding Business of the Year award was Moir's Bookshop, a local business that has been selling books for more than 26 years. As the Attorney General and I can testify, it is a great bookshop from which we have purchased many books in our time.

The award comes as Ian and Rosemary Moir end a chapter of their life: they decided to sell the shop and enjoy retired life. I thank Ian and Rosemary for their tremendous contribution to the Lane Cove community over the years, and I hope that retirement provides them with plenty of reading time. Sally and Jack Ford were presented with a leadership award for their work in organising the Greenwich Village Games. The Greenwich Village Games have been held once every four years since 1988, with the day providing members of the Greenwich community with an opportunity to come together and participate in a number of events ranging from a caber toss to a treasure hunt. The Greenwich Village Games provides activities for almost everyone, with people aged six and over invited to participate.

The winner of the Young Achiever award was soprano singer Anna Dowsley. Jackie Brighton, Rose Edwards and Eva Purnell won awards for music, culture and art. Edna Scott and Wenda and Patricia Lucas were given awards for their contributions to community service. Olga Zakrzewska was presented with a citizenship award in the category of access and disability. Michael Noetel and Jack Winning were recognised for their contributions to sport. Kerri Parkinson, Karen Bowen, Susan Butler and Michael Healy were presented with awards in the workplace general and workplace council categories. Corinne Fisher, Kim Loane, Jacqueline Parker, Merri Southwood, Lyndall McNally, and Sally and Jack Ford were recognised with awards for leadership within the community, and Chris Farnsworth was presented with the Outstanding Service and Leadership award. Finally, former Lane Cove councillor Frances Vissel was presented with the Sustainable Citizen award. I heartily congratulate all award winners and thank them for their tremendous contributions to our community in Lane Cove.

### **NSW JUSTICES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [1.15 p.m.]: "Be not afraid, justices of the peace, to act for the public good" was the theme of my keynote speech to the NSW Justices Association annual conference, which was held at Mittagong RSL last Saturday 25 May. I am very pleased that the Attorney General is present in the

House because he was mentioned in dispatches during that august conference. As patron of the Macarthur branch of the NSW Justices Association I was proud and honoured to be the keynote speaker for the annual conference.

I spoke of the importance of relationships and of improving relationships. I noted how the current board had worked with our Attorney General—a great man representing the law—and with Chris Banks of the Community Relations Unit of the Attorney General's Department in improving relationships with the Justices Association. The association is working towards improving the competency and training levels of our justices of the peace. I spoke of the importance of local branches and of justices of the peace engaging with their local members of Parliament. I informed the conference that I personally interview all local justices of the peace applicants because I am firmly of the view that justices of the peace are people of standing in the community and should have at least met their local member on one occasion.

I also spoke with the justices of the peace about our shared migrant history. I asked attendees at the conference: Who here has a migrant history in their family tree? About a third of the justices of the peace put up their hands. I told them that all of them have a migrant history in their family. They were surprised when I asked how many of them spoke a second language; a third of them put up their hands. One of the challenges that I presented to the Justices Association members was to use their skills to outreach to non-English speaking communities, which need access to justice of the peace services. The conference was an outstanding success. More than 130 delegates attended the conference—it was booked out—and they included representatives from the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia.

The master of ceremonies was Paul Phillips, JP, from the Southern Highlands branch of the Justices Association. A wonderful welcome to country was given by Aunty Val Mulcahy. The conference delegates were formally welcomed by John Reid, JP, President of the Southern Highlands branch of the Justices Association. The official opening for the conference was given by my good friend and long-term Campbelltown resident Paul Mannix, JP, who is the State President. The welcome to the Southern Highlands was given by Mayor Julie Arkwright from Wingecarribee Shire Council. We were also honoured by the presence of the member for Goulburn, the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women, who spoke of the gratitude of the community for the work of our volunteer justices of the peace.

One of the keynotes of the conference was the online training package I spoke of earlier, which has been developed through the support of the Attorney General, the Community Relations Unit and the NSW Justices Association. This online training is innovative and is aimed at improving the competency of justices of the peace. It provides multiple-choice questions as a testing base for confidence. Trainees have to answer questions and then they have to indicate how confident they are about that answer: whether they are very confident, sort of confident, not really confident or just stabbing in the dark. If the answer is wrong a penalty applies; and if the answer is wrong but the person is certain it is right an extra penalty applies. That enables the assessor to comprehend the level of understanding of the applicant.

The training is prepared by Roger Anderson, JP, Peter Enderby, JP, and Terry Wardle, JP. Presentations were given at the conference by the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC] on fraud and the NSW Trustee and Guardian. Justices of the peace provide a voluntary service and this ancient and honourable office serves the people of New South Wales well. I am proud to be associated with the New South Wales Justices Association and to be patron of its Macarthur branch. I commend the New South Wales Justices Association to the House.

#### **MCAULEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROSE BAY WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.20 p.m.]: On Friday 24 May I had the pleasure of participating in the national Walk Safely to School Day with McAuley Primary School, Rose Bay, which is in my electorate of Vaucluse. The Sisters of Mercy established McAuley Primary School in 1967. It is a parish primary school, co-educational from kindergarten to year 6. The school is closely linked to the parish of St Mary Magdalene, Rose Bay, which is located near the school. While the school has been administered by lay principals since 1980, it maintains a close association with the Sisters of Mercy through its motto, Seek the Truth, and by encouraging the culture and values of the Sisters of Mercy order: compassion, justice, service and excellence. The school song, called *Seek the Truth*, goes along these lines:

*Seek the truth, in everything you do.  
Walk with God, as students who are true  
McAuley grown, on a shoreline by the sea.  
Seek the truth, be whatever you want to be.*

The morning of Walk Safely to School Day had sunny skies. This was quite remarkable because the night before and the early morning had brought heavy showers. The break in the rainy weather gave the many students and their families the opportunity to walk all or part of the way to school from the surrounding areas of Rose Bay, Vacluse, Watson Bay and Dover Heights. My daughter also walked to her local school that morning and as she left our home early that morning she was very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in a special activity before school.

On this beautiful morning last Friday at McAuley I was joined by Principal Geraldine Guilhaus and Deputy Principal Patricia Raynsford. I was given a tour of the school ahead of the children's arrival. I saw the original buildings, which had cleverly been converted into main offices, and the library and classroom that had recently been upgraded. I shared with them that I, too, often walk to and from my place of work, Parliament House, on sitting days. I don my backpack and head west from home on a 45 minute walk up and down the several hills that punctuate the journey. The walk is an easier one coming home. I love these walks because I am exercising whilst also able to do some thinking and take in the beautiful city and suburb in which I live.

As the McAuley students arrived at school the year 6 students and school captain Joseph Bradshaw presented them with a special sticker to wear as a badge on their uniform to show that they had walked to school. The children loved this memento and proudly displayed the stickers on their shirts and dresses. It was a special treat for the final day of the week. Walk Safely to School Day, now in its fourteenth year, aims to promote road safety, better health and greater use of public transport. Walk Safely to School Day aims to change car dependency habits and help reduce hazardous traffic congestion in and around schools, creating a safer environment for children entering and leaving school. It also helps benefit the environment through a reduction in air pollution created by motor vehicles.

Walk Safely to School Day also encourages parents and carers to walk to school with their primary school children. This can be a special treat for parents and children alike. It helps reinforce safe pedestrian behaviour and develop vital road skills through children having safe traffic practices modelled for them by the adults who accompany them to school. It ensures children up to 10 years of age hold onto an adult's hand when they cross the road and teaches them to stop, look, listen and think every time they cross the road. Walk Safely to School Day encourages children to lead healthier, more active lives by including a walk before or after school. We know that walking is one of the best forms of exercise. It is also a low-impact exercise. This community event teaches children that positive lifestyle habits can be formed from a young age.

Today more than 25 per cent of our children are overweight or obese, and this figure is expected to increase to over 33 per cent in the next decade unless children become more physically active. This year Walk Safely to School Day introduced the Walk Safely to School app. This free app allows children and their parents to track the kilometres travelled to and from school, the time spent walking and the average walking speed. It also allows participating schools to create their own leader boards, on which children can challenge their classmates or classes challenge each other. I commend McAuley Principal Mrs Guilhaus, the parents and children and the whole school community for participating in the 2013 Walk Safely to School Day. I also thank them for welcoming me so warmly into their school on a busy day and I look forward to keeping in contact with them in the future. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

#### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY** (Riverstone) [1.25 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House a number of local groups that were successful in receiving funding under the Community Building Partnership Program for 2012-13. Nine local projects in the electorate of Riverstone received funding totalling \$200,000 to assist in their good work in the local area. The successful groups included the Australian Sikh Association, which received a grant of \$45,000 to refurbish the Guru Nanak Punjabi School in Glenwood. I was pleased to join the Treasurer, the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, to make this announcement. The school has more than 300 students who attend on the weekend to learn the Punjabi language, making it the largest Punjabi language school in Australia. On 1 June a launch of the project of the refurbishment works made possible by the grant will take place.

The YMCA of Sydney, which runs the Hawkesbury Oasis Leisure Centre, received a grant of \$30,000 to install a children's playground in the grounds of the swimming centre at South Windsor. Last month I had the pleasure to welcome the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, the Hon. Victor Dominello, MP, at the oasis leisure centre to inspect the site of the new children's playground. I commend the YMCA as the operator of that centre for its great focus on family by supporting them holistically and providing activities that keep families together. At the centre families can participate in recreation that suits everybody's needs as much as possible.



Blacktown City Council was also a successful applicant and received \$27,500 to provide disability access to the Dean Park Neighbourhood Centre. Windsor Bowling Club received \$12,500 to install lighting to allow night bowls to take place at its venue, increasing the utilisation of its facility and participation by the community more broadly. It is worth noting that the directors of Windsor Bowling Club are all unpaid and volunteer their time to allow this small traditional club to stay alive in an era when otherwise it might not be able to do so. I commend them for their generosity and dedication.

Quakers Hill East Public School received a grant of \$17,500 for the construction of a new sandpit and shade cover to provide infant school students with the chance to participate in productive and useful play. I note that at that school the very active, energetic and entrepreneurial principal Marketa Bird has recently retired after a lifelong dedication to public education in New South Wales. I wish her well in retirement. Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre received \$19,949 for the installation of security fencing and landscaping around the youth centre. The youth centre has had an old barbed wire fence around it, which rather deters and discourages youth from participating in activities at the centre. The fencing needed a revamp from a safety point of view. The new fence will be much more attractive and functional and will encourage youth to use the centre.

Hawkesbury City Council received \$22,500 for the installation of floodlights outside the Oasis Aquatic Centre to provide a greater degree of safety for patrons using that facility at night. Hundreds of thousands of people use that facility over 12 months so it is important, particularly for women accessing the centre at night, that the car park and surrounds are well lit. Hawkesbury Sports Council received \$14,498 for the installation of power- and water-saving devices at McQuade Park Grandstand in Windsor, which will be helpful to all the users of that park, who undertake a variety of activities. Newtown Green Men's Shed located at South Windsor received \$15,553 for its construction.

The slab has been laid and now the group has the wherewithal to build the shed. It has a grand plan to provide a facility for men of the area and to provide a place to mentor young blokes who, perhaps, need a hand to get back on the straight and narrow. It is a great idea and will provide a wonderful service to the local area. These most recent grants under the Community Building Partnership Program delivered more than \$90 million to 1,235 community projects across New South Wales. There was strong competition for the available funds and I am sure when applications are open for the 2013 round there will again be strong competition. I look forward to seeing the benefit to our communities as these projects are undertaken and put to good use for the people in our communities.

*[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.30 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

## **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NORTHERN TABLELANDS**

### **Election of Adam John Marshall**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that my writ issued on 22 April 2013 in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Northern Tablelands in place of George Richard Torbay, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of Adam John Marshall to serve as member for the electoral district of Northern Tablelands.

## **PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

**Mr Adam John Marshall took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.**

## **ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following bills was reported:

Bail Bill 2013

Baptist Churches of New South Wales Property Trust Amendment Bill 2013

Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2013

Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Amendment (Judicial and Other Office Holders) Bill 2013

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I inform the House that due to continuing problems at Sydney airport after this morning's fog, I will answer questions during the absence from the Chamber today of the Minister for Education; and the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Resources and Energy. Hopefully, both Ministers will arrive during question time.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Notices of Motions**

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

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

**QUESTION TIME**

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

**WESTCONNEX MOTORWAY**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that there is still no final route or budget for WestConnex and that both the chair and chief executive officer of Infrastructure NSW have now resigned, will the Treasurer commit to releasing in the June budget how much WestConnex will cost, where it will start, and where it will finish?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is fantastic that the Leader of the Opposition asks a budget question. He knows that in three weeks time there will be a budget. That is a good start. We are very pleased he picked up that point, unlike his efforts over the past couple of years. He is onto it this year. What is interesting about WestConnex is that Opposition members oppose it. They have not identified in any way, shape or form where the funds will come from to put it together. The O'Farrell Government not only has announced the project; it also has confirmed its commitment to WestConnex and identified the funding for it. The \$1.8 billion from the long-term lease of Port Botany and Port Kembla will enable us to get on with the job of building that infrastructure. The big difference between those opposite and us is that we are going to deliver the WestConnex project for the people of western Sydney.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** We didn't lose a billion dollars, that's the difference.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** Your people aren't giving any money to it.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** That is absolutely right. The Minister makes a good point. When parties go to an election they have to put policies to the people. We put policies out there to the community, and I note that in the recent Northern Tablelands by-election there was a resounding endorsement of those policies and there seemed to be a rejection of the policies of those opposite. We heard earlier the wording of a motion that will be accorded priority today refers to a message being sent to this Chamber. I suggest that the message was sent to the members sitting opposite. The Leader of the Opposition clearly articulated policy about which everyone in the Northern Tablelands had the opportunity to deliver a message—and they did. The results of voting at some of the booths for that recent by-election show some interesting trends. At the Glencoe hall booth—and I do not know who on that side went to the Glencoe hall booth—three people voted for Labor.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: One thing about those opposite is that they are so predictable.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the Leader of the Opposition have a point of order?

**Mr John Robertson:** Yes; it relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about WestConnex, not about Northern Tablelands.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The point of order is upheld. The results in Northern Tablelands are a little far from WestConnex.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We have put policies to the people of New South Wales, including the voters in the Northern Tablelands. Among those policies is one relating to funding for WestConnex. Those opposite do not have a policy. There is a clear synergy in these voting results. At the Croppa Creek booth three people voted for Labor; at Ben Lomond Public School three people voted for Labor; and at Kingstown hall there was one vote for Labor.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of The Opposition is going to mention the same breach of the same standing order, and I agree with him, unless the Treasurer can show relevance of the results in Northern Tablelands to WestConnex, and that is a hard call. The Treasurer will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I take the point. I will not mention Mingoola Public School, where Labor got no votes. I will not mention that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Is that relevant to WestConnex?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is. We have a new captain: Captain Mingoola, who received no votes whatsoever. We are going to build the WestConnex project. Whatever those opposite talk about, whatever they do in their own little Disneyland of economic appraisal, we will finally build a project for which people across the State have been waiting for many years. Those opposite may seek to oppose every measure that is put forward to deliver the infrastructure, but we do not care what they do or think; we are interested in looking after the people of western Sydney and New South Wales and implementing responsible, sensible economic policies that will provide funding for infrastructure that members opposite spoke about but never delivered.

#### CEBIT AUSTRALIA 2013 CONFERENCE

**Mr JAI ROWELL:** My question is directed to the Premier. What is the Government doing to secure Sydney as the information and communication technology capital of Australia?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for Wollondilly for his interest in this issue. I start by acknowledging the school leaders, school captains and vice-captains, from schools across the Kiama electorate who are present in the gallery today. This is about their future. The ICT sector is important to the New South Wales economy—163,000 people across the State are employed in ICT. For the benefit of the member for Mount Druitt I advise that ICT abbreviation stands for information communications technology. Too many on that side thought it stood for ignoring country towns. The only interest they showed in country towns was giving mining leases to their mates. This morning I was delighted to open my third CeBIT Australian conference, the twelfth that has occurred. It is the Asia-Pacific arm of the world's largest business technology trade fair, and I was pleased to join the Deputy Premier in announcing that the New South Wales Government will continue to sponsor CeBIT as its major partner for the next three years.

This annual event attracts almost 30,000 attendees over three days—although not the member for Wollongong. To put that number into perspective, it is about the same number of votes that the new member for Northern Tablelands received at Saturday's by-election. It is about seven times as many votes that Country Labor got at that by-election. This is a significant event by whatever measure—30,000 people from 45 different countries. It showcases Sydney as the national information communications technology capital, and the event alone injects something like \$30 million into our local economy. CeBIT is a magnet to attract the best technological talent to this city, and in keeping the event here we are helping to maintain our reputation as a leading Asia-Pacific hub for technology, productivity and innovation.

This year's CeBIT is particularly showcasing local technology start-ups. When I think of start-ups I think of those opposite, because the Leader of the Opposition claimed that Northern Tablelands was going to be a start-up for Labor's resurgence. As a couple of members opposite were telling me earlier, the only thing that started up is leadership speculation again. As a university city, Armidale understands the importance of technology on show at CeBIT over the next three days, just as farmers in the north-west understand how we can assist in increasing productivity across the agricultural sector. Speaking of that region, I noted the omission of two people from the Northern Tablelands campaign—the members for Toongabbie and Maroubra.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I am happy to take that bait under Standing Order 129. Madam Speaker, in the same way that you successfully had the Treasurer return to the question, can you get the Premier to return to answering the question asked of him?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will make that decision; the member for Maroubra does not need to argue his point. Until now the Premier has been successful in relating his answer to the question he was asked and in being relevant. The Premier has the call. There is no point of order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** However, those two members have not been missing in action—just today blaming the disastrous result on the Leader of the Opposition. The New South Wales Government is proud to continue as a principal partner to CeBIT. As I say, Sydney is Australia's information communications technology hub, and the Government wants to ensure it remains a place for growth and innovation to give our visitors in the gallery every opportunity for the future. Many of us here use the internet. Many of us are engaged in social media to keep our communities, our supporters, our families and friends up to date with our activities and the significant events in our lives.

All those things are being discussed at CeBIT. I use social media and I know the members for Wollondilly, Hornsby and Kiama do also. I am sure that the new member for Northern Tablelands is a user of social media, as would be some of those opposite—although the member for Mount Drutt had to be told that he cannot tweet using a garage door opener. And no-one is sure that he has a garage door opener. Even the Leader of the Opposition has a website detailing his activities and his pronouncements—the things he does, his major life events. But, it was pointed out to me—and I will not say by whom, Nathan—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Up until now the Premier has been miraculously relevant to the question he was asked.

**Mr Michael Daley:** That is not the test, Madam Speaker. The test is what he is doing now, not what he was doing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I said up until now. There is no point of order. [*Extension of time granted.*]

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** All I was saying is that the Leader of The Opposition, like many members of this House, makes use of social media, the internet and all those things, that are being showcased for the next three days at CeBIT.

**Mr Richard Amery:** At least it explains why he does not have any tweets.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I will explain it to you afterwards, Richard. But it was pointed out to me by someone opposite that there is a glaring omission on the website of the Leader of the Opposition. Does anyone want to guess? There is not a mention of a press release in relation to what happened on Saturday in Northern Tablelands. There is no doubt that Saturday demonstrated that Labor needed a reboot. Nathan is hoping they look in the recycling bin. Ron is hoping they bring back the Commodore 64. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition is helping Apple with its latest app—ifail. CeBIT is a great showcase of technology across the city. It is a great opportunity for those opposite—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has returned to CeBIT.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has returned to the leave of the question.

**Ms Linda Burney:** You think he has returned to the question?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Is the member for Canterbury canvassing my ruling? As I have already said, the Premier has returned to the leave of the question.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** All I want to know from the member for Canterbury is whether it is true that she was at the Mingoola booth where Labor got no votes. That would sum it up.

### NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is to the Treasurer. Given that the public is still waiting for final costings on the North West Rail Link and that the Government's two infrastructure heads, who were banned from assessing it, have resigned, will the Treasurer commit to releasing in the June budget how much the North West Rail Link will cost in total and when it will be completed?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is fantastic that members in this House understand the budget is coming. That is a great positive that we have in this State: they are on the job for the people of New South Wales and they are doing a great job. Those in the Northern Tablelands think they are doing a terrific job. Why did the member for Maroubra not go to the Northern Tablelands? It has to be a general question. Apparently it was because he was supposed to go to the Mingoola booth, but the word on the street was that it was not going to be good because we had such an outstanding candidate. What I love about the member for Maroubra asking a question about infrastructure is that those opposite dare to even raise infrastructure.

Why would they even think about raising infrastructure in this place? There is a big difference between the Minister for Transport on this side and the former Minister for Transport opposite—one will actually deliver the North West Rail Link. I went back in history to look at certain things that were announced at certain times. What a year 1998 was. A lot of things were going to happen under the former Labor Government. The Premier was Bob Carr—Bob the Builder. If members opposite want to talk about infrastructure, they might be interested in the 1998 announcement. They promised a Bondi Beach rail link. Has anyone seen that? No, they have not.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. I know that the member gets lost, but Bondi is nowhere near Baulkham Hills or Rouse Hill or Kellyville.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer is trying to contextualise his answer.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is absolutely relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I upheld the Leader of the Opposition's earlier point of order, but on this occasion there is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** These opposite are asking about infrastructure and we are delivering it. What did they do?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The second announcement in 1998 was the high-speed rail link to Newcastle. Has anyone seen that? I have not seen it.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The high-speed rail link from Sutherland to Wollongong was promised in 1998. Who has seen that? The member for Wollongong would love that one—she would not have to leave question time early. My favourite from 1998, to be delivered in 2010, is the North West Rail Link.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: That was a nice segue. The question was when and how much.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I know what the question was; I do not need the member for Maroubra to repeat it. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The question was, quite rightly, whether it is going to be in the budget. As is the normal practice, members will have to wait and see. We have demonstrated a commitment to the North West Rail Link. It is actually called allocating money in the budget.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I will give another quick case study. Those opposite thought they needed to do something across the city that was exciting, so what did they come up with? They came up with the CBD Metro,

the Rozelle Metro on the back of a coaster—what a fantastic idea. What was the bill to New South Wales for that little beauty? It was \$500 million. I say to those opposite: Do not come into this House and try to lecture us on infrastructure. We are doing all of the work that is required to deliver infrastructure. We are releasing the money to build the infrastructure and we are going to deliver to the communities across this State on all of those key projects. Those opposite can look forward to more details in the budget.

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** My question is to the Deputy Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order. Her comment was inappropriate.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** How is the Government delivering for the people of regional New South Wales?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the new member for Northern Tablelands for his inaugural question and on behalf of members in this House congratulate him on a resounding victory on Saturday. The Liberal Party and The Nationals went to the 2011 election with a comprehensive set of policies aimed at giving regional New South Wales people their fair share and a stronger voice in government—a suite of regional development policies called a Decade of Decentralisation. At the midpoint of our first term in government we are delivering for regional people across the State: record funding for regional infrastructure, including hospitals and roads; record numbers of nurses, teachers and police in regional communities; decentralised agency structures to enhance local community input to government services, including local health districts, and the Local Schools, Local Decisions reforms for schools; and payroll tax rebates for regional employers as well as regional relocation grants aimed at boosting populations and economies across regional New South Wales. Two years down the track it is very timely to evaluate this Government's efforts for regional people. That opportunity has arisen with the recent by-election in the Northern Tablelands.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I can assure members that this proposition has bipartisan support. Prior to the by-election on Saturday the Leader of the Opposition said this to the *Armidale Express*:

By-elections are a fantastic opportunity for people to send an incumbent government a message.

Send us a message they did: a record by-election swing of more than 30 per cent to Adam Marshall and The Nationals. It is an historic proportion: 19 out of 93, or 20.5 per cent, members in the Legislative Assembly are members of The Nationals, which is the highest percentage since World War II. This Government has a record proportional majority of 75.3 per cent in the Legislative Assembly. More than 92 per cent of the State is now represented by members of The Nationals, which is a record, and for the first time The Nationals have the youngest members in each House of this Parliament.

Any observer of these events would think that this was a reasonable endorsement of this Government and its regional policies. While we are talking about messages on which the Leader of the Opposition was focusing during and prior to the by-election, what sort of message did the good people of the Northern Tablelands send to the New South Wales Labor Party and their so-called Independent friends. I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he take particular heed of those messages because he personally headed up the Labor campaign, visiting the Northern Tablelands with his entire front bench, apart from a couple of notable exceptions already mentioned by the Premier—the member for Maroubra and the member for Toongabbie.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** The member for Blacktown must now accept responsibility for the single-figure Labor vote of 9.7 per cent and for the Australian Labor Party candidate running a poor and distant third. True to form, the Leader of the Opposition is not heeding the message. Listen to the member's interjections. People are trying to tell him something.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I have listened to the Deputy Premier rabbit on with irrelevancies for one minute now. My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was not about the Leader of the Opposition, it was about what the Government was doing for people in regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has been answering the question he was asked.

**Mr Michael Daley:** No, he has not; he has been talking about the Leader of the Opposition for 60 seconds.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Is the member for Maroubra canvassing my ruling? The Minister has been talking about regional New South Wales and the by-election, all of which are relevant to the question he was asked. There is no point of order.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** True to form, the Leader of the Opposition is not heeding the message. He is also trying to duck responsibility for the abysmal Labor campaign and vote by telling the party faithful that it had trebled its vote, calling 9.7 per cent a good result. He is not quite accurate because treble the 2011 Labor vote of 3.4 per cent when Richard Torbay was elected as the member for Northern Tablelands would be 10.2 per cent—but we will not quibble about numbers. The Australian Labor Party vote prior to Mr Torbay's incumbency would be a more useful comparison because Mr Torbay was recognised as the de facto Labor member in the Northern Tablelands. Labor ran dead in that electorate for the entire time that Mr Torbay was the member.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129.

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

**Ms Linda Burney:** Just because the Deputy Premier mentions the Northern Tablelands does not mean that he is answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have already ruled the Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I remind the Leader of the Opposition that Labor actually held the electorate of Northern Tablelands— [*Extension of time granted.*]

Labor held the electorate of the Northern Tablelands between 1978 and 1987 and yet the Leader of the Opposition is saying that 9.7 per cent is a good result—unbelievable. The member is ducking and weaving; he is not accepting responsibility for the outcome of the by-election. Labor's 1995 vote was 24.2 per cent and in 1991 it was 31.6 per cent.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: It is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister can stand here all day and give us a history lesson on the Northern Tablelands, but the question was about how the Government is delivering for regional New South Wales. The question was very specific.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked. There is no point of order.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** The member does not want to listen, but if there is to be any hope for the Labor Party he should listen. On the statistics from 1991 and 1995—

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** The scrupulously impartial Antony Green stated:

However, it is a terrible result for the state Labor Party, not even making double figures.  
... there must be some teeth gnashing over this result by both the state and federal Labor parties.

It is no wonder that the member for Toongabbie and the member for Maroubra have a spring in their steps today. What of the Independent candidates? The mayor of Armidale achieved 13.6 per cent, which was a much better result than Labor but a negative swing of 53.8 per cent compared with the vote achieved by Mr Torbay in 2011. Since the decision by Tony Windsor and Robert Oakeshott to install the Gillard Labor Government, contrary to the wishes of their electorates, country people have woken up to the backroom dealings between Labor and the so-called Independents. This Government has the thumbs up, Labor is toxic and the Independents are on the nose— [*Time expired.*]

### GAMBLING ADVERTISING

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing. Given the Minister's statements in favour of banning gambling advertisements at sporting venues and on sports jerseys, what measures has the Government taken to implement the plan?

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS:** I thank the member for such a lovely question. The Government has been dealing with this issue for quite some time and it is amazing that only today the Labor Party has chosen to join the debate.

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

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS:** This Government engaged with the Commonwealth in a Council of Australian Governments subcommittee in 2011. The Commonwealth was represented by Senators Stephen Conroy, Jenny Macklin and Bill Shorten. At that Council of Australian Governments meeting the Commonwealth undertook to ban running commentary spruiking betting odds, but nothing happened until a few days ago. The New South Wales Government is disappointed that this is very much a half-baked measure, leaving large loopholes that allow for the continuation of this sort of promotion prior to the commencement of a match, during the match when there are breaks such as for half time or quarter time, and during commercial advertising in the lead-up to the event. The Government believes that this does not achieve what the Federal Government stated it would achieve and that is to ban sports promotion betting during the conduct of a match. The other aspect concerns the Commonwealth making a statement to the sports bodies rather than introducing legislation.

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

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS:** The Commonwealth states that unless it sees implementation of what is set out in its statement or some reduction in sports promotion betting it will not contemplate legislation. Will it contemplate legislation after the close of business of the current Federal Parliament and therefore avoid completely the obligation to introduce legislation? The New South Wales Government will consider the announcement and its impact. Major sports events such as the State of Origin series, the Lions tour, the Bledisloe Cup and Football Federation Australia matches, including the Manchester United match, will be held during the winter sports period. The Government will observe what happens and whether incidental coverage is afforded to betting companies during matches and events. It will then consider what options are available. I conclude by expressing the disappointment of the State Government with the two-year lag by the Commonwealth subcommittee to act and the fact that only a statement has been made, no bill has been contemplated or introduced, and some very large loopholes are available to betting companies.

### CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research. What is the Government doing to strengthen public health and boost immunisation rates?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question. I know the member shares my views about the importance of vaccination and I know her daughter is vaccinated. This is a matter of interest to all members of Parliament. Given the comments that were made in Parliament last week I expect it will receive bipartisan support. I remind the House that across the State we have a child vaccination rate of 92 per cent. Unfortunately there are pockets where immunisation rates are lower such as the eastern suburbs, northern suburbs and the North Coast. Health NSW wants to increase immunisation rates in those areas. It is believed that some people have simply not kept up with immunisation schedules but that others have made a conscious decision not to immunise.

The Government is using a multifaceted approach including introducing legislation regarding vaccination prior to enrolment at childcare centres. I will highlight some of the other measures that Health NSW is implementing—it is about informing parents to ensure that they understand the importance of vaccination. Anyone who has seen a child or baby with whooping cough or measles will know the importance of vaccination. My sister and I had whooping cough when we were children. My mother was a nurse and she told me many times of the horror of seeing my sister and me with whooping cough. My niece who lives in Melbourne has a three-week-old baby who was infected with whooping cough when she was exposed to a child who had not been vaccinated.



Members would not want to see a baby or a child suffering with whooping cough. The Government has a multifaceted approach and has been running the Save the Date to Vaccinate campaign on television, which most people will have seen, and on radio. It has also been put on the web. The Government also has a mobile phone app that is available for parents to remind them of the scheduled dates for boosters and other shots. I recommend this really important app. The blue book, which has been around for some time, is going electronic. The Premier was talking a little earlier about CeBIT information and communications technology. New South Wales has taken the lead and has developed a blue book mobile application, which will be rolled out in western Sydney where it is being trialled. That will be important.

The Government has sent information kits and posters to general practitioners and to other places where families with young children gather. An information kit will also be sent to childcare centres. The legislation the Government will introduce is markedly different from that proposed by Labor. The shadow Minister for Health is on record as saying that his legislation would give childcare operators an option; my legislation does not. My legislation will require childcare operators to seek from parents proof of vaccination or proof of exemption using the Commonwealth Medicare forms, which must be filled in by a general practitioner or another authorised provider. Before getting these forms parents must have counselling. They will be given all kinds of access to important information about the medical advantages of having their child vaccinated. Childcare centres will not be able to enrol a child unless those two items are produced.

The childcare operator will be required to keep that information on a register and when the Department of Education and Communities inspectors visit, as they are required to do from time to time to see whether centres are complying with regulations, they will check the register. If any child is attending the childcare centre without that documentation, that child will be excluded immediately and the childcare centre will face a fine of up to \$4,000. I assure members that the childcare industry is highly reputable and I believe that will happen very rarely. The truth of the matter is it is believed the majority of those with unvaccinated children have mostly forgotten about it and what we want to do is remind them. I am sure every member of the House will support this measure.

The approach we are taking is supported by the Australian Medical Association. I am thrilled that the association has called it a smart immunisation move. It is supported by public health officials, immunisation experts and the childcare sector, which was very worried about the Labor approach because it would have put the onus on operators. The Government is saying "No, this is important. Get your children registered and make sure that you provide extended safety to those around you." I commend the Opposition for indicating that it will take a bipartisan approach and support this initiative.

### GAMBLING ADVERTISING

**Mr NATHAN REES:** My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing. What discussions has the Minister had with the Queensland and Victorian Liberal governments regarding his plan to ban gambling advertisements at sporting venues and on football jerseys?

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS:** I was anticipating a question on the odds for the Northern Tablelands result over the weekend. I have not had any discussions with the Queensland Government, but I imagine my agencies have done so and to the extent that that may be relevant to the debate I shall find out in due course. That was a totally pointless question.

### LOCAL LAND SERVICES

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries. What action is the Government taking to ensure the development of Local Land Services in time for its January 2014 start date?

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I thank the hardworking member for Monaro for his excellent question and his real interest in all things rural, particularly the development of Local Land Services, which has been underway for a number of months now. I congratulate Adam Marshall on his election to this place. It is great to have him in the Chamber—it has been a long time coming and what a relief it is. I was going through the Labor booth figures of three, four, four, three, one, zero, four compared with Adam Marshall's results of 1,100, 1,100 and 1,200. The member for Northern Tablelands won 63.2 per cent of the vote while Labor had less than 10 per cent—indeed, 9.8 per cent at the last count. This will be a positive move forward in the Northern Tablelands, where the constituents have taken an active interest in the new Local Land Services moving forward.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has the call. She does not need any assistance.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** The Government will be streamlining three existing regional service delivery organisations—catchment management authorities, livestock health and pest authorities, and Department of Primary Industries agricultural extension—into one organisation. Currently there are 25 separate boards in this space. Between them they have 202 separate directors. Under the new arrangements with the amalgamation of this regional service delivery organisation—Local Land Services—those 202 directors will be reduced to 80 and there will be 11 Local Land Services boards. They will be posted on the Internet very soon. I have produced a new map, which is publicly available as of today, and I will introduce legislation into this place today as well.

This is a very positive way forward for the future of farming. New South Wales has approximately 42,000 farmers, and many people working in the landscape and environmental area. By streamlining these organisations and by having common boundaries and common boards with a common mission—that is, to deliver landscaping services, environment services and farming delivery services to their local services, which is at the forefront of their responsibilities—we are also saving approximately \$5 million a year upfront in board fees. The amount saved will be redirected straight into front-line services for the Local Land Services regions.

I thank some very special people. I appointed a stakeholder panel approximately eight months ago to help with community consultation. The panel held 22 meetings across New South Wales consisting of the organisations very much involved in this space, including Greening Australia, Landcare, the NSW Farmers Association, the catchment management authorities, the Department of Primary Industries, the Local Government and Shires Associations and others because we wanted to make sure we covered every spectrum and that everyone was considered in the consultation. Many thousands of people from across New South Wales turned up to those meetings. We also received more than 2,000 submissions on the Have Your Say website. The development of the boundaries caused some controversy as we went forward, but I am confident that the map I have released publicly today will be universally accepted across the board by everybody in this regional service delivery space.

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

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** Moving forward, over the next four years we will have more than \$500 million budgeted for Local Land Services and we anticipate that when the new Local Land Services commence on 1 January next year more than 750 employees will be directly involved as part of Local Land Services. In addition, today's announcement that we are delivering a massive dividend for the State's primary industries sector, with the creation of a \$35-million Future Fund and also the reinvestment of \$5 million per year for agricultural advisory services, is very exciting. That is in addition to the existing fund for livestock health and pest authorities. Rates funding will continue to be quarantined for livestock health and pest authority biosecurity services. Catchment management authority funding will continue to be used for catchment management authority services and will be quarantined for that purpose. Department of Agriculture funding for extension services will continue to be quarantined for that purpose as we move forward. In addition, there will be a \$35 million Future Fund—*[Extension of time granted.]*

I have really said all I wanted to say. We will be looking forward to debating the legislation in due course.

### GAMBLING ADVERTISING

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Given that yesterday on the ABC AM program the Minister said that he was looking to remove stadium naming rights for gambling organisations, what steps is the Government taking to remove "Centrebet" from Centrebet Stadium, Penrith?

**Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY:** I genuinely thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question because, apart from a question on my first day back in this place, it has been a long time between drinks. I was beginning to feel a little unloved, so I thank him for the opportunity to answer a question. We do not believe the announcement by the Prime Minister over the weekend about the intended action in relation to the overt intrusion in sports broadcasts by gambling organisations goes far enough. We should not be distracted from the fact that the issue is purely about the intrusion into sporting broadcasts.

**Mr Michael Daley:** When in doubt blame the Feds.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked. I will not tolerate any further interjections.

**Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY:** The intrusion of gambling into sporting broadcasts has raised a level of angst in the community. We should not be distracted by furphies in other areas that have not caused the same level of public disturbance. This Government will continue to do whatever it can to protect the integrity of sport. In my inaugural speech in this House I spoke of my concerns about particular forms of gambling and the impact that they could have on the integrity of sport. We all accept that gambling is a fact of life and that there are elements of gambling within sport, particularly in the racing industry, that are part and parcel of our way of life. But I will do everything I possibly can to protect the integrity of sport where I feel that it has been threatened, particularly in relation to sporting broadcasts, which are at the forefront of public concern.

## RAIL SERVICES

**Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. What progress is the Government making on improvements for customers on trains?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Gosford for that question and for his interest in very important matters regarding public transport.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Every day we are working hard to ensure that we provide improvements for our customers. Most members in this House would know that we have announced a major shake-up of rail services in this State to fix our trains and to give customers the services they expect. Those opposite do not like to hear this, but for 16 long years they failed to do anything to improve rail services. I know the member for middle management does not like to hear this, but we are making major changes to cut the waste in the bloated bureaucracy and return power and resources to the front line, because that is in the best interests of our customers. I have advised the House previously that from 1 July RailCorp will no longer exist. Given Saturday's by-election result, the question is: Will the Leader of the Opposition still be the leader?

From 1 July we are creating two new rail organisations focused on the customer—Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. This side of the House believes customers should be at the centre of every single decision we make in transport. This did not happen in the past. We are making longer-term reforms but we are also delivering improvements right now, and customers are noticing. I take this opportunity to speak about some particular initiatives that customers have already started to notice on the rail network. We have set up a new cleaning unit to attack our dirty trains and stations, and we are embarking on a \$3.5-million, 27,000-hour cleaning blitz on the interior of Sydney's trains. I was disgusted to find out when we did an audit of all our cleaning that some seats on trains had not received a deep clean for 10 years. The former Government did not appreciate how important—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has the call. Members will cease conversing across the table.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I know a few members on the other side of the House want to clean out some caucus members but, unfortunately, for 10 years they did not regard cleaning services as important. We on this side of the House appreciate how important cleanliness is to our customers. The cleaning blitz we are undertaking will see more than 1,300 carriages extensively deep cleaned. Members on the other side do not like to hear this.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Minister has the call. This is the final question. I ask members to be patient.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Our customers will be pleased to know that we are cleaning all the fabric on the Millennium, the OSCar and the Tangara carriages. In recent months we have also undertaken an extensive graffiti blitz at maintenance centres and stabling yards across the network. I am pleased to say that so far more than 6,000 carriages have been cleaned. In addition to cleanliness, we also want to make better use of technology. We know that customers want accurate, up-to-date information about their train services. Last month I was pleased to launch six real-time train apps. We went to the market—

*[Interruption]*

You say "wow", but customers care about this. You do not know how important this is to customers. I can inform the House today that since we launched our train apps we have had more than 1.5 million downloads of the apps, in just over a month—more votes than those opposite will ever see in their lifetimes. While I am speaking about technology, I do not tweet but, given that it was relevant to public transport, I was interested to read the tweets of the Opposition spokesperson for transport in the other place, the not so sharp shadow Minister for Transport. She did not comment on transport but this is what she tweeted on Saturday about the Northern Tablelands by-election:

We have re-energised Country Labor.

*[Extension of time granted.]*

The shadow Minister for Transport does not choose to comment on transport issues but she did say that Opposition members had re-energised Country Labor. This is the clincher after their nine point something per cent result on Saturday. She said:

We are rebuilding the base for 2015.

Nine point something per cent and they are rebuilding the base! While they are rebuilding their base we are fixing our trains. We are getting on with the job of fixing public transport and fixing up New South Wales. There are many other initiatives I could talk about—transport officers, extra services, our quiet carriages. The important message is that those opposite can continue to disregard what matters to customers, what matters to the people of this State, but we on this side of the House are fixing New South Wales and making sure that we are number one in the country.

**Question time concluded at 3.18 p.m.**

#### **VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2012-13**

**Mr Mike Baird** tabled, pursuant to section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, variations of the receipts and payments estimates and appropriations for the Department of Family and Community Services arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of specific purpose payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates.

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

##### **Government Response to Report**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/55 entitled, "Interim Report on the Eighth General Meeting with the Valuer-General", received out of session and authorised to be printed on 27 May 2013.

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

**The Clerk** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Report for 2013, Volume Two, received on 28 May 2013.

#### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

##### **Report**

**Mr Stephen Bromhead**, as Chair, tabled the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 38/55", dated 28 May 2013, together with minutes of the committee meeting dated 21 May 2013.

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

## PETITIONS

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

### **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**.

### **Inner-city Social Housing**

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

### **Slaughterhouse Monitoring**

Petition requesting mandatory closed-circuit television for all New South Wales slaughterhouses, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Pet Shops**

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

### **Social Housing Tenants Mental Health Support**

Petition requesting the provision of community outreach and support programs directed to people with a mental illness who are tenants of Housing NSW and community housing, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

## **CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY**

### **Northern Tablelands By-election**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [3.21 p.m.]: The motion that I seek to be accorded priority notes that on Saturday the people of Northern Tablelands voted for a Government that delivers for regional New South Wales, that John Robertson told the *Armidale Express* that by-elections are a fantastic opportunity to send an incumbent government a message, and that the message sent by Labor's 9.7 per cent vote on the weekend was squarely directed at John Robertson. This motion should be accorded priority because on Saturday Adam Marshall became the newest member of the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. In the Northern Tablelands by-election he secured the biggest swing to a sitting government in New South Wales history.

Thanks must go to the many people who contributed to this result. I thank the Premier and our parliamentary colleagues who went to Northern Tablelands and supported Adam Marshall, and Ben Franklin and his team in the New South Wales Nationals, including Deputy Director Greg Dezman, who is in the gallery today, and the people who worked so tirelessly to see Adam elected. This historic result tells us that the people of regional New South Wales recognise and endorse the achievements of the O'Farrell-Stoner Government. This motion should be accorded priority because the people of regional New South Wales have endorsed the fact that we are rebuilding regional roads and infrastructure, restoring regional health services and rebuilding the regional

economy. We have seen that not only in Northern Tablelands but also in the electorates of Tamworth, Bathurst, Dubbo, Menai and Mulgoa—right across New South Wales. The Government is getting on with the job of making New South Wales number one again.

This motion should be accorded priority because John Robertson told the *Armidale Express* that by-elections are a fantastic opportunity to send the incumbent government a message. He is absolutely right. The message the people have sent is for us to continue to get on with the job of making New South Wales number one again. We have heard some rumblings about the leadership. I noticed that the Hon. Penny Sharpe tweeted, "Good job." Is that another knife in the back? We do not want the Leader of the Opposition to resign; we want him to stay right where he is—he is our best asset. Stay where you are, sir. My motion should be accorded priority because the people of New South Wales want the O'Farrell-Stoner Government to get on with the job of making New South Wales number one again. They gave their message loud and clear on Saturday in Northern Tablelands.

### **Cabramatta Street Team**

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [3.24 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority over the politically motivated ramblings of the member for Tamworth. The Cabramatta Street Team was established in 2001 by former Labor Premier Bob Carr. In stark contrast to the Greiner-Fahey Government, the Carr Government put our youth and the people of Cabramatta first through the introduction of the Cabramatta Anti-drug Strategy. For the past 12 years the Cabramatta Street Team has been based out of Cabramatta police station, at no accommodation cost, and has worked directly with our local police. The main focus of the Cabramatta Street Team has been to work with young individuals throughout Cabramatta and neighbouring suburbs who may be at risk. The team is especially skilled in implementing early intervention measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our youth who may be at risk.

The Cabramatta Street Team works directly with at-risk youth in our local areas and has built a strong rapport with not only the youth, but also local police, community groups, schools and people within our communities. The team is highly regarded, well respected and commended for its ongoing hard work and tireless efforts within our communities. It provides our troubled youth with guidance and a helping hand when it is needed most. Changes announced by the Government have not been well received in our local areas. There was community outcry and dismay when people found out that their street team was to be diluted and dispersed back into the system.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** There was no community consultation before the Government made this decision, and the community is now up in arms. It is fighting to keep the Cabramatta Street Team where it is and to allow it to continue to provide the services that are paramount to the welfare of the youth within our community. I call on all members of this Parliament who have a conscience to support the Cabramatta Street Team. I ask the member for Smithfield, Andrew Rohan, to stand by his promise and throw his support behind the Cabramatta Street Team. Last Thursday the member for Smithfield stated in this House, "I stand in support of any services that may benefit the youth of my electorate." As I said, the Greiner-Fahey Government did nothing to alleviate crime and drug problems in Cabramatta. Members of that former Government sat on their hands and said, "Leave it in Cabramatta. Who cares about Cabramatta?" The current Minister is doing the same thing as Greiner and Fahey. She is sitting on her hands.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! Government members will come to order. I call the member for Goulburn to order.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** The Minister wants to dilute the Cabramatta Street Team and send Cabramatta back to the dark old days of the Greiner-Fahey Government. It brings tremendous shame on the O'Farrell Government to allow a Minister, with no community consultation, to shut down a service that has been operating for 12 years and has been of great benefit to Cabramatta and its youth. I call on Government members to support my motion, because it deserves priority.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 60**

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

**Noes, 22**

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	Mr Parker	
Ms Hay	Mrs Perry	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hoenig	Mr Piper	Mr Amery
Ms Hornery	Mr Rees	Mr Lalich

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**NORTHERN TABLELANDS BY-ELECTION****Motion Accorded Priority**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [3.36 p.m.]: I move:

That this House notes that:

- (1) on Saturday 25 May 2013, the people of the Northern Tablelands voted for a Government that delivers for regional New South Wales;
- (2) the Leader of the Opposition told the *Armidale Express* that "by-elections are a fantastic opportunity for people to send an incumbent government a message"; and
- (3) the message sent by Labor's 9.7 per cent vote on the weekend was squarely directed at the Leader of the Opposition.

I am pretty happy to state that last Saturday the people of the Northern Tablelands voted for a Government that delivers for regional New South Wales. They voted for a Government that gets on with the job. They endorsed this Government rebuilding regional roads. For example, allocations of \$3.7 billion and \$3.8 billion were made to regional roads in this Government's first two budgets, which is \$1 billion more than Labor's average between 2001 and 2011. The people of Northern Tablelands also endorsed this Government's restoration of regional health services. For example, there has been a record \$1.7 billion spend on hospitals at Armidale, Dubbo, Tamworth, Parkes, Forbes, Port Macquarie, Wagga Wagga and Lismore, along with the appointment of record numbers of nurses and regional doctor interns.

They also endorsed this Government rebuilding the State's regional economy. For example, there are many jobs on the boil in the Tamworth electorate that will result from infrastructure projects such as a

\$16 million brand-new railway overpass in Gunnedah, a \$210 million hospital redevelopment, and a \$42 million cancer care centre. The list goes on. Prior to the Northern Tablelands by-election the Leader of the Opposition, John Robertson, told the *Armidale Express* that by-elections are a fantastic opportunity for people to send an incumbent government a message. That message was pretty clear last Saturday. The people of Northern Tablelands want this Government to continue with its agenda of reforming New South Wales and making it number one again.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** Their discussions would be interesting.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** As my friend the member for Mulgoa said, imagine what is going on in the Labor Party at the moment. They would be having nightmares. The once great party now boasts 20 members in this House.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** That is more than you have, isn't it? Is that more than The Nationals?

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** The member for Cessnock interjects. He is the only Country Labor member left, and is welcome to cross and lift The Nationals members in this House to 20. Currently, there are 19 lower House members of The Nationals, which is a record. The primary vote on Saturday for Adam Marshall was 63.3 per cent. That sends a clear message that the people of the Northern Tablelands have joined the rest of the State. They want to get on board. They want to make sure they are part of the action. They were in the wilderness for far too long.

The Australian Labor Party's primary vote in the Northern Tablelands over the past few years has been 1988, 26.84 per cent; 1991, 31.59 per cent; 1995, 24.16 per cent; 1999, 9.17 per cent; 2003, 4.74 per cent; and in 2007, 4.3 per cent. In 2011 the Australian Labor Party primary vote in the Northern Tablelands was just 3.4 per cent. Northern Tablelands borders the Tamworth electorate. Members should think about what has happened in the past couple of years, with seats moving from Independents to The Nationals. Port Macquarie—what a great seat—is now held by The Nationals. Dubbo—another great seat—is now held by The Nationals. Northern Tablelands—what a great seat—is now held by The Nationals, and Tamworth is now held by The Nationals.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Monaro.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** How can I forget my good friend the member for the Monaro, who was up against second-chance Steve Whan? The member for Monaro will have an opportunity to speak in this debate. Our message to the Leader of the Opposition is: Do not resign. He is our best asset. He might have got 9.7 per cent for the Labor Party, and we thank him for that. The Hon. Penny Sharpe tweeted on Saturday night, "A good result. Keep up the good work." We can surmise from that comment that they are coming, they are hunting, they are sniffing. The leadership challenge is on. It is clear that the people of New South Wales voted for change on Saturday just like they have done—

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. The only challenge of relevance is Jock Laurie to Stoner.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! There is no point of order. The member's time has expired.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury)** [3.41 p.m.]: It is such a shame that Adam Marshall is a reserve grader. It really should have been Jock Laurie, but he was too much of a threat to The Nationals leader.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! If the member for Canterbury wishes to attack another member in this place, she should do so by way of substantive motion. The member will return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** He was too much of a threat to Andrew Stoner and that is the reason that that young man is sitting over there. By the way, comrade—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** —I am sorry you had to leave our party.



**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. The member for Northern Tablelands has just come to Parliament. I ask that the House show him some respect and that procedure is followed.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! I remind members that attacks on members of the House should be made by way of substantive motion.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** I cannot think of too many other members who have come here with a referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. There are some matters that members might like to think about.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Point of order: The member for Canterbury is not complying with your last ruling. Again she has attacked the new member in this House.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! I thank the member for Monaro for his point of order. I warn the member for Canterbury that I will terminate her time if she does not adhere to my rulings. I have ruled accordingly.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** I simply wanted to put on the record some matters about the new member for Northern Tablelands. The motion notes what The Nationals have done for regional New South Wales. Let us look at the record of the conservatives in New South Wales. Closing Grafton jail was a really good initiative. Cutting nurses, teachers and agricultural officers available to service communities in regional and rural New South Wales was a really good initiative. Regional New South Wales has suffered a \$3 billion cut to health funding; that was a really good initiative. The \$1.7 billion cut to education has been fantastic for regional New South Wales. The Restart NSW Jobs Action Plan promised to create jobs at a modest rate. It has achieved less than half the jobs achieved by the Labor Government. Only 1,800 have taken up the failed \$7,000 Regional Relocation Grant. That was a really good initiative. What about ring fencing prime agricultural land? That was a promise, but that has not happened.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Monaro and the member for Clarence will come to order. I call the member for Monaro to order.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** They have allowed uranium exploration and shooting in national parks and approved the sell-off of New South Wales electricity generators. That has been fantastic for regional New South Wales. What about the closure of the timber bridges project? That has been really great for regional New South Wales.

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

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** But what has really topped it off, comrade Marshall, is the abolition of the drought relief assistance. That has been amazingly good for New South Wales. The farmers out there are saying how great it is that drought relief assistance has been abolished in New South Wales.

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

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** The irony about this motion is that there is a list as long as one's arm of the negative impacts of the Government's actions on regional New South Wales. Let me be very clear that the cuts to public service jobs across New South Wales will cost some members opposite their seats, and they know it. Those members with very small margins, such as the member for Swansea, will understand what I am saying.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Clarence will come to order.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** They know that 1,700 staff across the Department of Primary Industries, catchment management authorities, livestock health and pest authorities and extension officers are threatened by amalgamations; 300 Department of Primary Industries staff have been sacked; 28 rural communities have lost experienced and specialist agronomists with hundreds of years of experience; and \$30 million has been cut from the catchment management authority operating budget. All of these initiatives of the Government have been fantastic for regional New South Wales. As well, 50 biosecurity staff have been sacked and the revenue base for

livestock health and pest authorities has been frozen. These are wonderful initiatives for regional New South Wales. The member for Tamworth must be pleased that he moved this motion. There is no country representative on the State Water Corporation board, and the contribution to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has been cut, jeopardising maintenance and agricultural productivity. *[Time expired.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO** (Monaro) [3.46 p.m.]: I was going to start my speech by referring to this document but I will not need it after listening to that rubbish. The message to the Labor Party on Saturday was clear: the New South Wales community is sick and tired of that sort of argy-bargy, negativity and rubbish that is not only played out in this House but is also played out in the community. Let us look at what happened in regional New South Wales under Labor: declining regional infrastructure, reduced regional employment growth, reduced regional population growth, low relative income growth, and negative business growth.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Do members opposite want to hide from this? What members opposite have not learnt while they have been in opposition is that they have an opportunity for self-reflection. They have an opportunity to look at electoral rehabilitation and what a party must do—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! I call the member for Shellharbour to order. The member for Toongabbie will come to order. The member for Canterbury will remove herself from the Chamber for one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 3.47 p.m.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The Labor Party needs to go through a process of looking within and examining the mistakes it made and the damage it did to the State. The internal focus, the scandals, the backroom deals may mean a lot in Sussex Street, Sydney, but they do not mean anything in Beardsley Street, Armidale, or Monaro Street, Queanbeyan. You people are an absolute joke. You learnt nothing from 26 March. The message was loud and clear on Saturday. It was not only support for the O'Farrell agenda, the mandate we were given on 26 March to get on with the job of fixing the State; it was also a message back to Labor that the community, the people, are sick and tired of the Opposition opposing for the sake of opposing. They are sick and tired of the factional games played out in Sussex Street. They are sick and tired of the unions' stranglehold.

They are sick and tired of the recycling job that those opposite are doing in this place, whether it is an ex-chief of staff in the upper House or a former member who was booted out and returned to the upper House—I am talking about second-chance Steve Whan who, as we know, has been retreaded. Now they are recycling a fundraiser and mate of Eddie Obeid to the upper House. People are sick and tired that those opposite do not accept the damage they did to the people of New South Wales and they are sick and tired that they do not take responsibility for the garbage that has been played out at the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry. When those opposite do that, when they start looking within and acknowledging the damage they did to this State and the damage they did to their own party, they will feel ashamed.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** What they did to their poor members who paid their dues and supported each and every one of them was a disgrace.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** What they did to the people of New South Wales was a disgrace. The message on Saturday was loud and clear: people are sick and tired of the New South Wales Labor Party.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Hornsby will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [3.49 p.m.]: I speak in opposition to the motion accorded priority that is before the House. I appreciate the considerable screaming in the Chamber in the prelude to what is undoubtedly the pinnacle of the debate today. I welcome to the Chamber comrade Marshall and congratulate him on his victory on the weekend. Of course, until recently, he was a member of the Labor Party and one thing that he can be sure of—

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Wollondilly will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** The best advice I can offer the new member is this: When you are in opposition at least no-one in your electorate expects you to get too many favours from the Government. But people cannot understand why when you are a member of the Coalition Government you get absolutely nothing. All The Nationals members realise this but they are unable to explain it to their constituents. When services are closed, infrastructure taken away and assets sold so that the Liberal Government can build a north-west rail shuttle service of some description, the population does not understand. I also offer this advice to comrade Marshall. When I was standing at a polling booth at Inverell, the comment I heard most from the beautiful people of Inverell was, "We're going to give this bloke a go, but if he doesn't deliver for our community he will be gone at the next election." The next election is 687 days away. The member has 687 days to impress.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Castle Hill will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Government members may mock the 9 per cent vote that we got.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Dubbo will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** But guess what? I am from Cessnock. When you grow up in Cessnock, people always want to put you down.

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** People always say you cannot win. People always say you cannot succeed.

**Mr Bruce Notley-Smith:** You're proving it.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** People always say that you are on a hiding to nothing. I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Coogee who said I am evidence of that. You know what? I am, and I turn up and fight, and I have the argument. I am willing to turn up tomorrow and fight again because that is what people from Cessnock do, that is what people from Country Labor do and that is what we did at Northern Tablelands last weekend.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! The member for Coogee will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** We will turn up and fight. Those on the other side might not like it, they might mock us, but we will turn up and we will keep turning up. So they had better get it right or they will be gone.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [3.52 p.m.], in reply:** I am pleased that my motion accorded priority has been debate in the House. I thank my good friend the member for Monaro for expressing his passion about the way New South Wales is continuing to move forward. I also thank the member for Canterbury—hang on, she has been thrown out again. That is bad luck; I cannot congratulate her on her terrible—

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Go after her.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I will, yes. I also mention the member for Cessnock, who made a worthwhile contribution. It is interesting to note that he was suddenly on the back foot, almost apologising for the fact that he is a member of the Labor Party.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Here is a form for Liberal Party membership.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Absolutely. He started out by attacking the newest member of the Fifty-fifth Parliament, Mr Adam Marshall, who won the primary vote by 63.3 per cent, which is fantastic. Then he went on to almost being an apologist for the Labor Party. The member for Cessnock is a good bloke. He is welcome to come across to this side any time. He is just down the road from us. He has coalmines coming out of his ears; coal seam gas is next—they are all over it.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! Government members will come to order.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** He came out of his coal city and went to the Northern Tablelands to help his Labor mates, Mr John Robertson, Ms Linda Burney, Ms Carmel Tebbutt and Dr Andrew McDonald. When I was at the Glen Innes booth—it was about minus 50 degrees—the Hon. Penny Sharpe, a member of the upper House, was there.

**Mr Jai Rowell:** They would have loved her.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That is exactly right. She informed us all that she travelled by train the day before and it took her eight hours to get there.

**Mr Bruce Notley-Smith:** Was it a coal train?

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** It was time well spent on the coal train, and then eight hours to get back. She sent a tweet to John Robertson on Saturday night, "A good result". How was it a good result?

**Mr Troy Grant:** They got 90 per cent rejection.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, a 90 per cent rejection. One in 10 voted for the Labor Party.

**Mr Bryan Doyle:** That is too many.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That is right. One in 10 voted for the Labor Party.

**Mr John Barilaro:** And some of them voted more than once.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, typical Labor Party voting procedures: vote early, vote often; pick a booth, any booth, every booth's a winner. This motion has been well and truly debated. On Saturday the people of the Northern Tablelands voted for a government that delivers for regional New South Wales. We encourage Mr John Robertson to stay as Leader of the Opposition, despite moves to remove him. He is our best asset, at 9.7 per cent. May he continue to drop to zero, where he belongs—down, flatlining and out. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 60**

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

**Noes, 20**

Mr Barr  
Ms Burton  
Mr Daley  
Mr Furolo  
Ms Hay  
Mr Hoenig  
Ms Hornery

Mr Lynch  
Dr McDonald  
Ms Mihailuk  
Mr Park  
Mr Parker  
Mrs Perry  
Mr Rees

Mr Robertson  
Ms Tebbutt  
Ms Watson  
Mr Zangari  
*Tellers,*  
Mr Amery  
Mr Lalich

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**LOCAL LAND SERVICES BILL 2013**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Katrina Hodgkinson, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [4.06 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am delighted to introduce the Local Land Services Bill 2013 on behalf of the Government. Some 18 months ago this Government set out on one of the largest reforms of agricultural services since the 1940s. There was extensive consultation in relation to this legislation. It was overseen by the Local Land Services stakeholder reference panel chaired by the Natural Resources Commissioner John Keniry, AM. Mick Keogh, Executive Director, Australian Farm Institute, did an outstanding job with the stakeholder reference panel, which also consisted of the Department of Primary Industries, the Catchment Management Authority, the Livestock Health and Pest Authority, the New South Wales Farmers Association, Landcare NSW, Greening Australia and the Local Government and Shires Association.

It is important to remember that this consultation followed on from the Government's pre-election commitment to a review of the livestock health and pest authorities, which resulted in the report by Terry Ryan. That review was done following widespread concern about the Livestock Health and Pest Authority model expressed by many ratepayers across New South Wales. This process is a clear sign of the Government's commitment to the State's 42,000 farmers and many landscape managers, including those land care, bush care, coast care and rural communities across the State. The Government is one critical step closer to reform. Local Land Services will bring together a wealth of technical and advisory knowledge from parts of the Department of Primary Industries, the livestock health and pest authorities and the catchment management authorities into a modern, efficient and flexible model for service delivery. Local Land Services has been designed by farmers and landscape managers for future service delivery in this critical area.

From 2014 farmers and land managers will be able to access services and advice from the Local Land Services or the Department of Primary Industries in 139 towns across New South Wales. Local Land Services will make it easier for farmers and land managers to access advice, to improve agricultural productivity, to manage plant and animal pests and diseases, to prepare for and respond to emergencies and natural disasters and to deliver local natural resource management programs. Local Land Services will comprise 11 regions, each with a local board of seven members. The seven members will consist of four government appointments and three ratepayer-elected positions, except for the western region which, due to its size, will have four elected and five appointed board members. There will be a board of chairs with an independent overall chair. The number of boundaries is being reduced across the State from the existing 25, which basically consists of the 14 livestock health and pest authority boards and the 11 catchment management authority boards, to 11 on a new boundary area. I seek leave to table the map of the new boundaries for local land services.

**Leave granted.**

**Map tabled.**

I will outline the most contentious areas of the map. In some areas the stakeholder panel was divided as to which local areas should go into a Local Land Services region. I have retained Murray, which was from the majority shareholder map. However, it ends at the Western Division boundary. The Western Division boundary is maintained in its existing form up to the commencement of Walgett shire. Finch county has been moved into Walgett shire. Gwydir has been moved into the north-west and Lockhart has been moved into the Riverina. I have created a new Central Tablelands, which includes mid-western regional, Cabonne, Orange, Bathurst regional, Lithgow, Oberon, Blayney and Cowra. Boorowa, Upper Lachlan shire, Yass Valley, Wingecarribee and Goulburn have moved into the south-east and Greater Taree has moved into the Hunter.

The number of directors and shares will be more than halved from 202 under livestock health and pest authorities, and catchment management authorities to 80 under Local Land Services. Through reducing duplication of governance, managerial and back-office functions we found savings in the order of \$5 million, which will be directed back into front-line extension and advisory services, whether through contracting private agronomists, partnering with farming systems groups or hiring additional staff. Local Land Services will be managed by local people on local boards working closely with landholders and communities to deliver services that are relevant to their needs. These local people are best placed to represent local landholders, not someone sitting behind a desk in Sydney.

Local boards will have real powers and will be able to make decisions about budgets, services, staff and partnerships with other organisations. Local boards will be a mix of government and ratepayer-elected positions, striking the right balance between accountability and ownership by local farmers. These reforms are about putting farmers back at the centre of the decision-making process. It is about getting behind our farmers, helping them to grow their business and preparing for future challenges. It is about creating a more robust, modern and efficient model, reducing duplication and delivering more money for front-line services.

Local Land Services will be a financially secure organisation with revenues in excess of \$500 million in the first full four years and net assets in excess of \$130 million. There will be no cost shifting to ratepayers unless the local boards and ratepayers see value and wish to pay for additional and new services by their Local Land Services. Importantly creating Local Land Services has also enabled us to create a Local Land Services Future Fund in the order of \$35 million through consolidating the accumulated cash assets of the livestock health and pest authorities and the catchment management authorities. This is the first time that such a fund has been created to support the future sustainability of primary industries and natural resource management advice in New South Wales.

The decision on how to spend these funds will rest with local boards. I place on the record my sincere thanks to all those who have taken part in the consultation process and to members of the stakeholder reference panel for giving their valuable time and expertise to the process. During the course of the stakeholder consultation 22 meetings were conducted right across New South Wales and more than 2,000 submissions were received from various organisations and individuals from right across New South Wales. Many of these submissions made a valuable contribution to the development of this bill. I thank everybody who made a contribution and those who have taken the process so genuinely and so sincerely. It is with very great pride that I commend this bill to the House.

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

## **ENERGY SERVICES CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT (DISTRIBUTOR EFFICIENCY) BILL 2013**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 9 May 2013.**

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [4.14 p.m.]: I am honoured to lead for the Opposition on the Energy Services Corporations Amendment (Distributor Efficiency) Bill 2013. While the Opposition does not oppose this bill, one has to ask why it has taken the Government so long to enact legislation to effectively put in place a simple bill that has the effect of protecting the common directors of Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy from breaches of fiduciary duty and conflict of interest problems, and enabling Treasury under the State Owned Corporations Act to avoid liability for reimbursement. Why did the Treasurer not know that appointing directors to three boards of the State-owned energy distribution companies might expose them to liability? Why

did they not obtain legal advice on this issue? Surely the Government would have taken legal advice before it made its announcement nearly a year ago. It is legal advice that could have been given to the Government by a first-year law student.

The boards of the three energy corporations have been meeting consecutively because they are three different corporations, although it seems that a proprietary limited company called Networks NSW has been incorporated. The implication arising from the bill is that there must have been concern that directors have been making decisions that may have been to the advantage of one corporation and to the disadvantage of another; otherwise why would item [1] of schedule 1 be required? New section 9A of the principal Act is being inserted not just to require each corporation to have the same board but also to entitle those directors to act to the detriment of one or more of those corporations provided it is to the benefit of the total corporations as a whole. New section 9B exempts State-owned corporations from being entitled to reimbursement under section 20N of the State Owned Corporations Act 1989 should the Minister give a direction to the detriment of one corporation provided the direction is to the benefit of all three corporations as a whole.

If there is any doubt that the Government has obviously got itself into some type of difficulty with the way in which it approached this matter last year through not obtaining any or proper legal advice, one need only look at item [6] of schedule 1, which, in part 4, proposes validating the appointment of directors and validating any action of previous boards relating to the current directors previously appointed to the board. Why are these issues of importance? It is because they affect the credibility of the Treasurer when he asserts that the Coalition Government's promise of effecting savings of \$400 million across the three businesses is on track and that the total operating costs and capital benefits are now expected to be in the order of about \$2.5 billion across the businesses, including more than \$600 million in operating savings. The Treasurer then asserts:

These savings will deliver real benefits for the people of New South Wales, with network price changes stabilising from 1 July this year ...

The debate about electricity prices paid by normal households and who is to blame is one of the most bizarre debates. In reality the reason that people in New South Wales are paying through the nose—extortionate electricity prices—is the huge amount of revenue that the State Government extracts from its electricity assets. These amounts have to be calculated from the TransGrid, Endeavour Energy, Essential Energy and Ausgrid annual reports of 2012. The Government's sources of revenue from those organisations are incorporated into dividends, tax equivalent payments and interest. They are as follows: TransGrid, \$388.3 million; Endeavour Energy, \$507.3 million; Essential Energy, \$450.7 million; and Ausgrid, \$1,007.002 billion.

Total government revenue is \$2.353 billion. It does not matter whether it is called dividends, tax equivalent payments or interest; it is an electricity tax that is being paid by electricity consumers. NSW Treasury has become so dependent on the huge volumes of revenue from its energy assets that it keeps running these efficiency arguments, not to benefit electricity consumers in New South Wales but to benefit NSW Treasury. Again, looking at the annual reports of these corporations, this is the level of debt according to their 2012 annual reports: Transgrid \$2.26 billion, Endeavour Energy \$3.01 billion, Essential Energy \$4.17 billion and Ausgrid \$8.18 billion—a total debt of \$17.62 billion. Despite the huge volume of debt of these corporations, even after paying interest on those loans from which the State derives a benefit, huge revenue is still being generated to Treasury via dividends. The gold plating, which is the badge everybody uses to describe the over-investment in energy assets, has derived even greater revenue to Treasury.

Whether one adopts the economic rationalist model that the State is entitled to a good efficient return on its electricity assets, or whether one thinks that electricity should be a public utility and the public should not pay huge electricity prices to pay the New South Wales Government an electricity tax, the reality is that the amount people are paying to NSW Treasury as part of their electricity bill should be transparent. Fifty-two per cent of the average electricity bill is being paid for transmission and distribution, while the State pockets more than \$2.3 billion worth of revenue out of its assets. The Opposition does not oppose making Government-owned enterprises more efficient and reducing operating costs, but I suspect Treasury's motivation is to generate more revenue.

My concern in respect of the efficiency drive is that the State not lose sight of the fact that the State-owned distribution corporations are significant employers throughout New South Wales. Substantial savings can be achieved by combining the business in a number of ways with common technology and the like. However, maintaining employment in rural and regional New South Wales is even more important. In the zeal to derive greater efficiencies, the State should not forget how important it is to maintain employment in rural and regional New South Wales—important not just for efficiency relating to energy distribution corporations but for economic efficiency in rural areas.

To preserve employment for a period of time in rural areas the Opposition proposes an amendment that would require each energy distributor to ensure that its regular staff employed at a rural centre, as far as is reasonably practical, be maintained at not less than the same level of staff as was employed by the energy distributor at the rural centre immediately before the commencement of new section 9 of the principal Act. This is not a novel statutory provision; a similar provision for maintaining staff numbers in rural centres exists, as members no doubt will recall, in section 218CA of the Local Government Act when rural councils are amalgamated. That provision requires employees to be maintained for a period of three years. The Opposition's amendment provides for employees to be retained for a period of five years. The maintenance of employment in rural areas is not just about jobs for employees and their families, it is about the economic benefits that their income provides to regional communities.

State-owned energy corporations employ people in rural areas across the length and breadth of the State. To explain how extensive it is I will inform members of the locations of the electorates where employees are employed. Essential Energy: Albury, Ballina, Barwon, Bathurst, Bega, Burrinjuck, Clarence, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Goulburn, Lismore, Monaro, Murray-Darling, Murrumbidgee, Myall Lakes, Northern Tablelands, Orange, Oxley, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Tweed and Wagga Wagga. Endeavour Energy: Bathurst, Blue Mountains, Camden, Goulburn, South Coast and Wollondilly. Transgrid: Burrinjuck, Orange, Shellharbour, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga. Ausgrid: Cessnock, Gosford, Maitland, The Entrance, Wallsend and Wyong. I will request that the House consider the bill in detail when I move the Opposition amendments. Government members should carefully consider whether a brake needs to be applied to maintain employment in country New South Wales.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [4.25 p.m.]: I support the Energy Services Corporations Amendment (Distributor Efficiency) Bill 2013, which is another chapter in the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's electricity reform program. The O'Farrell Government's key electricity reform agenda is to achieve efficiency savings and to place downward pressure on electricity prices. In my electorate of Mulgoa, pensioners, families and small business operators are doing it tough. The rising cost of living seems never to abate and the heavy burden of escalating electricity prices over these past years has seen families and pensioners turn off heaters during winter and small businesses close their doors.

The cost of electricity is frequently raised with me as an item of great concern. That is why when coming to government in 2011 the Liberal-Nationals Government targeted operating costs savings in the order of \$400 million across the three State-owned electricity distributors: Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy. However, current signs indicate that this target will be substantially exceeded, with total operating costs and capital benefits now expected to be in the order of \$2.5 billion across the businesses, including more than \$600 million in operating savings.

Federal Labor's Carbon Tax—the tax we were promised would never be introduced by a Gillard Government—together with the gold plating of the electricity network and the inefficient management of the distributors by the former Labor Government led to an unthinkable 80 per cent increase in electricity prices over five years. In 2011 alone there was a 17 per cent increase. The former Labor Government oversaw double-digit price rise after double-digit price rise. The former Labor Government's inefficient green initiatives, like the 60¢ solar bonus scheme that blew out to more than three times its budget, and the banning of electric hot water systems, demonstrated that State Labor did not care about, nor did it represent, its traditional constituencies in western Sydney, that were left to pay higher electricity prices as a result.

On 23 April 2013 the Minister for Energy and Resources said that "the days of the double-digit price hikes are over". It was on this day that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal released its draft recommendations, which included just a 3 per cent price increase for the 2013-14 year. This is a win for the people of New South Wales. After so many years of large price hikes the network is back on track and delivering price stability, and it will continue to do so for at least the next six years. This Government has also expanded the energy rebate programs to ensure that more people who need help with power bills are eligible to receive that help. In July 2012 the Government implemented new governance arrangements for Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy. These arrangements provided for one board, and one chief executive officer and senior management structure for all three distributors.

This bill formalises this restructure and will ensure that the restructure of the three State-owned electricity distributors will continue. Not only have significant savings been realised from the restructure but the joint board is a more efficient decision-making body. It has been easier for the Government to drive electricity reform initiatives through one board rather than through three different boards. Another result of the amended



structure is that a distributor will not be entitled to be reimbursed for the costs of complying with a direction from the Government that is not in its commercial interests if the direction is in the combined commercial interest of all three distributors. Similarly, any amount that an individual distributor is entitled to as reimbursement is offset by the amount of net benefit accruing to either of the other distributors as a result of compliance with the direction.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is concerned about electricity prices and it is concerned about the rising cost of living, especially in western Sydney. The Liberal-Nationals Government represents families and businesses across western Sydney. As a result, the Government is responding with a suite of electricity reform programs such as the Energy Services Corporations Amendment (Distributor Efficiency) Bill 2013. I am proud to support this bill, which honours a Liberal-Nationals election commitment to reform the electricity network and will in future formalise the arrangement that has already found \$2.5 billion in savings. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [4.29 p.m.]: The Energy Services Corporations Amendment (Distributor Efficiency) Bill 2013 seeks to amend the Energy Services Corporations Act 1995 and formalise the Government's announcement last year to establish Networks NSW. Despite having legal expertise on tap, the Government has only now come to the realisation that specific governance arrangements need to be made to achieve its original intent of combining operations and making efficiency gains. No doubt the Treasurer will be keen to get his hands on the revenue. I must say there is quite a lot of it.

The 2011 annual reports indicate the following company revenues: Transgrid was \$388.3 million, Endeavour Energy was \$505.3 million, Essential Energy was \$450.7, and Ausgrid was just over \$1 billion. The total government revenue was \$2.353 billion. From July 2012 to December 2012 energy companies increased their profits by a whopping \$430 million. Electricity prices have increased by as much as \$750 for the average New South Wales household since the O'Farrell Government came to office. The member for Heffron and I are concerned that any savings derived should not be at the expense of the average household paying exorbitant electricity prices or at the expense of jobs.

The Government anticipated operational cost savings of \$400 million, but now expects that to reach \$600 million. The Opposition is concerned that these savings should not be achieved by putting unnecessary pressure on families, in particular those in rural and regional New South Wales. I would expect that the Government would be keen to achieve greater efficiency and revenue gains in ways other than at the expense of the livelihood of families in rural and regional areas. In particular, the Government should want to ensure that jobs in rural New South Wales are not a casualty of any efficiency and revenue gains made by Networks NSW and electricity distributors.

Quite rightly, the member for Heffron proposed an amendment that I hope the Government will sincerely consider and agree to, given the number of Government representatives from rural and regional New South Wales. The amendment requires that each energy distributor is to ensure that State-owned electricity distributors maintain employment or full-time positions other than senior staff in rural New South Wales for a period of three years. It is essential that staff employed at these electricity distributors, the majority of which are based in rural and regional New South Wales, are given some degree of job security and are assured that the governance restructure will not be at the expense of their livelihood, job tenure and security.

The reports that I alluded to earlier, and that the member for Heffron mentioned, clearly state that State-owned electricity companies, including Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy, are making enormous profits and that the O'Farrell Government is reaping record dividends whilst New South Wales families continue to suffer high electricity prices. During the 2011 election the Premier campaigned on lowering the cost of living for families. In particular, he announced a \$75 energy rebate for families who were struggling with their bills. That key election promise was significantly underfunded. In the 2012-13 budget \$12.5 billion was allocated to pay for the \$75 energy rebate scheme. However, \$40.5 million was required to be allocated in order for it to reach the 540,000 families it was promised to. That resulted in 360,000 families across New South Wales missing out on that energy rebate.

The Government continues to fail the people of New South Wales. Whilst attention is being given to amending governance structures of electricity distributors for the purpose of achieving efficiency savings and revenue gains, the same attention to detail has not been given to adequately funding the energy rebate scheme on which the Government campaigned before the 2011 election. The New South Wales Opposition does not oppose the bill, but it certainly expects the Government to support the amendment to better protect jobs in rural and regional New South Wales.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [4.35 p.m.]: I support the Energy Services Corporations Amendment (Distributor Efficiency) Bill 2013. I commend the Treasurer and the Minister for Energy and Resources. The cost of living is one of the most important issues in Myall Lakes. We all know that part of the cost of living pressure is caused by increased electricity prices, which rose 60 per cent during the last few years of the former Labor Government. The Government is determined to stop the spiralling, out-of-control increases in the electricity prices. This bill is one measure in a suite of measures that we will implement.

This year electricity prices will increase only in line with the consumer price index of 3 per cent. That shows that the Government is getting on top of the problem. The member for Heffron asked, "Why so long?" One would ask why Labor let this go on for 16 shameful years during which electricity costs and costs of living spiralled out of control. I will address four ways in which Labor impacted on the cost of electricity. The first is that in 2009 under Federal Labor the Australian Energy Regulator approved the prices for the poles and wires and a \$19 billion infrastructure spend. Naturally, that price impacts on every electricity bill in New South Wales.

Secondly, the member for Heffron spoke about \$17.6 billion. How did that come about? Up until the late 1990s Oxley County Council was the electricity distributor in my area. It was then forcibly merged with NorthPower, which was then merged with Country Energy. During that time Bob Carr told the electricity companies that he wanted them to pay a dividend. He dictated the dividend to the power companies and they said that the dividend was more than their profit and they could not pay it. Bob Carr told the companies that they should borrow against their assets. That is how we got to \$17.6 billion. It happened under Labor. The Liberal-Nationals Government is now trying to stabilise prices and hopes to bring prices down in the next few years.

The Federal carbon tax is the third way that Labor increased power prices. The carbon tax adds 10 per cent to every power bill. That is on top of the Australian Energy Regulator setting prices for poles and wires and on top of the \$17.6 billion debt that was driven by Labor over the past 16 years. The Solar Bonus Scheme is the fourth way in which Labor increased power prices. Labor also introduced that scheme before March 2011. We all know that it was supposed to cost \$345 million. When Treasurer Baird had a look at it he found that the cost would be \$1.9 billion. Every single person in New South Wales, particularly every single person in rural New South Wales, is subsidising the cost of providing electricity, because of the incompetence and mismanagement of the Labor Government.

What happened in relation to the electricity industry under Labor is absolutely disgraceful. Costs increased under the Labor Government and prices were driven up accordingly. That why it was so important for the former Premier, Morris Iemma, and his Treasurer, Michael Costa, to sell electricity assets before the people of New South Wales found out what was going on. Premier Iemma and Treasurer Costa were very upset when the current Leader of The Opposition, John Robertson, as the leader of the State's union movement, opposed the sale. Later, after John Robertson was elected and when Eric Roozendaal and others wanted to sell the assets, he voted in favour of selling electricity assets. Part of that strategy was an attempt to hide the debt that had been driven up by Labor. Yet Labor Opposition members now reject this bill and foreshadow amendments. The Labor Opposition has caused a great deal of damage to New South Wales, particularly to regional areas of New South Wales.

This bill is designed to drive down electricity costs. Together with other reform measures, this legislation will halt spiralling costs and drive down the cost of living in this State. One would think that Labor members would be cheering about this State finally having a government that is bringing costs under control, but no: again Labor members have put their head in the sand. They have absolutely no idea what good government is about. That message was delivered yet again during last weekend's Northern Tablelands by-election when Labor polled 9.7 per cent—not even double figures, just a single digit. One wonders which digit of the hand is being gestured right now towards Labor by the people of the Northern Tablelands and other regional areas of New South Wales. The strong message given to the Opposition at last weekend's by-election came through loud and clear at every polling booth in the Northern Tablelands electorate. Labor did not win one booth.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Not one?

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Not one. In fact, at some polling booths Labor did not get even one vote. The message delivered by the electorate is loud and clear, but Labor has not learned anything. Labor must listen to the people. The people of New South Wales want the changes that the O'Farrell Government is implementing. That is why the Northern Tablelands by-election was a victory for the Government. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [4.41 p.m.]: My contribution to debate on the Energy Services Corporations Amendment (Distributor Efficiency) Bill 2013 will be brief. I support the bill, which continues the Government's election commitment to reform our electricity networks. The Government has identified more than \$2.5 billion in unnecessary capital expenditure and operating costs. As a result, network price rises will be capped at the rate of increase of the consumer price index or below from 1 July for at least the next six years. The days of unsustainable labour costs and the culture of extravagance of the previous Labor Government are now over. Electricity network businesses must now focus on delivering the lowest prices possible for New South Wales electricity consumers. Every effort is now being directed towards driving down the cost of electricity.

Since July last year the Government has already reduced business operating expenditure by \$220 million and stripped more than \$550 million of capital spending from this year's and next year's budgets. The Government also has directed future capital spending to be cut by a further 20 per cent, which will result in total savings of more than \$2.5 billion. That is \$2.5 billion that will not be flowing onto household power bills. Part of the reform process has been the Government's implementation in July 2012 of interim governance provisions for the three State-owned electricity distributors—Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy—whereby the networks are governed under a common board. The bill aims to formalise that interim structure by appointing a single joint board for all three distributors.

The bill provides that the joint board will act in the best interests of the companies as a combined operation as though individual distributors are part of a single entity. That will substantially improve the efficiency of the three State-owned electricity distributors by enabling decision-making processes which are driving electricity reforms to be made at one board rather than by a cumbersome, time-consuming and inefficient process of decisions being made at three separate board meetings. Schedule 1 item [1] to the bill will provide for the appointment of a single board of directors as the joint board of each of the energy distributors. This amending bill also will vary section 20N of the State Owned Corporations Act 1989, which provides for energy distributors to be reimbursed for the costs of complying with directions that are not in their commercial interests.

As a result of this bill an energy distributor will not be entitled to be reimbursed for the costs of complying with a direction that is not in its commercial interests if the direction is in the combined commercial interests of energy distributors. The amount to which an energy distributor will be entitled to be reimbursed for the costs of complying with a direction that is not in the combined commercial interests of energy distributors will be reduced by any net benefit accruing to any other energy distributor as a result of compliance with the direction. Schedule 1 item [4] will provide for the chief executive officer of an energy distributor to delegate functions to an employee of the energy distributor, subject to any directions of the joint board.

Instead of allowing electricity prices to increase by more than 60 per cent over five years as a result of the incompetence, extravagance and gold-plated capital expenditure of the Government's predecessors, this Government is standing by New South Wales consumers by recognising the struggle its constituents face day to day in coping with the cost of living, to which electricity prices are a major contributor, by introducing a suite of reforms, driving down the cost of electricity and driving down networked power costs in New South Wales. The creation of a common board will avoid the legal niceties and potential for conflicts of interest for board members with various commercial interests. It will drive savings by introducing the efficiency of common decision-making. This bill is all about increased efficiency and driving down costs. The Government is not introducing legislation for its own sake but, rather, is moving to introduce reforms in the interests of New South Wales consumers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD** (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [4.46 p.m.], in reply: I thank members who contributed to the debate, particularly the member for Mulgoa, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Cronulla, the member for Heffron and the member for Bankstown. It is worth making a couple of key points that emerged during debate. An issue was raised relating to the timing of this reform and directors' duties and obligations. I will attempt to ease members' concerns by pointing out that when the interim governance arrangements were implemented, legal advice confirmed the validity of doing so during the interim period. The Government is now moving to formalise the interim arrangements. The bill establishes an appropriate governance framework for the continuing operations of the distributors.

The member for Heffron raised concerns related to electricity prices. It is worthwhile dispelling some of the myths associated with electricity prices. As the member for Heffron well knows, dividends do not affect electricity prices. A regulator makes a determination on the cost of equity, which includes a dividend stream.

That is set in stone and it is a cost that is embedded in the business. Ultimately, provided that business activity remains within the dividend streams, dividends do not affect electricity prices. The member for Heffron knows that and so does the community. It should be noted that the Government's dividends are well within the dividends forecast by the Labor Government. This Government is doing everything possible to generate savings. It is important for the House to understand that when a responsible government moves to contain electricity prices it reduces the costs of the business, which will lead to long-term lower prices. That is exactly what this Government has done.

The Government examined the operating arrangements and the capital arrangements of electricity distributors. The interim board has done a fantastic job, and very good progress is being made. The next determination relating to costs of the distributors will reflect the efforts that have been applied over the past couple of years to reduction of costs. The member for Heffron foreshadowed the moving of an amendment in relation to employment. We do not support the amendment. We have asked our State-owned corporations to run their businesses with stand-alone governance and management. As part of that they have an obligation to maintain regional employment. We will continue to support the State-owned corporation model, which is to drive efficiencies as much as possible in delivering the best possible services at the lowest possible prices, and ensuring the corporations maintain their commitments. They have broad community mandates as well as commitments to regional employment. We will allow management to get on with their job.

The bill amends the Energy Services Corporation Act 1995 to improve the combined operational efficiency of the three State-owned electricity distributors through more streamlined board governance arrangements. In July 2012, when the Government implemented its interim governance arrangements for Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy, the purpose of these arrangements was to drive network reform, achieve efficiency savings and put downward pressure on electricity prices. Those in opposition have mentioned electricity prices. That is what this is all about: driving a more efficient business with smaller head offices, looking for savings, putting downward pressure on prices—exactly what we have done. Significant savings—about \$2½ billion—have been found in capital expenditure and operational expenditure.

We are well up on the original forecast of \$400 million for operating expenditure and, in the long term, that will benefit consumers across the State. The expectation is that from 1 July it will be at or below the consumer price index rate. We anticipate that for the next few years that is exactly what we will see. This is a responsible government taking responsible action, delivering for the people of New South Wales. The bill also provides for a joint board of directors to act in the best interests of the distributors as if the individual businesses were being operated as part of a single enterprise. This will assist in streamlining the decision-making process at board level. Currently decisions to drive the electricity reform initiatives are made at three separate board meetings, which can obviously be inefficient and cumbersome. This bill obviously streamlines the process.

The bill also helps to alleviate concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest of board members discharging their directors' duties, and the bill provides that the chief executive officer may delegate any of his functions in respect of a particular distributor to an employee of that distributor subject to any directions of the joint board. This amendment allows for streamlined management arrangements while maintaining appropriate levels of oversight. The bill also provides that a distributor will not be entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of complying with a direction from the Government that is not in its commercial interests if the direction is in the combined commercial interest of the three distributors.

Again, it is all businesses acting as one, and any amount that an individual distributor would be entitled to be reimbursed will be reduced by the amount of the benefit accruing to any of the distributors as a result of compliance with the directions. I again thank members for their contributions. The O'Farrell Government continues to take all possible action to reduce the cost of electricity for households across the State. This legislation is sensible and responsible and is achieving the results the community would expect from the Government. The actions we have taken will put downward pressure on electricity prices. I commend the bill to the House

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Ron Hoenig.**

### Consideration in Detail

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** By leave, I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules.

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.54 p.m.]:** I move Opposition amendment No. 1:

No. 1 Page 5, Schedule 1 [6]. Insert after line 13:

#### 21 Maintenance of staff numbers in rural centres

- (1) Each energy distributor must ensure that the number of regular staff of the energy distributor employed at a rural centre is, as far as is reasonably practicable, maintained at not less than the same level of regular staff as were employed by the energy distributor at the rural centre immediately before the commencement of section 9A.
- (2) This section operates for 5 years after the commencement of section 9A.
- (3) In this section:

*regular staff* of an energy distributor means:

- (a) staff appointed to a position within the organisational structure of the energy distributor, otherwise than on a temporary basis, and
- (b) casual staff who are engaged by the energy distributor on a regular and systematic basis for a sequence of periods of employment during a period of at least 6 months and who have a reasonable expectation of continuing employment with the energy distributor,

but does not include senior staff.

*rural centre* means a centre of population of 30,000 people or fewer.

State-owned corporations should act efficiently but the Opposition accepts that many constraints on State-owned corporations restrict their operations. However, if it is a State-owned corporation the State consequently has an obligation to the people of the State and also an obligation to those in rural communities who require some assistance from the State because of their isolation and their economic prospects. I conceded in my speech on the second reading that there are a number of ways—and I gave one example—in which operating the three State-owned corporations as one entity could create efficiencies. They relate specifically to technology and licence agreements, which are extremely costly and are multiplied through the three State-owned corporations.

The problem is that when one wants to treat a State-owned corporation as a private company the first thing to be looked at is the employees of the company. It will start downsizing to generate greater revenues to the shareholders, who happen to be the Treasury and the people of New South Wales. But you cannot just look at this corporation in isolation, because the State has wider obligations to rural communities. In my speech on the second reading I named the rural seats where these employees work. There are 33 Coalition seats that contain employees of State-owned corporations. It is not just their or their families' jobs that are at risk; it is the economic generation in those rural communities that depend upon their income to generate local economic activity.

New South Wales is not a corporation; it is not just a corporate balance sheet; it is a homeland of millions of people and consequently a measure of protection is required for those in rural New South Wales over a period to allow economic transition. There is nothing wrong with the amendment. It is not an amendment I just invented. A similar provision is contained in the Local Government Act. When councils are amalgamated in rural areas the council is required to retain its full-time employees for three years. That is designed to ensure the employees and the rural communities are maintained and protected. The Opposition is proposing a similar provision. If there is as much fat in these electricity companies as the Government is suggesting, the first place they will look to is their employees. Employees are spread right throughout the rural communities.

There is considerable concern in Port Macquarie, where there are 800 such employees. The amendment refers to a rural centre as containing fewer than 30,000 people, but 800 employees in Port Macquarie are extremely concerned as to their future. If this independent corporation made a decision to centralise the head office in Sydney hundreds of people in Port Macquarie could be out of a job. I urge the Treasurer to give this

matter careful consideration. These State-owned corporations are specifically designed not to operate as private corporations. They have powers of direction over them by the Government of the day, through the Treasurer, which may well entitle them to a measure of reimbursement. In fact, that is the very thing this bill tries to prevent. This is about maintaining employment in the bush and allowing a particular transition. There should not be a hands-off approach. The Treasurer made an observation when he spoke in reply to the second reading debate that consideration will be given to protecting some of these people at various times.

The difficulty that the Government faces by going down this path is that that is not an economically efficient approach to take. If we put it in the legislation that the corporations cannot just sack workers for a period in rural communities they will not be able to do it: that will be the law. If you rely on the Treasurer—you make representations to the Treasurer and ask for directions that these people in a rural community are able to maintain their particular jobs—the State-owned corporation under section 20N will be entitled to reimbursement from the Treasury. It will cost the Government money to issue directions. It will not be economically efficient. I would much rather have the Treasurer come into this House and say that five years is too long, because even in local government it is three years, and the Government proposed to reduce that to a period of one year about a year and a half ago. I would much rather he say, "You are asking for an excessive time." My amendment states in proposed section 21 (1):

Each energy distributor must ensure that the number of regular staff of the energy distributor employed at a rural centre is, as far as is reasonably practicable, maintained at not less than the same level of regular staff as were employed ...

The distributors are not directed to maintain employment that is unreasonable but employment that is reasonably practicable. It does not require maintenance of high-powered executive staff. If the corporations—or the Treasurer for that matter—think that the corporations are overstaffed with high-powered, highly paid executives rational economic decisions would be made by the energy corporations. If not, we would expect there to be some intervention from the Treasurer, as a shareholder.

We are talking about general workers in rural towns—some of them tiny towns—around the State. You will always be able to make a case that employing people who, for example, may be sitting there just in case they have to repair wires in a storm is not economically responsible, because it could be outsourced to some sort of private corporation, so those employees are not needed. You may be able to contract out a number of those services because a State-owned corporation, thinking it is acting efficiently, has no need for those particular employees. These employees have been entrenched in their rural communities: they have built their homes and businesses have been established there. I have visited those towns only on circuit, but members of the Coalition who live in those towns know how desperate many of those people are for there to be economic generation and some sort of employment.

They know how concerned those people are going to be if the Government allows carte blanche for them to lose their jobs. As I said, if five years is considered unreasonable, pick three years. But pick a town so that, if there is to be a transition, at least the transition will be at a particular place. If Government members do not support what I am proposing, or some form of what I am proposing, representations will be made to the Treasurer and the Government to give directions to the corporations to maintain employment in rural towns. If the Treasurer gives a direction Treasury will say that there will need to be reimbursement under section 20N of the State Owned Corporations Act. The Opposition amendment is not unreasonable; it is designed to help those in rural communities.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD** (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [5.04 p.m.]: I thank the shadow Minister for proposing the amendment, for the approach he has taken in delivering the amendment and the overall reasonableness that he has brought to the debate. But as a result of this bill there is no impact on numbers of employees. That is the fact. This is about confirming arrangements that have been in place on an interim basis and making them permanent. In relation to taking costs out of the business, we did exactly what the shadow Minister alluded to: rather than having three boards, we had a single board; rather than having three chief executive officers, we had one chief executive officer; rather than having three chief financial officers, we had one chief financial officer. So rather than having three levels of senior executive management across these businesses, we had one single level. That has started to take the costs out of the business.

In relation to the shadow Minister's concerns, if we put that sort of direction in, it would preclude things such as voluntary redundancy. There would be many across the business who would be very interested in taking voluntary redundancy, and this would not allow that to take place. That is not the constraint we want to put on the business. We understand the commitment of this business across regional New South Wales. It is a

long and proud tradition and one that we are happy to support. At the same time we are asking businesses, commercial enterprises, on behalf of the Government, to run them as efficiently as possible and deliver services to the community in the best possible way.

We certainly think we have done that with the electricity reforms contained in this bill. We will see outcomes ultimately in relation to electricity prices. We are doing everything possible to put downward pressure on electricity prices. I understand the intent of the shadow Minister. I think the preclusion I identified is a good example of why it does not work practically. The leave of this bill does not in any way, shape or form impact upon the number of employees as a result. I highlight that the O'Farrell Government is incredibly committed to regional New South Wales. As the shadow Minister articulated in his speech, there are many members on this side who represent regional communities, and we are proud to stand up for our regional communities.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Keira?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I don't think so. We have preserved jobs with the Jobs Action Plan and ensured that there are incentives applying to regional jobs. We have started infrastructure projects such as the long-awaited duplication of the Pacific Highway—the funds have been delivered for that—and the Princes Highway. Money has finally been allocated for Bridges for the Bush. We are certainly delivering for regional New South Wales. We are proud of our record and we stand by it. We reject the amendment proposed by the Opposition.

**Question—That Opposition amendment No. 1 be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 21**

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

**Noes, 59**

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

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Opposition amendment No. 1 negatived.**

**Schedule 1 agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail concluded.**

### **Third Reading**

**Motion by Mr Mike Baird agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.**

## **STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2013**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 22 May 2013.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.20 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013. With limited exceptions the Opposition does not oppose the bill as introduced. The bill is of a type introduced by all governments over the past 30 years. It is an omnibus bill with a large range of miscellaneous provisions that, it is assumed, are too minor in their own right to justify separate legislation. Schedule 1 contains amendments to Acts and one regulation. They are characterised by the Government as minor and non-controversial policy changes. Schedule 2 deals with what is termed matters of pure statute law revision. This is meant to consist of minor technical changes. Schedule 3 repeals redundant Acts and instruments or parts thereof. Schedule 4 deals with general savings, transitional and other provisions.

The Opposition will not oppose the bill in this place. I understand that two issues have arisen. Schedule 1.26 causes some concern to the member for Bankstown, who I understood was to express her views. Perhaps she has raised them directly with the relevant Minister, although that may not be the case. The Hon. Walt Secord and the Hon. Sophie Cotsis raised the other matter. It relates to concerns from the United Services Union, which sent a letter to the Attorney General dated 24 May in which the union raised issues about the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, which is dealt with at schedule 1.12. The union raised the following questions:

The union has the following questions about the amendments:

What impact will the amendment have on employees of council?

What impact will the amendment have on employees of council who work within the water section?

What impact will the amendment have on ownership of the water utilities of Gosford and Wyong councils?

What impact will the amendment have on financial control of the water utilities of Gosford and Wyong councils?

Why does the Government seek to make this amendment?

I understood those matters had been raised with the Attorney's office and hopefully they will be resolved by the time the bill goes through the upper House. For that reason the Opposition will not oppose them here. As I understand it, those concerns have been raised and hopefully either clarification has been provided or those amendments have been withdrawn and the concerns will be addressed. Apart from those comments, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [5.23 p.m.]: I support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013. Subject to the matters raised by the member for Liverpool, this is essentially an uncontroversial bill. It represents a regular practice of this Chamber in previous sessions of Parliament to introduce in one bill a number of very minor policy changes. For example, schedule 1 to the bill contains amendments to 41 Acts and one regulation. I will not go through each of them. In fact, I highlight only one, that is, the amendment made by schedule 1 to the Interpretation Act 1987. The amendment will authorise the New South Wales *Government Gazette* to be published on the New South Wales legislation website and give official status to the online version of that gazette.



Very importantly for legal practitioners and members of the general public, publication of that website will enable searches across multiple gazettes. It is very important that law in New South Wales is accessible. Allowing searches to be undertaken across multiple gazettes will enhance the accessibility for not only the legal profession but also the general public. The amendments will also enable printing of subscriptions of the *Government Gazette* to be discontinued. This is essentially a non-controversial bill. It is part of a tidying up exercise. To the extent that many redundant pieces of legislation are repealed, it will declutter the statute books, which is always a good thing. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [5.24 p.m.]: I support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013. These types of bills are regularly introduced into the Parliament for the purpose of making minor policy changes and repealing redundant legislation. The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 also seeks to clean up a number of statutes. The objects of the bill are, first, to make minor amendments to various Acts and one regulation under schedule 1; second, to amend certain other Acts and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision under schedule 2; third, to repeal certain Acts and an instrument and provisions of instruments under schedule 3; and, fourth, to make other provisions of a consequential or ancillary nature under schedule 4. Schedule 1 contains a significant number of statutes that have been amended, including the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003. I would have liked that Act to have been repealed. Other than that matter, as these are minor amendments I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [5.26 p.m.]: The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 continues the longstanding statute law revision program, particularly for making relatively minor policy changes. Among other reforms, schedule 1 amends the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 to extend the term of appointment of any prospective Auditor-General from seven years to eight years. This will be more consistent with the conduct of reviews of the Audit Office through the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee. Following recent legislative amendment, these reviews are now required to be conducted four yearly rather than three yearly, or once every New South Wales parliamentary term. Indeed, there is one such review presently being undertaken.

This amendment gives effect to a Public Accounts Committee recommendation. It will ensure that the Auditor-General will be subject to two reviews during his or her term in office and that the same Parliament initiating a review will have time to implement any recommendations from the review. I note that the term of the current and very capable Auditor-General, Mr Peter Achterstraat, will expire in September this year. A recruitment process is underway for the new Auditor-General, who will be appointed for eight years pursuant to today's proposed amendment to the Public Finance and Audit Act.

**Mr STUART AYRES** (Penrith) [5.27 p.m.]: The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 makes for a number of important changes and minor amendments to a number of Acts, including the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, the Aboriginal Land Rights Regulation, the Anatomy Act, the Biofuels Act, the Building Professionals Act, the Charles Sturt University Act—I might come back to that one—the Community Land Management Act, the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act, the Conveyancers Licensing Act, the Conveyancing Act, the Electricity Supply Act, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act, the Health Administration Act, the Home Care Service Act, the Human Tissue Act, the Impounding Act, the Interpretation Act, the Local Government Act, the Macquarie University Act, the Plumbing and Drainage Act, the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act, the Public Finance and Audit Act, the Radiation Control Act, the Radiation Control Amendment Act, the Real Property Act, the Residential Tenancies Act, the Retirement Villages Act and the Southern Cross University Act.

From time to time the Attorney General has to make a number of minor amendments to provisions of Acts and regulations and the Parliament often rolls these bills together. A number of these areas are important to people across New South Wales. One of the key components of this bill is that we want to ensure that all the legislation keeps ticking over and that as particular issues arise we make changes to the relevant legislation. A number of changes are also proposed to other university Acts, as well as to the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Act and the Sydney Water Catchment Management Act. I acknowledge that the Minister for Primary Industries is also making a number of improvements to the way that Sydney Water operates. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.30 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Greg Smith, in reply: I thank all members who have made contributions to the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013. The bill makes miscellaneous minor amendments to 41 Acts and one regulation. The bill deals with matters of pure statute law revision, it repeals certain Acts and provisions of Acts and instruments

that are redundant and it contains necessary savings, transitional and other provisions. The amendments contained in the bill are of a minor and non-controversial nature. As part of the ongoing statute law revision program, this bill enables minor policy changes to be made efficiently and redundant legislation to be repealed and overall it ensures that New South Wales legislation remains as up to date and as effective as possible. I commend the bill to the House.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

### **Third Reading**

**Motion by Mr Ray Williams, on behalf of Mr Greg Smith, agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.**

## **CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT (SUPERVISORY LEVY) BILL 2013**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 22 May 2013.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.31 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in this place on the Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill 2013. The shadow Minister with carriage of the matter is the Hon. Steve Whan in the other place. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The object of the bill is to require the payment of a casino supervisory levy in respect of each casino licence issued under the Casino Control Act 1912. The amount of the levy is to be fixed by the regulations and is to be paid to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, which is to pay it into the Consolidated Fund.

The Government justifies the bill by saying that it is appropriate to apply user-pays charges to the regulatory and supervisory services the authorities have in place for the casino. The Government proposes to insert a clause into the Casino Control Act which would allow it to impose these as yet undefined charges by regulation. Any proceeds from the charges would be paid into the Consolidated Fund. Theoretically there is an issue about whether this legislation is necessary. Currently the rate of tax the casino pays on different forms of gaming and between different parts of the casino is ultimately set by a direction from the Treasurer. In theory, this is after negotiation with the casino. But ultimately, as I understand it, the Treasurer does not require agreement from the casino. I understand that at one stage the casino did pay directly for the casino supervisory staff. Later, during negotiations, it was understood that the rate of taxes and charges applied to the casino included the funds to cover the cost of the casino supervisory staff.

It could be argued that this appears to be an unnecessary piece of regulation when one considers the fact that the Government already has the power to increase the amount paid by the casino via Treasurer's direction and that revenue from both goes directly to the Consolidated Fund. I am advised that the Government has been unable to provide any information either to the Opposition or to the casino about the amount currently being spent, the amount to be collected or the services intended to be covered by the proposed regulation. Whilst it is reasonable to suggest that the cost of the supervision of the casino should be covered on a user-pays basis, it is hard to see why this separate legislation is necessary. On the one hand, this is creating a new regulation for no real purpose and does not appear consistent with the oft talked about agenda of removing red tape. The contrary argument is that putting these fees into a disallowable regulation makes the process more transparent and subject to the Parliament.

I understand that the casino, not surprisingly, has a fairly dim view of the tax, and given the Government's history of very poor relations with The Star casino it is certainly possible to read an element of payback into the legislation. I am told that the Government has provided the casino with no indication of the amount of the new cost. There is a legitimate question about why specific legislation for a specific user-pays

charge is being imposed on the casino for supervisory services but not on other gaming venues that receive similar services. One wonders whether this is a precedent that might later be applied to pubs and clubs. Having made those comments, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [5.34 p.m.]: I support the Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill 2013. This bill will introduce a levy that is to be imposed on the casino operator for the purposes of funding the ongoing necessary regulatory practices under which the casino operates. In the interests of the wider community, the casino in question, The Star, will now be required to contribute to the considerable costs of overseeing the regulations by which it is bound. The levy will consolidate the ongoing efforts of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to regulate the casino operator in New South Wales.

The regulatory functions undertaken by the authority help provide a check on the casino operator to ensure that the casino maintains its ethics and legality in an environment potentially conducive to harmful behaviour. Casino regulation is undertaken pursuant to the provisions outlined in the Casino Control Act 1992, which ensure that "the management and operation of the casino remains free from criminal influence or exploitation" and that gaming is "conducted honestly", and that the management and operation of the casino contains and controls the "potential of a casino to cause harm to the public interest and to individuals and families". Therefore, the Act currently protects the community from potentially negative and harmful influences that the casino environment may produce, and limits these effects wherever possible.

I do not need to speak about the potential consequences of gambling in general, whether it is playing the pokies in the local pub or betting on a football game. The casino environment can be even more tempting and potentially even more harmful. The authority will "directly supervise and inspect the operations of a casino and the conduct of gaming in a casino" and "detect offences committed in or in relation to a casino" and will prosecute offences under the Act.

Under the current arrangements, taxpayers foot the bill entirely, with no ongoing levy imposed on the casino for the considerable costs of maintaining the casino regulatory regime. This amendment addresses that imposition on taxpayers by making provisions for the payment of a casino supervisory levy. In a period where the New South Wales budget is still under considerable strain, it is entirely appropriate that The Star casino and any future casino licence holders contribute to the ongoing public costs of their business. Whilst the authority's regulatory practices are in the public interest, it is vital that we are able to ensure that they can be funded in the most effective way, and that is through a levy such as this. The New South Wales Government is still working to repair our budget and there are many other essential services that we must continue to fund in the public interest.

The introduction of this levy shows that the New South Wales Government and the authority, through its extensive system of casino monitoring and supervision, are committed to the necessary ongoing regulation of casino operations in line with the Casino Control Act 1992. Despite difficult economic circumstances putting pressure on the State's funding responsibilities, obviously we must continue to maintain casino regulations. I note that the Government has appropriately engaged The Star casino in consultations on how to facilitate the commencement of the supervisory levy, with the aim of having these regulations in place for the 2013-14 financial year. Ultimately, the introduction of this levy appropriately charges the casino operator with the responsibility of contributing to the significant necessary costs of maintaining the regulatory system within which it must operate, in addition to the taxpayers of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla) [5.38 p.m.]: I support the Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill 2013. The object of the bill is to require the payment of a casino supervisory levy in respect of each casino licence issued under the Casino Control Act 1992. This ongoing levy will ensure that a casino will assist in meeting the day-to-day public costs of maintaining the regulatory regime. Under new section 115A of the Casino Control Act, that levy will be paid to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, which will pay it into the Consolidated Fund. Broadly speaking, it is appropriate that the costs of regulation that ensure the integrity of an industry's operating environment are met by that industry.

There are numerous examples of this. One example is the Australian Transactions Report and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC], which is Australia's specialist financial intelligence unit. Its function, among other things, is to mitigate the risk of money laundering, terrorism financing and other organised crime. It recovers the cost of its regulatory activities from the businesses it regulates. Those businesses are best placed to minimise the cost of regulation. They in turn benefit through regulation by the Australian Transactions Report and Analysis Centre insofar as they are better protected from risks of being exposed to money laundering or terrorism financing.

The same principle equally applies in the case of a casino supervisory levy. The industry has created the need for regulation and it should therefore be responsible for the associated expense of regulation. Under existing arrangements, much of the cost of maintaining the regulatory system in New South Wales is borne by taxpayers. There is no ongoing levy imposed on the casino to maintain the regulatory system. The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority currently imposes some fees on the casino operator in accordance with specific provisions of the Casino Control Act, and also undertakes certain investigations for which reimbursement is required. Other jurisdictions already have arrangements in place to recover similar costs.

The amount of the levy will be prescribed via a regulation-making power in the Casino Control Act. How the levy will be calculated, the regulatory activities and functions that are to be costed and the timing and imposition of the levy will be determined in future consultation with the casino. It is important to note also that regulation will not be compromised; robust supervision and oversight will occur. Regulation promotes community confidence that the casino operates in a responsible manner. The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority will continue the ongoing assessment of the casino operator in between the five-yearly statutory reviews of the casino's operations. Compliance with statutory review recommendations is continuously assessed to identify any deterioration in standards, or systemic failure. A casino demands robust oversight. The bill ensures that the costs associated with achieving that oversight are borne by the casino operator, as they reasonably should be. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.41 p.m.]: The Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill 2013 seeks to amend the Casino Act 1992 to allow a casino supervisory levy to be imposed on the casino operator. The bill also seeks to provide for the ongoing and thorough regulation of the Sydney casino and cover costs incurred in the process by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, who is responsible for this regulation. The authority's functions include the licensing of individuals performing sensitive functions at the casino, the approval of new games, the auditing of casino revenue, and the monitoring of the casino operations on a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week basis through an onsite inspectorate.

Once every five years the authority also undertakes detailed licence investigations under section 31 of the Casino Control Act and makes inquiries into specific matters relating to the casino or its management as the situation arises. At present, much of the costs incurred in the duties of the authority are funded by the New South Wales taxpayer, because there is no ongoing levy that assists in meeting the day-to-day public costs of maintaining the regulatory system. This bill amends that by providing for the introduction of a supervisory levy to assist in meeting those costs and ensuring facilitation of the highest degree of oversight and supervision of the casino.

For well over 20 years I was in the fortunate position of managing licensed clubs. During that time I was involved not only in the liquor industry but also in the gaming industry. I believe it is only fair and reasonable that the casino contributes to the costs of the authority. I add that even while in opposition the current Minister was astute about the needs of the industry. Above all else, he consulted with the industry on a regular basis and he still does. I note previous comments about his discussions with a current casino licensee. I applaud the Minister for his foresight and vision in creating a gaming environment that is open, transparent and independent of government and government processes.

I have a knowledge of how other gaming institutes operate around the world, and I think our situation would be the envy of every other gaming institution. I congratulate the Minister for his work. The amount of the levy will be prescribed through a regulation-making power through the Casino Control Act, which will allow it to be adjusted for inflation and reflect adjustments to the regulatory activities as necessary. We see new games and activities on a regular basis and the industry is renowned for new devices, such as multi-terminal gaming. As technology increases I am sure the pace of those changes will also increase, so I think it is wise to reflect the regulatory activities as necessary. The levy will be paid to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority.

The importance of the Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill cannot be understated because it directly parallels the importance of casino regulation in New South Wales. Regulators must match the changing and fluid environment of the casino with regular reviews and adjustments to the approach taken to protecting against emerging risks. Regulations are in force to protect the industry from criminal influence and exploitation. Regulation also builds community confidence in fairness and the responsible nature of the casino. The Minister and his department must be applauded for building the community's confidence in the way the casino conducts its business. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GEORGE SOURIS** (Upper Hunter—Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts) [5.46 p.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Liverpool,

Coogee, Cronulla and Tweed for their contributions to the debate. The Casino Control Amendment (Supervisory Levy) Bill 2013 will impose a levy on the Sydney casino to help cover the cost of monitoring and regulating its operations. A casino environment demands intensive regulatory oversight including a legislative framework, reporting requirements, and monitoring to ensure that the unique risks associated with such a venue are identified and managed within a strict regulatory framework. It is appropriate that costs associated with regulating the casino should be borne by the casino operator. The bill will help to achieve this. I commend the bill to the House.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

### **Third Reading**

**Motion by Mr George Souris agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.**

## **PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT BILL 2013**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 22 May 2013.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.47 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate in this place on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013. Shadow Minister the Hon. Steve Whan has carriage of the matter in the other place. The Opposition will not oppose the bill in this place, although we reserve our position to give further consideration to the bill in the other place. The object of the bill is to amend the Petroleum (Onshore) Act, the Mining Act and some related Acts.

The amendments include: to increase penalties for offences relating to mining for petroleum without authority and certain other offences and to revise other offences so that corresponding offences relating to petroleum mining and other mining are in similar terms; to enable directions relating to compliance with conditions of petroleum titles and addressing adverse environmental impacts of mining for petroleum to be given and to provide for enforcement of such conditions and appeals against directions; to provide for audits of prospecting or mining for petroleum; to extend the legal costs that the holders of mining authorities or petroleum titles must pay for landholders relating to arrangements for access to land and to make other provision with respect to access to land by holders of petroleum titles, and to make other provisions with respect to arrangements for access to land.

The bill also will make it an offence for the holder of a petroleum title to fail to pay royalty, enable the publication of certain environmental information, provide for the appointment of, and to confer inspection and other investigation powers equivalent to those conferred under the Mining Act on, inspectors under the Petroleum Act and to provide for permits for entry onto land the subject of a petroleum title in other circumstances. The bill also will insert various offences relating to enforcement of the Petroleum Act and the enforcement of rights under and conditions of petroleum titles, and will make existing and new offences relating to the provision of false or misleading information under the Petroleum Act and the Mining Act offences of strict liability.

This amending bill also will insert other provisions relating to offences under the Petroleum Act consistent with the Mining Act, including provisions about continuing offences, proceedings for offences, enabling orders that are made to require offenders to make monetary payments and enabling restraining orders to be made against the property of offenders against whom payment orders are sought. The bill will provide for the ongoing effect of notices given under the Petroleum Act and the Mining Act and the effect of conditions of petroleum titles, authorisations and permits, to make other amendments to the Mining Act consistent with

amendments to the Petroleum Act, including the removal of the power to suspend a mining authorisation for contravention of an access arrangement. I have outlined the principal amendments that will be effected by this legislation.

The bill includes power to ensure immediate compliance with requirements of the Act by expanding the range of issues for which directions may be given, including adverse impact or risk of adverse impact on the environment, and requirements to mitigate impacts that include the rehabilitation of land. The bill will introduce audit powers to enable the Government to meet its commitment to auditable licences. Inspectors also will have greater powers to obtain information and to gather a wider range of material for investigation. Inspectors will be able to enter premises where there is proposed or suspected exploration, or production activities, or where documentation about those activities may be kept. The legislation will amend the Petroleum Onshore Act and the Mining Act. It will increase the powers and penalties of those Acts, thereby allowing greater compliance activity over exploration and extraction activities.

The legislation also deals with some issues relating to access to land for exploration. It will give a landowner a right to deny access to a mining company, but only if the company has breached the conditions of its access agreements. The bill also will provide increased ability for landowners to recoup legal costs from the proponents of the project. The legislation also will confer power to make codes for access agreements, which means either a standard access agreement or a set of standard clauses. Standard and public access agreements or at least frameworks would be worthwhile and clearly should be supported. The legislation purports to seek to cut red tape by removing the requirement for an explorer to notify adjacent landholders if it is undertaking seismic testing on a public road and has permission to do so. As I indicated, the Opposition does not oppose the bill in this House but reserves its position in the other place.

**Mr CHRIS SPENCE** (The Entrance) [5.52 p.m.]: I support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013, which underscores the New South Wales Government's determination to have the toughest regulatory framework in Australia for our petroleum industry. Since March 2011, the New South Wales Government has introduced a wide range of important changes to how the petroleum industry must perform. I will outline the changes during the course of my speech. The first change made by this Government was the development and implementation of the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy, which has been one of the most significant policy developments in New South Wales recent planning history. The policy identifies and provides a higher level of protection for more than two million hectares of strategic agricultural land and valuable water resources.

Under the policy, an agricultural impact statement is required for all mining and coal seam gas exploration and production proposals that may impact agricultural resources. The purpose of the statement is to provide an assessment of the potential impacts of those activities on agricultural and water resources and businesses. Where a petroleum exploration or production proposal is located on strategic agricultural land, it is also required to go through a gateway process. The gateway process is an independent, scientific and up-front assessment of impacts on agricultural land and water of a proposal before a development application can be submitted. The gateway assessment ensures that the potential impacts of exploration and mining activities on agricultural resources or industries are identified and assessed.

Further extensive requirements for assessing agriculture and water impacts exist under the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy. The Government developed the aquifer interference policy to safeguard water and the policy is now part of the regulatory framework under the Water Management Act. It sets out the requirements for obtaining water licences for aquifer interference activities. It also sets out what must be considered when assessing impacts on an existing water-dependent asset. Extensive water studies must be undertaken and submitted as part of the material to be assessed for project proposals that will interfere with an aquifer. The Government's actions under the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy have not stopped there. The Government understands that difficulties can arise between farmers and miners with interests over the same land. It has therefore created the important position of Land and Water Commissioner. The commissioner provides guidance to landholders and the community in relation to those competing interests.

The commissioner already has been instrumental in the development of a code of practice for land access. The code will ensure that access arrangements between landholders and titleholders are fair and reasonable. As part of the bill's amendments, the code of practice for land access will be a regulation under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act. The regulatory framework also has been strengthened through the implementation of further codes of practice that address important subjects relating to hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and the integrity of wells, and they are enforceable as conditions of title. The Government is introducing a number of measures that recognise the community. New community consultation guidelines have been developed to ensure communities are aware of, and are consulted in relation to, new title applications.

Furthermore, to ensure the health and wellbeing of the community, an exclusion zone has been declared over residential and future residential areas as well as critical industry clusters. An additional two-kilometre buffer zone will apply around residential areas. In addition, all petroleum exploration, assessment and production titles and activities will be required to hold an environment protection licence that will be issued by the Environment Protection Authority [EPA]. The Government has strengthened how coal seam gas activities will be regulated by establishing the dedicated Office of Coal Seam Gas. The office is responsible for regulating the coal seam gas industry under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act, and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 as it applies to petroleum work places.

The Government also has made the Environment Protection Authority the lead regulator of environmental and health impacts of coal seam gas activities, which means that the Environment Protection Authority will be able to regulate the local, cumulative or acute impacts of any pollution from coal seam gas activities and take any necessary compliance and enforcement action. The Government sought independent, scientific appraisal of aspects of coal seam gas exploration activities. It called on the Chief Scientist to provide an appraisal on the process of fracking and the design of wells before it lifted a moratorium on fracking. The Government again has called on the Chief Scientist.

This time the Chief Scientist will undertake a full and independent compliance audit of all coal seam gas related activities since 2011. The impact of those activities on health, safety, the environment and the community will be part of the audit. The outcome of this important work will be a set of evidence-based recommendations to the Government. This State is not in the business of closing down the petroleum industry. This State is in the business of ensuring that industry develops with appropriate community and environmental safeguards as well as consideration of other important sectors of our economy. The amendments effected by this bill to the Petroleum (Onshore) Act will further strengthen those two important aspects of this developing industry. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [5.57 p.m.]: I join in debate on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013. The Greens welcome the Government's legislation, based on its objectives to strengthen and clarify the compliance and enforcement framework of the Petroleum Onshore Act 1991. Many members of this House will recall the Legislative Council's inquiry into coal seam gas. In its May 2012 report, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 gave considerable treatment to the Government's lack of compliance monitoring and enforcement. More than a year has passed since the committee made its recommendations based on the inquiry.

The Government has introduced this legislation to address the critical areas of compliance and enforcement in coal seam gas operations. This Government has had to traverse a long distance owing to the role played by the former Government, which involved handing out licences, problems with royalties, and a distinct lack of process that ensured the protection of aquifers, local farming and residential communities, including Alexandria and Petersham, which are very close to my electorate and which were the subject of coal seam gas drilling proposals by Dart Energy. While The Greens do not oppose the bill, I will deal in detail with several elements of it to highlight some positive issues and some negative ones.

I foreshadow that I will be moving some amendments—our right to refuse access amendments—which will allow farming people and others to refuse access for coal seam gas exploration and mining on their properties. I will leave discussion of that to a later time. I draw members' attention to quite a few elements in the bill that are positive. It is worthwhile saying positive things in this situation. We welcome the improved provisions in the bill relating to directions. Such powers are certainly necessary in order to have companies comply with environmental and regulatory obligations. Therefore, we support the fact that directions can be issued for any adverse impact or risk that a company's activities may have on an aspect of the environment.

The fact that directions can be used to rehabilitate, conserve, prevent, control or mitigate any harm to the environment is a positive step, and that should be welcomed. The Act was clearly deficient in this regard, and the bill highlights the inadequacies of the current regulatory regime. With this power the right of the titleholder to challenge the merits of a direction order in the Land and Environment Court is in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. Likewise, we support retaining the power of the Minister to suspend operations for certain contraventions without allowing a merit challenge, as the necessary checks and balances are in place under the Act. This should send a strong message to the industry that it must act in accordance with licence conditions or risk being forced out of business.

Other elements that are useful in the bill and that I would like to spend time discussing include, for example, environmental information aspects. The provisions that allow for environmental information to be

published are welcomed by The Greens and those communities who have been fighting for years to access such information. Of course, this should have been done already as a proactive release under the Government Information (Public Access) Act. If this Act were being followed precisely, community groups would already have access to the information they need to regulate an industry; something the Government has failed to do for many years. It is also important to make these provisions effective. We must have a mandatory requirement for the director general to publish such information; if we do not we will continue to have the problems that plague the current system whereby some information is published and some is not, which can cause significant concern in the community.

The reimbursement of legal costs in arbitration is something The Greens will raise in the Legislative Council. The provision in the bill for the titleholder to cover landholders' reasonable legal costs is a welcome addition. That is something positive that we should acknowledge. However, it falls short because the provision stops when arbitration starts. Many members representing rural and regional areas are aware of this. For example, at this very moment landholders in the Bylong Valley in the Southern Highlands are racking up astronomical legal bills on legal advice for compulsory arbitration. The problem with new section 69DA and its section 141A Mining Act equivalent is that they exclude legal costs when it comes to arbitration.

This arbitration is compulsory for the landholder. If the Government were to ensure that landholders were able to receive positive legal advice on access arrangements, there would be no rational reason for this provision to stop at arbitration. As I said, during this compulsory acquisition period a lot of landholders are clocking up very significant legal fees, which only provides an incentive for mining companies to play out the clock, quite frankly. If you are a legal adviser for a mining company, you play out the clock and you force the landholder into compulsory arbitration where it is clear that the power of the mining company against the landholder—who has no legal advice or support, only his or her own capacity to pay for legal advice—would lead to a very significant power imbalance, because the ability to receive legal advice or support is precluded. In the Legislative Council my Greens colleagues will move amendments to extend the provision to provide legal costs to encompass the arbitration process.

We also believe the financial cap should be addressed. Rather than the cap there should be reasonable costs. We believe that is a common-sense approach. Let us not forget that the landholder receives no compensation for any stress caused, the loss of income by virtue of time spent in these access negotiations—which we know are often complex and difficult—and the huge costs that inevitably accrue in engaging the services of experts, consultants and other non-legal experts to assist in these land access negotiations. For these landholders it is not just the legal costs; it is often getting other access reports, other reports on the quality of the farming land and the cost to their business, and that is not something the Government is proposing to proceed with in this legislation.

It is important to recognise that while there have been some positive developments, there are some concerns. Another positive development is inspectors. The increased powers of inspectors to obtain information and gather a wide range of material for investigation is definitely welcomed. Likewise, we support the strong powers for inspectors being backed up by provisions for offences for failing to comply with requirements either by wilful delay or obstruction. Of course, it is now up to regulatory agencies to make use of them and have staff on the ground to see this enhanced role for inspectors implemented.

Finally I will address the issue of royalties. The position of royalties under the former Labor Government was, to say the least, inadequate. The Government must now recognise its lax royalty regime in regard to coal royalties—it is attempting to tighten up the equivalent provisions in the Petroleum Act. It is clear we should be doing the same for the Mining Act, especially in light of the report by the Auditor-General in November 2010, which the Government is yet to act upon significantly. Therefore, it is important that this issue of royalties be addressed in detail. Elements in the bill are positive and welcomed. The right to refuse access is an important area, which we know has been supported by the Federal leadership of the Coalition. I will take some time to address a point that came up during the second reading about gas supply crisis.

In his second reading speech the Minister for Resources and Energy said that there will be gas supply issues for New South Wales—and there most certainly will be—but this is not related to the amount of gas in Australia. Australia already has an abundant supply of conventional gas, of which we export more than 50 per cent. The crisis is not caused by the lack of the resource, in the short term at least; it is caused by the Government and industry, which, instead of preserving any supplies for Australian industries or Australian households, would prefer to export the product, therefore leading to supply and demand price increases in the domestic market.



Members know there has been a great deal of discussion in the United States and in other countries about implementing the gas reservation policy, not for all the gas but for a proportion of it, to make sure that, while we export almost 50 per cent of our conventional gas, we retain gas to make sure we can provide for Australian businesses, retailers, residential users and others. It is important that the Government address this issue. The export market is driving this issue, not the lack of resources in the short term. I will move my amendments in globo to make sure we do not spend a great deal of time on this, but these are important issues that should be raised. I commend the Government for its positive efforts, but a lot more must be done. I trust my amendments will be examined by the House and will be looked upon as a positive way to help address these matters in our community.

**Mr ANDREW ROHAN** (Smithfield) [6.07 p.m.]: I support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013 and congratulate the Minister for Energy and Resources on introducing this much-needed legislation. The Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013 strengthens and clarifies the compliance and enforcement framework of the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991. In New South Wales, exploration and production of hydrocarbon products are regulated by the Act, which provides for a system of titles for exploration, assessment and production activities called licences. Currently New South Wales produces just 5 per cent of its gas needs and thus remains dependent on importing the rest from neighbouring States. It is worth mentioning that New South Wales gas supply contracts will expire in 2014. It is unlikely that such contracts will be renewed as many of the gas producers have contracted their gas to the export markets. A number of companies are based in my electorate and will face this problem next year.

Security of gas supplies is vital for this State as thousands of local businesses who rely on gas as an energy source will have to pay even higher prices if such contracts were to be renewed. With gas supplies from other States heading overseas, it is vital for New South Wales to develop its own domestic gas resources. Currently, exploration in New South Wales has identified more than 500 billion cubic metres of gas reserves associated with coal seams in a number of geological basins across the State. This is enough to provide more than one million homes with energy for more than a century. Exploration for petroleum oil and gas is an extremely complex process and certain controls, requirements and measures are needed to ensure that the health and safety of the community as well as the protection of the environment are not compromised.

At exploration stage a wide range of heavy machinery is used, such as special trucks, in conducting geophysical exploration to map subsurface structures and rock strata. Big trucks are used to carry drilling rigs; other trucks to carry pipes and ancillary equipment used in drilling exploratory and production wells. The vehicles and equipment have to access lands under different jurisdictions and therefore the current provisions for land access need to be updated to ensure that landholders are not disadvantaged. This bill will make sure that petroleum activities are conducted in a normal manner, and the industry will be held accountable if it does not meet its obligations, particularly its environmental obligations. The bill is designed to build community confidence and provide certainty for the industry at the same time. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.10 p.m.]: I speak in support of the bill. The petroleum industry in Australia is a very important part of our economy, and indeed in New South Wales, and I think we should make no mistake when we have this debate today that the products that come from that industry—the jobs that it provides, the energy that powers most of the activities that we undertake every day—is the result of an industry that survives and invests in our community. It is also vital that exploration and production of all petroleum products in New South Wales is carried out in a way that ensures the health and safety of our community as well as the protection of our very precious environment. We rightly expect the industry to operate in accordance with best practice. We should also expect the industry to be regulated in accordance with best practice. It is that that is behind the bill that we are discussing today in this Chamber.

This bill is only one aspect of the work being carried out by the Government to build community confidence and to provide certainty to the industry in our State. Both objectives are really important. It is very important for the Government to make sure that there is certainty for the business community—certainty of investment and returns on investment. At the same time, balanced off, the community is seeking a better understanding of the significance of any particular proposed or ongoing activity in the petroleum industry. To ensure that community concerns are addressed the Government has developed the most rigorous requirements in Australia for the petroleum industry. This bill strengthens and clarifies the compliance and enforcement framework of the 1991 Act. It provides a regulatory framework for the responsible exploration and production of petroleum products in our State. It will bring the 1991 Act in line with existing stronger provisions in the Mining Act. It will also strengthen landholder rights.

The Petroleum (Onshore) Act currently provides for a system of titles for exploration, assessment and production activities. A key power for ensuring immediate compliance with the requirements of the Act is the ability to issue a direction. The Act currently has very limited powers for directions to be given, which are not nearly sufficiently adequate and robust. Our community expects a regulatory enforcement regime to be robust, particularly where it impacts on the environment and safety. The bill extends and considerably strengthens these direction powers in keeping with the powers in the Mining Act and will extend the range of matters for which directions can be issued. The bill proposes that directions can be issued for any adverse impact, or risk of one, that petroleum industries may have on any aspect of the environment.

Directions can also be issued to conserve the environment or to prevent, control or mitigate any harm to it. They can also be used to rehabilitate land that is, or could be, affected by activities under the title of the land. The amendments to directions in this bill are a robust means of ensuring prompt industry compliance and protection of the environment while balancing off the other important protection of giving titleholders a fair process to seek review of decisions. The bill includes provisions for audits by incorporating the voluntary and mandatory audit provisions of the existing Mining Act. The audits will provide information on compliance with title obligations, such as conditions or legislation or codes of practice. The audits will also enable assessment of how activities on the title can be improved to protect our environment.

The bill also strengthens inspector powers, which are manifest, to enter premises where there is proposed or suspected exploration or production activity, or where documentation about that activity may be held; to obtain information and gather a wider range of material for investigation; and to require answers from a person whom they reasonably suspect of knowing about an offence that has been committed. The inspection provisions in the Petroleum (Onshore) Act are currently limited and not considered by this Government to be robust enough to provide inspectors with sufficient powers to carry out their work effectively and to ensure the compliance we expect. The amendments before the House today will provide a sound basis for that to happen. The existing inspector provisions will be replaced with the far more extensive provisions in the Mining Act.

Turning briefly to the issue of compliance, the industry must know and understand that compliance is not a choice. However, currently the Petroleum (Onshore) Act does not provide for offences for all acts of non-compliance and penalty amounts are not generally sufficient in all cases to act as a deterrent to non-compliance. This will be addressed through proposed amendments that bring the offence provisions in line with those of the Mining Act. The bill supports the strong new powers of inspectors, with offences for failing to comply with requirements without lawful excuse or wilful delay or obstruction. The strongest possible penalties will now be imposed in these circumstances—a penalty of \$1.1 million for corporations and \$220,000 for individuals.

New offences will include failure to comply with requirements for royalties and failure to make royalty payments, and failure to comply with the audit provisions I mentioned previously. For the first time strict liability offences will be introduced for providing false or misleading information. However, a person will have available to them the defence of honest and reasonable mistake. As well as increasing penalties for offences, the bill will amend provisions for proceedings for an offence by extending the time within which proceedings must commence from 12 months to three years from the date of the offence, with no time limit for indictable offences. The Mining Act in this case will also be amended to provide for the same time limits.

The bill proposes new provisions to ensure a consistent approach to the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] agreed principles for the assessment of directors' liabilities. I must comment on that provision because I know that our Government has taken a lot of time and effort to go through a number of these Acts on the law books and to make consistent our director liability provisions. They are contained in new section 125F. It provides, consistent with the Council of Australian Governments principles that have been agreed between States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government, that there will be no automatic liability of directors. There will be no reverse of onus of proof. Both are really important protections for directors who in good faith go about the business of providing the strategic oversight and direction for the companies that this Act will touch upon. That Council of Australian Governments harmonisation process is one on which this Government is leading the way in adopting those provisions into pieces of legislation as they come before the House.

Further amendments in the bill will help balance the interests of landholders and titleholders. There are other amendments, and I touch on one or two of them. There will be a code of practice for land access made by

way of regulation, and a separate regimen for environmental information and an extension of a titleholder's obligation to pay reasonable legal costs of a landholder for access arrangements. This bill is important. It strengthens the Petroleum (Onshore) Act and makes many provisions consistent with those in the Mining Act, which are stronger than they are currently in the Petroleum (Onshore) Act. The bill requires compliance from industry, an industry that is very important for this State, for our community, for jobs, for products, for the energy that allows us to get about our day-to-day activities, but it is particularly strong on environmental matters and it will provide a deterrent to industry non-compliance, which under this Act has very serious consequences—offences are extended and penalty amounts are increased. On that basis I support the bill and I commend it to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.18 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Chris Hartcher, in reply: I thank all the members for their contribution to the debate: the member for Liverpool, the member for The Entrance, the member for Balmain, the member for Smithfield and the member for Vaucluse. The Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill amends the Petroleum (Onshore) Act of 1991. One of the key purposes of the bill is to bring the Act into line with modern standards for the sound protection of the environment. The bill strengthens the enforcement and compliance powers in the Act. Further, it extends offences for non-compliance and increases the amounts of associated penalties. A second key purpose of the bill is to address the interests of landowners by strengthening their rights. The bill provides a statutory basis for a code of practice for coal seam gas exploration. It will extend the obligation of a title holder to pay a landowner reasonable legal fees in negotiating access to land agreements and it provides for the community to have access to the industry environmental information much earlier than at present.

Making these amendments will ensure that the petroleum industry in New South Wales must maintain a high standard of good environmental management. It will be held accountable if it fails to maintain these standards. Landowners and communities will have greater access to information, which will address concerns raised over how access arrangements are made, and improve understanding of the impact of the industry. This is sound legislation that addresses the importance of protecting the environment. It recognises landowners' need for equal power in negotiations with petroleum title holders and the community's need for more information so it can assess the impact on the land from the petroleum industry's activities. I commend the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013 to the House.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Jamie Parker.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** By leave, I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules.

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [6.21 p.m.], by leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 18 in globo:

No. 1 Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 11:

[5] **Section 45F Access arrangement required for prospecting operations under low-impact prospecting titles**

Omit ", or that is determined for them by an arbitrator in accordance with that Part" from section 45F (2) (a).

[6] **Sections 69B, 69D (2), 69E (4) and 69F–69S**

Omit the sections and subsections.

**[7] Section 69C Prospecting to be carried out with consent and in accordance with access arrangement**

Omit section 69C (1). Insert instead:

- (1) The holder of a prospecting title must not carry out prospecting operations on any particular area of land without the consent of each landholder of that area of land.
- (1A) The holder of a prospecting title must not carry out prospecting operations on any particular area of land except in accordance with an access arrangement or arrangements applying to that area of land agreed (in writing) between the holder of the prospecting title and each landholder of that area of land.

**[8] Section 69C (2)**

Omit "or determined".

No. 2• Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 13:

**[6] Section 69D (4)**

Omit the subsection. Insert instead:

- (4) If the holder of a prospecting title contravenes an access arrangement, a landholder of the land concerned may deny the holder access to the land until the holder ceases the contravention or the contravention is remedied to the reasonable satisfaction of the landholder.

No. 3. Page 4, Schedule 1 [6], lines 24–26. Omit "The amount is not to cover costs for any legal services in connection with arbitration relating to the access arrangement."

No. 4. Page 4, Schedule 1 [6], lines 27–33. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 5. Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert after line 19:

**[7] Section 69T Variation of access arrangements**

Omit section 69T (2). Insert instead:

- (2) An access arrangement may also be varied by the agreement of the parties to the arrangement.

**[8] Section 69U Change in landholders**

Omit "or determined" wherever occurring in section 69U (2), (3), (4) and (6).

**[9] Section 69U (5)**

Omit the subsection. Insert instead:

- (5) If the new landholder objects to the access arrangement within 28 days after being given a copy of the arrangement, the access arrangement ceases to apply to the new landholder unless the new landholder agrees to an access arrangement with the holder of the prospecting title concerned in accordance with this Part.

No. 6. Page 51, Schedule 1. Insert after line 13:

**[19] Section 136 Other offences**

Insert after section 136 (3):

- (4) Subsection (3) (a) does not apply in respect of anything done by a landholder or any other person in relation to a person prospecting on the landholder's land if there is no access arrangement in force for the carrying out of the prospecting operations on the land.

No. 7. Page 51, Schedule 1. Insert before line 14:

**[19] Section 138 Regulations**

Omit section 138 (1) (q).

No. 8. Page 51, Schedule 1 [19]. Insert after line 28:

**Application of amendments to existing access arrangements determined by arbitrator**

The amendments made by the *Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Act 2013* to the provisions of this Act about access arrangements do not apply to prospecting operations in relation to which an access arrangement determined by an arbitrator was in force immediately before the commencement of that amending Act.

No. 9 Page 53, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 33:

[2] **Section 32F Access arrangement required for prospecting operations under low-impact licences**

Omit ", or that is determined for them by an arbitrator in accordance with that Division" from section 32F (2) (a).

No. 10 Page 54, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 4:

[3] **Sections 139, 141 (2), 142 (4), 143–156, 263 (4), 264 (4) and 276 (3)**

Omit the sections and subsections.

[4] **Section 140 Prospecting to be carried out with consent and in accordance with access arrangement**

Omit section 140 (1). Insert instead:

(1) The holder of a prospecting title must not carry out prospecting operations on any particular area of land without the consent of each landholder of that area of land.

(1A) The holder of a prospecting title must not carry out prospecting operations on any particular area of land except in accordance with an access arrangement or arrangements applying to that area of land agreed (in writing) between the holder of the prospecting title and each landholder of that area of land.

[5] **Section 140 (2)**

Omit "or determined".

No. 11 Page 54, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 6:

[4] **Section 141 (4)**

Omit the subsection. Insert instead:

(4) If the holder of a prospecting title contravenes an access arrangement, a landholder of the land concerned may deny the holder access to the land until the holder ceases the contravention or the contravention is remedied to the reasonable satisfaction of the landholder.

No. 12 Page 54, Schedule 2.3 [4], lines 17–19. Omit "The amount is not to cover costs for any legal services in connection with arbitration relating to the access arrangement."

No. 13 Page 54, Schedule 2.3 [4], lines 20–26. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 14 Page 54, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 26:

[5] **Section 157 Variation of access arrangements**

Omit section 157 (2). Insert instead:

(2) An access arrangement may also be varied by the agreement of the parties to the arrangement.

[6] **Section 158 Change in landholders**

Omit "or determined" wherever occurring in section 158 (2), (3), (4) and (6).

[7] **Section 158 (5)**

Omit the subsection. Insert instead:

(5) If the new landholder objects to the access arrangement within 28 days after being given a copy of the arrangement, the access arrangement ceases to apply to the new landholder unless the new landholder agrees to an access arrangement with the holder of the prospecting title concerned in accordance with this Division.

No. 15 Page 56, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 24:

[17] **Section 293 Jurisdiction of Land and Environment Court**

Omit "an arbitrator's determination under Division 2 of Part 8 or of" from section 293 (1) (u).

No. 16 Page 60, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 19:

[28] **Section 383B Consent of landholders and others**

Omit "or determined by an arbitrator as referred to in section 140 (1) (b)" from section 383B (1) (c).

No. 17 Page 61, Schedule 2.3 [29]. Insert after line 11:

**Application of amendments to existing access arrangements determined by arbitrator**

The amendments made by the *Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Act 2013* to provisions of this Act about access arrangements do not apply to prospecting operations in relation to which an access arrangement determined by an arbitrator was in force immediately before the commencement of that amending Act.

No. 18 Page 61, Schedule 2.3. Insert after line 26:

**[31] Dictionary**

Omit the definitions of *Arbitration Panel*, *arbitrator* and *party*.

I will start by reading a report in the *Northern Star* newspaper on 3 May 2013 concerning a political leader in this country, Mr Tony Abbott. The report in the newspaper outlines one of the reasons The Greens are moving these amendments. The report states:

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott has backed farmers fighting mining companies, saying miners should not be allowed to enter land without the permission of landholders.

Mr Abbott told 2GB on Friday he "absolutely" backed the sentiment expressed by Coalition resources spokesman Ian McFarlane at a recent farmers rally in southern Queensland.

At the Basin Sustainability Alliance rally on Cecil Plains a fortnight ago, Mr McFarlane said the Opposition's policy was "that you don't extract coal seam gas, and you certainly don't mine this sort of country, unless the farmer says you can".

In a speech to the rally, Mr McFarlane said if farmers did not want mining or CSG companies entering their land to exploit resources, "that's what everyone should abide by".

That sounds sensible. The report continued:

Mr Abbott told 2GB host Alan Jones on Friday that "miners should not go onto farms if they're not wanted".

That is a good sentiment. The Greens amendments will ensure that the views of the Federal Leader of the Opposition and Mr Ian McFarlane are expressed through this bill. Mr Abbott is reported to state:

"It's very wrong and they shouldn't be going on to land where the landowners don't want them."

While he said he absolutely backed Mr McFarlane's comments at the Cecil Plains rally, Mr Abbott would not guarantee the Coalition would bring in such a policy if elected.

That is the purpose of The Greens amendments. I note that in the absence of adequate protections for farmland, water catchments and sensitive environments landholders have resorted to locking the gate. This has resulted in the development of a growing mass social movement under the auspices of the organisation Lock the Gate, which supports farmers locking the gate to invasive coal seam gas exploration. These amendments are only directed to coal seam gas exploration, not for other forms of mineral exploration. The amendments will support landholders in their endeavours by giving them the legal right to lock the gate without threat of compulsory arbitration and the associated huge legal cost, or the courts overriding them. I will refer to these amendments as "lock the gate" amendments in recognition of the consistent call from the community to strengthen landholder rights with regard to coal seam gas exploration. These amendments also seek to implement recommendation 16 in the report of the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 inquiry into coal seam gas. It was an excellent inquiry and subsequent report. Recommendation 16 states:

That the NSW Government review the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 with a view to strengthening landholder rights and achieving a fair balance between the rights of landholders and coal seam gas operators in relation to land access, and considering harmonisation with the Mining Act 1992 if possible.

That is a good recommendation from the upper House committee. What the committee is saying is that the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 should be amended with a view to strengthening landholder rights. The aim of recommendation 16 is to achieve a fair balance between the rights of landholders and the rights of coal seam gas operators. The amendments address the power imbalance between landholders and mining companies by levelling the playing field and putting landholders in a strengthened bargaining position. Without these

amendments coal seam gas companies can ride roughshod over communities that have locked their gates. The provisions in the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 will be amended to allow landholders to refuse the holders of exploration licences, assessment leases and special prospecting authorities to carry out prospecting operations on their land.

Any prospecting operation to which a landholder agrees will be required to be carried out in accordance with an access agreement negotiated between the holder of prospecting title and each landholder of that land area. The current procedure of an arbitrator determining the access arrangement when the landholder has not agreed to the arrangement will be removed. Removing the arbitration provisions means that companies can no longer force their way on to land where landholders do not want them. It should already form the basis of legal protections. The two-kilometre coal seam gas exclusion zone has protected people in my community and other communities. The amendments seek to protect rural and regional people and give them the option to say no. It is as simple as that. Recommendation 16 is fully consistent with the views of Mr Tony Abbott and Mr Ian McFarlane. I commend the amendments to the Chamber.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [6.26 p.m.]: With respect to the member for Balmain, I advise that the Labor caucus has not been consulted on this matter with sufficient time to take a position on it. Therefore, should a vote be called at this stage of the debate the Opposition will not vote. Labor will refer the amendments to the shadow Minister and reserves any rights in relation to the bill and the position the Opposition will take in the Legislative Council.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.26 p.m.]: The Government opposes the amendments put forward by The Greens member for Balmain. This bill is a package of amendments agreed to by key stakeholders—the farmers and gas producers—and facilitated by the New South Wales Land and Water Commissioner. It is a package with a strong regulatory framework. The Greens will either support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013 or not.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [6.27 p.m.]: I appreciate the contribution by the member for Tweed. The Greens do support the increased protections in the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013. I will not take the time of the Chamber going through all of the issues but I emphasise that it is difficult to play both sides of the fence. When Tony Abbott and Ian McFarlane attend farmer's rallies saying that—

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: The member is speaking to the amendment or not speaking to the amendment. This is not an opportunity for broad debate about other issues and members from other places; it is about the precise amendments.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** The member for Balmain has the call.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** I am sure members in this Chamber and member of Federal Parliament would support the amendments. They are in line with the quoted comments from many people in the community, including the Federal Leader of the Opposition. The Chamber has discussed the amendments and I will not go through them in precise detail again, but the Government must acknowledge the concern and anguish in farming communities that want to be able to protect their land. They should have that right. I commend the amendments to the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment Bill 2013 to the Chamber.

**Question—That The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 18 be agreed to—put.**

**Division called for and Standing Order 181 applied.**

**Ayes, 2**

Mr Greenwich  
Mr Parker

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**The Greens Amendments Nos 1 to 18 negatived.**

**Schedules 1 and 2 agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail concluded.**

### Third Reading

**Motion by Mr Geoff Provest, on behalf of Mr Chris Hartcher, agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.**

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

#### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Divisions and Quorums

**Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that until the rising of the House no divisions or quorums be called.

### CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN) BILL 2013

#### Second Reading

**Debate resumed from 22 May 2013.**

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [6.33 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of the Opposition on the Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013. I indicate at the outset that the Opposition will not oppose the bill but we have some serious questions about it and I cannot predict what will happen in the other House. The concern is more about what the bill does not say rather than what it does say. Historically the legislative function of the operations of the Working With Children Check, a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work, has been undertaken by the Commission for Children and Young People.

This bill proposes that the Commission for Children and Young People will no longer have that function. I am not concerned about the contents of the bill but, rather, the removal of those functions from the Commission for Children and Young People to the Children's Guardian. The bill has some positive aspects, and I shall go through them later. However, I refer now to the matter on which the bill is silent, that is, the future of the commission and the commissioner. I see this bill as a very real attempt to gut the Commission for Children and Young People and to undermine the role of the commissioner.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Canterbury has the call.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** I shall refer briefly to the aspects of the bill with which the Opposition is in agreement. It is important to note that the bill expands the groups of people who will be subject to a Working With Children Check. A positive measure is that the bill requires adults living with home-based childcare providers to obtain clearances. Another positive aspect is that for the first time carers undertaking intimate functions when working with very disabled children will also be required to obtain clearances. The Opposition agrees with that measure. Essentially, the bill transfers the core work of the Commission for Children and Young People to the Children's Guardian.

I note that many commentators and child protection advocates have expressed concern about independence and conflict of interest with the transfer of those functions to the Children's Guardian, under the umbrella of the Department of Family and Community Services. I note that the Minister for Family and Community Services in her second reading speech referred to my comments about maintaining the independence of the Children's Guardian and said that the Children's Guardian will be maintained as a separate statutory organisation with its own budget. However, the Minister cannot escape the fact that if the Children's Guardian office becomes an office within the Department of Family and Community Services questions will arise about the independence of that organisation, despite the Minister's attempted spin in her second reading speech.

The Government claims that independence will be maintained by the fact that the Office of the Children's Guardian is now an independent statutory office with a separate budget, the Governor will continue to appoint the Children's Guardian and the bill provides for a joint parliamentary Committee on Children and



Young People to monitor, review and report on the exercise of the Children's Guardian's function under the Working with Children Act. None of those things have changed from the original position of the Children's Guardian. I am concerned not only about the fact that the Working With Children Check is being moved away from the Commission for Children and Young People but also about the function that the Commission for Children and Young People has in working with other organisations to make them child safe and child friendly.

I ask the Minister to be honest and open about the future of the Commission for Children and Young People and the commissioner if the bill moves all the functions of the commission and commissioner to the Children's Guardian. My view is that whilst there are some positive aspects to this bill it is a stalking horse for undermining the primary advocate for children and young people in New South Wales. I believe it is incumbent on the Minister to not just respond to the views of the Opposition but to be clear about the future of the Commission for Children and Young People and the commissioner in New South Wales. It would be extraordinary if this piece of legislation has the effect of not having an independent separate commission and commissioner in New South Wales, and I say that in the strongest possible terms.

I note, however, that according to the Minister's second reading speech, a number of organisations have concluded that having all the regulatory functions for child protection in the one place is a positive step. I have not had the opportunity to seek the views of those organisations but I believe that if they understood that this was going to have the effect of ripping the main functions out of the commission they might take a different perspective to the proposed legislation. It is very important for the Children's Guardian to be independent. If that position is not truly independent, in my view, it undermines the intent of this bill.

The Minister claims that the independence of the Children's Guardian under these arrangements is the same as that of the Ombudsman and other authorities. That is an extraordinary stretch of the imagination considering the way in which this bill is structured. As I said, the Opposition will not oppose this bill. In a sense that is recognition of the importance of the work of the Working With Children Check. In earlier legislation the Minister for Citizenship and Communities made changes to the Working With Children Check, which the Opposition supported; so we are being consistent. However, as I said, I want some answers from the Government about the implications of this bill in relation to the independence and separate nature of the Commission for Children and Young People and the commissioner in New South Wales.

One positive aspect of this bill, and I think it must be very close to the bill that the Minister for Citizenship and Communities introduced some time ago in this House, is that the new Working With Children Check will commence on 15 June this year. The proposed legislation refers to checks taking 14 days. I hope that the resources will be provided to make that a reality because in order to reduce the time for compliance from 28 days to 14 days a number of positions will be transferred from the Commission for Children and Young People to the Children's Guardian staffing component. Once again that sounds alarm bells for me about the viability and future of the Commission for Children and Young People and the commissioner.

The Opposition will not oppose this legislation in this House but we want answers as to what the change means, not in terms of the Working With Children Check—we have no argument with that—but in terms of the viability and future of the Commission for Children and Young People and the commissioner, as well as the reporting arrangements to the parliamentary Committee for Children and Young People and whether there are inconsistencies in the proper reporting of these actions to that committee. I have not had a great deal of time to examine this bill because I did not know it was going to come before the House until a little while ago. I question whether all the functions of the Children's Guardian will now be monitored by the parliamentary committee. I suspect not. If not, I also want answers about that matter.

*[Business interrupted.]*

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business**

#### **Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard, by leave, agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to postpone the commencement of private members' statements until the conclusion of all stages of the Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013 or until 7.30 p.m., and for the sitting to be extended accordingly.

**CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN) BILL 2013****Second Reading**

*[Business resumed.]*

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [6.46 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013, which will improve child protection in New South Wales. The main purpose of the bill is to transfer child protection regulatory functions from the Commission for Children and Young People and the Minister for Family and Community Services to the Children's Guardian. The issue of child protection is close to the heart of every member in this place. In 2011-12 more than 23,000 cases of confirmed abuse and neglect of children were recorded in New South Wales, according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies. This number, while an improvement on the 34,078 cases recorded in 2008-09 under the former Labor Government, demonstrates that further action is needed to protect our children. This bill is an important step forward in that direction.

Under the proposed legislation, all regulatory functions will be transferred to one singular independent body, the Office of the Children's Guardian. The Children's Guardian will incorporate additional regulations to the existing system under the Working With Children Check, which will reduce duplication and red tape. These additional regulations not only will protect our children from existing or past offenders but will introduce measures that prevent employers from employing individuals who have been identified as posing a serious risk to children. Individuals that fail accreditation-based system assessment will be banned from coming into contact with children. The proposed amendments encourage employers and private institutions to introduce their own strategies to minimise risk to children they care for. I believe this measure will introduce a healthy culture in all child-related services to recognise the importance of prevention rather than deal with issues of abuse after they have occurred. Current regulations allow offenders to roam around communities without being detected.

Under the existing system offenders are not required to report to police if they take part in the Work for the Dole or volunteering programs. This leaves our children vulnerable targets for these offenders. The bill recognises these dangers and introduces measures that will require all offenders to report to the police any work-related activities. It also deters volunteers from misleading employers by introducing tough penalties of up to five years imprisonment when volunteers fail to declare any offences they have committed that breach the Working With Children Check. This bill overcomes the shortcomings of child protection policy under the former Labor Government. The bill establishes a fully independent Office of the Children's Guardian with a separate budget and staff from the Department of Education and Communities. It provides the Office of the Children's Guardian with the financial and regulatory requirements to fulfil its goals.

It is extremely important that the Children's Guardian office continues to report directly to the Minister. This means that the Government will continue to engage with issues of child protection in order to respond effectively to challenges faced by the Children's Guardian office. Furthermore, measures in this bill that provide the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People with the authority to monitor activities of the Children's Guardian will enhance the guardian's transparency and accountability. The proposed amendments have received support from the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, Barnardos and Life Without Barriers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [6.49 p.m.]: As part of its objectives, the Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013 will transfer the functions relating to Working With Children Check clearances, transfer the function of encouraging organisations to develop their capacity to be safe for children from the Commission to the Guardian under the Working with Children Act, and transfer the functions relating to the employment of children under chapter 13 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. Whilst Opposition members do not oppose the legislation, we have some questions regarding the children's check that will now occur under the Children's Guardian. The bill is silent on the future of the commission and the commissioner. At this stage, the bill looks set to undermine the role of the commissioner. Schedule 1 [12] makes it clear that the function of encouraging organisations to develop their capacity to be safe for children is transferred from the commission to the guardian and is to be exercised under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act.

The member for Canterbury mentioned some issues with which we do not argue. They include the expansion of the groups of children who will be checked for working with children. As a former teacher, I know that these checks are vital. Minister Dominello, who is in the Chamber, last year put legislation through

regarding working with children and the checks. As I stated, the bill transfers the work of the commission to the Children's Guardian. Particular commentators and child protection advocates have expressed some concerns about the independence or the possible conflict of interest caused by the transfer of functions from the Children's Guardian to come under the umbrella of the Department of Family and Community Services. A number of non-government organisations have also expressed support, however, for the regulatory matters regarding the children being under one organisation. The Opposition does not oppose the legislation; however, it has some serious questions about the bill.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.52 p.m.]: I support the Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013. I am pleased that the existing operational staff of the Office of the Children's Guardian will receive training to educate employers about the check and child-safe organisations, and to monitor compliance with checking requirements. The importance of monitoring and auditing the checking system was highlighted by the Auditor-General's 2010 Performance Audit of the Working With Children Check. The Auditor-General found significant deficiencies in this area. While the commission has since employed more staff to support a compliance program for the Working with Children Check, the assistance that current staff of the Office of the Children's Guardian will be able to provide in this area is welcome.

The Children's Guardian staff regularly visit out-of-home care agencies, adoption agencies and employers of children in prescribed employment. Section 48B of the Commission for Children and Young People Act has operated to restrict staff of agencies not involved in child-related employment background checking, from accessing information about background checking. Transferring the check to the Children's Guardian will allow effective compliance monitoring as part of statutory out-of-home care and adoption service provider accreditation and the monitoring of visits during visits to voluntary out-of-home care providers and employers of children in prescribed employment.

The committee will monitor how education and compliance monitoring associated with the check is built into the Children's Guardian current operations. While the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act removed the power of the Minister to issue written directions in respect of the checking function, that Act retained clear powers for the Minister to issue directions in respect of the monitoring and auditing of checks. That is an important safeguard, given the Auditor-General's previous concerns, and I am pleased that new section 40A (7) will form part of the Act.

New section 40A provides for the audit of any such declarations and enables the Children's Guardian or a person authorised by both the Children's Guardian and the Privacy Commissioner to conduct criminal record checks for that purpose, and to have regard to spent convictions, consistent with arrangements under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act. This is consistent with the Children's Guardian's audit powers in respect of declarations made under the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912, which is provided for at schedule 3.9 to the bill. I understand the Department of Attorney General and Justice assisted in developing the privacy protections at new section 40A (5) and (6). These are important, given the sensitive nature of such audits.

In closing, I draw the attention of members to the different checking regimes that apply across Australia and the mutual recognition arrangements that are in place for such checks in some circumstances. While the new check provides additional protection to the children of New South Wales, child protection risks would be better managed if all States and Territories moved to a common national check. The previous New South Wales Commissioner for Children and Young People, Megan Mitchell, who is now the national commissioner, can take a key leadership role in this area. I am sure the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will also be looking at this issue. New South Wales should continue to work with other jurisdictions towards a national Working With Children Check.

The Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013 supports the integration of child protection regulatory functions under the newly established Office of the Children's Guardian, a single body headed by the Children's Guardian, who is an independent statutory officer. The separation of the commission's regulatory functions will support a renewed focus on advocacy for children and young people. These are sensible policy initiatives that should be supported by all members of Parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ANDREW CORNWELL** (Charlestown) [6.56 p.m.]: In my role as chair of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People, I have had a front-row view of the Commission for

Children and Young People's work in developing the new Working With Children Check. I commend the commission for developing a check that all members of this Parliament would acknowledge as being state of the art. The former commissioner, Megan Mitchell, acknowledged that the check has consumed a lot of the energy and resources of the commission over the past three years. This has meant that the commission struggled to fulfil its advocacy and policy role to the extent it should have. That reflects the reality of juggling competing regulatory and advocacy priorities.

The tension that exists between regulatory and advocacy roles was acknowledged by the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in New South Wales. The submission by the Commission for Children and Young People to the special commission noted that regulatory bodies require a balanced view of the system and that consideration must be given to the economic realities and the range of stakeholders within that system. The commission noted that an advocate for children is not so constrained. Advocacy and regulation must be separated. Advocates should be unconstrained so that they can best represent the needs of children and young people. An organisation cannot both deliver the Working With Children Check and independently advocate for changes to the check. There is always a risk of the regulatory responsibilities of an organisation driving any advocacy responsibilities that it might have.

The capacity for the commission's regulatory role to distract from its advocacy role has been identified in submissions in response to every review of the Commission for Children and Young People Act by organisations such as the Ombudsman, the Council of Social Service of New South Wales, the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, Ethnic Child Care, Barnardos, the Benevolent Society, Save the Children and the National Children and Youth Law Centre. Organisations such as the Ombudsman, the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, Life Without Barriers and Barnardos have recognised that integrating the Children's Guardian and commission's regulatory functions will improve child protection regulation in New South Wales and minimise the risk of some issues falling through the regulatory gap.

This bill not only co-locates child protection regulatory functions in the newly established independent Office of the Children's Guardian, but also will revitalise the policy and advocacy work that can be achieved when these tensions are released. I welcome the review into how to strengthen policy and advocacy work for children and young people and am heartened by the commitment of the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, who is in the Chamber, to maintain and strengthen an independent advocate for children and young people. Maintaining the oversight role of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People is necessary to support that important independent advocacy function.

The committee also has oversighted the commission's Working with Children Check and child-safe organisation work. As I made clear on behalf of the committee to the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, the committee's oversight in those critical areas must continue. Items [3] and [4] of schedule 3.5, which will insert new subsections (1) (a) and (b) into section 28 of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, will ensure that the functions of the Children's Guardian under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 will be subject to the committee's oversight. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [6.59 p.m.]: The Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013 is described in the long title of the bill as:

An Act to amend the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* to transfer the functions relating to working with children check clearances to the Children's Guardian; and for other purposes.

It is precisely because of those "other purposes" that I have enormous concerns relating to this bill, which appears to be a Trojan Horse. *Hansard* does not record that the three Government members who preceded me in this debate read prepared speeches onto the record of this House. There is no indication of who prepared their speeches. Clearly, this bill is part of the process of gutting the Commission for Children and Young People. I have enormous concerns relating to the future of the commission and the commissioner. The Working With Children Check in the bill is an improvement over the previous check, but it does not need this legislation to make it work. The new Working With Children Check will work perfectly well without this legislation.

I want to hear from the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities about how precisely this legislation will improve the governance of the new improved Working With Children Check. The Commission for Children and Young People was established in 1998 at the behest of large numbers of workers in the childcare field who felt that children needed an independent voice that

should be monitored by a parliamentary committee. This is the first generation of children who are likely to have a shorter lifespan than that of their parents. For that reason, many of the experts in the field felt that we needed a strong children's commissioner who had core activities as part of their role.

The first responsibility to go was the Child Death Review Team. To this day, I cannot work out why the responsibility was transferred to the Ombudsman. I say that because most children who die do so as a result of causes that the Ombudsman does not need to investigate. The Premier felt so strongly about this issue that he was thrown out of Parliament when arguing for removal of the Child Death Review Team to the Ombudsman. As the only former member of the Child Death Review Team in this House, to this day I remain dumbfounded and cannot understand why the team was moved. Since its removal, the Commission for Children and Young People has been damaged. Now we see the second major activity of the commission, which is the Working With Children Check, also being removed. Effectively by introducing this bill, the O'Farrell Government has gutted the idea that was conceived in 1998 that children needed a strong independent voice whose core business was activities that are pivotal to the care and protection of children in society.

That was not a new concept. Britain and most other countries throughout the world do it. New South Wales was one of the first to do it. This bill represents the last rites for the Commission for Children and Young People as a central body whose role is advocacy for children in the State of New South Wales. I want those points on the record of this House because the effects of the legislation will not be felt tomorrow or next month but throughout future years. For many reasons, there has been a very significant reduction in the mortality of children during the 16 years of the operation of Commission for Children and Young People. The fact that this State had a strong, independent and central Commission for Children and Young People is one of the reasons for that reduction in child mortality. This bill is a Trojan Horse that effectively guts the Commission for Children and Young People and will make it peripheral to the workings of government. The children of this State will be the losers. The new Working With Children Check does not need this legislation, but the Government, through this bill, pretends that it does.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO** (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [7.04 p.m.], on behalf of Ms Pru Goward, in reply: The Child Protection Legislation Amendment (Children's Guardian) Bill 2013 will deliver a single regulatory body that will integrate the Working With Children Check with other child protection regulatory systems. That will strengthen the safety net for our most vulnerable young citizens. I thank the staff of the Commission for Children and Young People for their work in developing the new check, which will commence on 15 June. I also thank Kerryn Boland, the Children's Guardian, for her leadership of the commission over the past couple of weeks and for working with key stakeholders in settling the final child-related employment policy framework. I also thank Tony Farley and Anne Walker of the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations for their work with Ms Boland in developing the targeted statutory declaration scheme that an employer may use for some lower-risk categories of employees and volunteers who are not subject to the check.

The bill will improve both the employment checking and offender registration systems in relation to child protection. The new Working With Children Check is the most comprehensive child-related employment checking system in Australia and has the lowest annual cost for workers of any State or Territory. Volunteers and foster carers are checked free of charge. The new check imposes one standard for all categories of workers, irrespective of whether they are employees, contractors, volunteers or self-employed people. It considers a person's full criminal history rather than a limited subset of offences and continuously monitors New South Wales criminal and disciplinary records to manage ongoing risk. The most important reform is that persons who want to work in child-related employment will be given either a clearance or a bar. That will replace a system whereby the employer ultimately was required to make an employment decision based on an approved screening agency's risk assessment of the applicant. An employer could decide to employ a person assessed as high risk. By virtue of this bill, the decision on whether a person can be employed in child-related employment will be made by the Children's Guardian.

The new check is a paperless online system—the first of its kind in Australia—and also is the first system in Australia to operate without a card by providing a verifiable number instead. That spares the community the cost of issuing, replacing and withdrawing cards. It also will enable employers and parents to go online and directly verify whether a person working for them or with their child has a Working With Children Check clearance. The new check will be fast and efficient, with more than 60 per cent of applicants receiving the outcome of their check on the same day that a motor registry verifies their identity. By using a number instead of a card, New South Wales will reduce greatly the potential for fraud and unsafe persons working with children. Cleared applicants will be subject to ongoing monitoring for the five-year life of the check.

If a worker becomes barred during that time, their check status in the new online system will immediately be changed to barred. That will have serious and immediate consequences, which are twofold: The system will identify every employer who has verified the barred worker, and those employers will be notified immediately; and prospective employers will be prevented from engaging the barred worker for child-related work because the mandatory online verification process will identify them as barred. The new online system of carrying out a Working With Children Check will provide a fast and efficient link to the Children's Guardian carers register. By transferring the Working With Children Check, the regulatory functions of the Commission for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian will be co-located in the newly created independent agency, the Office of the Children's Guardian. The online Working With Children Check will provide a fast and efficient link to the Children's Guardian carers register.

As the Minister who is responsible for youth affairs in New South Wales, I want to hear what the youngest citizens of the State have to say about how their voices can be best heard by government. We know that the lives of children and young people are diverse and complex. The world in which kids live today is subject to rapid change and is significantly different to that of even the last generation. New generations bring new ideas and different forces as well as new groups and organisations who seek to advocate for children. The advocacy, policy and research provisions of the Commission for Children and Young People Act have not changed significantly in 15 years, but a lot has changed in the lives of children over that time. It is timely that government, in partnership with children and young people, takes a fresh look at how we can best support advocacy, policy and research work that is relevant to children and young people today. New South Wales now has number of government and non-government organisations that advocate for children and young people, such as the Youth Advisory Council and the Young People Advisory Group. We also have a joint parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People which plays a vital oversight role of ensuring that an independent voice for children and young people is heard in the New South Wales Parliament.

We have numerous non-government organisations, like Youth Action, the Inspire Foundation, CREATE and the Y Foundation. Only by aligning and harnessing the energies of all bodies that play a role in advocating for children and young people, and harnessing the energies of children and young people themselves, will we maximise their involvement in decisions that affect their lives. The Government will gather the views of this diverse range of advocates and seek their advice about how we can help revitalise the advocacy and policy structure of the children and young people in New South Wales. Led by the Commission for Children and Young People, the consultation will take place in July and August 2013. It will identify the issues of most importance to children and young people in New South Wales today. It will seek views on line and via community roundtables of young people and adults, which I will chair.

To ensure that the voices of children and young people are kept at the absolute front and centre of the consultation process we will be guided by young advisers, appointed by me. Of particular interest will be how we cross the digital and social media divide that frequently separates the world of adults from the world of children and young people. This issue was raised in 2012 by the joint parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People. These consultations will help us to understand this challenge and develop a strategy that children and young people will see as relevant and useful to them. The consultations will be complemented by an issues paper on the role of the commission in the context of the other government and non-government agencies that also have a child and youth advocacy role.

The paper will also cover the other structures in New South Wales through which children and young people can have a say on the issues that affect them, including the Youth Advisory Council and the Young People Advisory Group. We want to know the best and most effective places for youth advocacy to take place. It may be that the current model under the Commission for Children and Young People Act simply needs to be reinvigorated, or consultation may tell us that another model will deliver a better outcome for our youngest citizens. We do not want to limit the scope of how this model will be structured or to predetermine how it will operate. We will look at other Australian States and Territories and international advocacy models. We will examine how best to align youth advocacy in the non-government and government sectors.

No matter what emerges from the consultation I am committed to an independent body for children and young people, and the joint parliamentary committee will continue in its important oversight role. The results will be provided to me by September and the Government will then consider the best options for guaranteeing a strong and effective voice for children and young people in New South Wales. The O'Farrell Government will provide a platform where diverse, relevant and contemporary views can be sought and listened to. We will promote greater collaboration between agencies that work with and on behalf of children and young people. With the help of our younger citizens, the Government will ensure children and young people will have a stronger and more effective voice in New South Wales.

A number of matters were raised by members opposite, and I would like to address those quickly. In response to the member for Canterbury, this bill is not about undermining the commission. It is about revitalising the advocacy for children and young people. The Office of the Children's Guardian is not an office of the Department of Family and Community Services. It is in the family and community services cluster for administrative purposes, in the same way that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is in the Justice cluster. In response to comments made by the parliamentary joint Committee on Children and Young People, I can say that this Government is committed to its continued oversight of the Working With Children Check system and Child Safe Organisation program.

The bill provides for this. The Government is committed to improving accountability and transparency. We will discuss oversight arrangements in the other place. This bill, which both the Minister for Family and Community Services and I have created, provides for an independently administered Working With Children Check, subject to parliamentary oversight. It integrates that check with other child protection regulatory systems, improving child protection in New South Wales. It also allows for a renewed and reinvigorated focus on policy and advocacy work for children and young people. I thank the members for Charlestown, Mulgoa, Tweed, Menai, Canterbury, Fairfield and Macquarie Fields for their contributions. I commend the bill to the House.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

### **Third Reading**

**Motion by Mr Victor Dominello, on behalf of Ms Pru Goward, agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.**

### **EDUCATION AMENDMENT (SCHOOL PROVIDERS FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL 2013**

### **STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (STAFF DIRECTORS) BILL 2013**

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

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

---

#### **YMCA NSW YOUTH PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATIVE IVANA ZARIC**

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [7.14 p.m.]: This evening I will give a brief speech about a very important young person in my electorate. Her name is Ivana Zaric, and she is the Keira representative for the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament. Ms Zaric is a passionate young local student. I had the opportunity over the past couple of years to watch her develop both in her role in the student representative council and in her broader interest of significant policy issues beyond school buildings and beyond the school playground. She is passionate about her community and the environment in which she lives, and in ensuring that those less fortunate are given opportunities to excel. They are exactly the sorts of qualities that we want to see in our young people and they are exactly the types of qualities we want to see in today's young leaders as they progress through to being leaders of tomorrow.

Ms Zaric is a 17-year-old student of Figtree High School, a fantastic local school in the heart of the Keira electorate—a school doing wonderful things. At the moment Ms Zaric is balancing the role of youth member for Keira with the completion of her very important Higher School Certificate studies. She has been a strong advocate for community fundraising at the school. One of the most impressive things I know about Ivana is that she often scribes for people—students and young people—who have a disability or who are having trouble reading and writing. She also offers assistance at the local primary school with reading groups. This

makes her well fit to represent our community at this very important forum, the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament, and I hope she will continue to represent the interests of many young people in my electorate. She is just about to finish school, going through that transition from school into her future career, and I look forward to working with her on advancing issues for young people in the future.

Her interest in politics and representations started with membership of her school's student representative council. She was the secretary in 2011 and she is currently a senior member of that important group. I am equally impressed that she has an understanding of some of the big policy issues that face New South Wales. She is a strong advocate for public education, and is passionate about ensuring an end to the current discrepancy in funding. She is obviously a very strong supporter of the reforms that Julia Gillard is making through the Gonski program. In transport she has some big ideas about moving people around the State quicker and safer, and on the environment I have provided her with important material on the issue of coal seam gas and its future, particularly the concerns in my local community about coal seam gas extraction in and around water catchment areas.

I am looking forward to her bringing a positive and visionary approach to the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament. All members of this place need to pay careful attention to what is discussed in the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament. This is not just some tokenistic exercise. This is an opportunity for the leaders of tomorrow and other young individuals to make a contribution through a very well-organised forum. I look forward to coming to see her in Parliament in July. I commend the YMCA for running a program that gives talented students great opportunities to explore their leadership qualities, to explore their skills as future leaders and to learn about policy and the way laws are developed and advanced. Most importantly, I look forward to working with Ivana Zaric on advancing issues that are important to young people within the electorate of Keira and throughout the entire State of New South Wales.

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.19 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I thank the member for Keira for bringing to our attention the wonderful work of Ivana Zaric, a young person in his electorate. It is obvious from the information he has provided regarding her attributes, her contribution to the community, her fundraising and working with disability services, that she is a fine young lady. I too, like all members of this House I am sure, support the YMCA New South Wales Youth Parliament. It is an outstanding initiative that provides young leaders in our community with the opportunity to have a real say and articulate their views of the world, of which we all take notice. I commend the member for Keira for raising this matter today and wish Ivana Zaric the best of luck when she takes up this opportunity. Yvette Quinn, a wonderful young lady from my own electorate, will join her at the Youth Parliament. I am sure the two of them will swap plenty of ideas and discuss different situations in their own electorates, and will make a wonderful contribution to this year's Youth Parliament.

### **HELLO KOALAS SCULPTURE PROJECT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS** (Port Macquarie) [7.20 p.m.]: I am pleased to inform the House of a very exciting event that is gathering momentum in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area. Hello Koalas is a three-year public art project managed by Arts and Health Australia that commenced this year. This unique local initiative will culminate in September 2014 with a koala sculpture trail. This signature event will see the installation of 50 large-scale fibreglass sculptures, which will be skilfully painted and decorated by celebrity and professional artists and inspired community groups. Locals and visitors to the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council area will be guided to the koala sculptures via trail maps that will be available in hard copy and online.

I take this opportunity to commend the Hello Koalas project director, Margret Meagher. Margret is also the executive director of the Port Macquarie-based national organisation, Arts and Health Australia, which was established to improve health and well-being within the community through encouraging participation in creative activities. As outlined on its website, Arts and Health Australia passionately promotes best practice policy in arts and health. Who better to lead the organisation than Margret, whose passion and enthusiasm for advocating and showcasing the benefits and close links between creativity and healthy living is inspiring? Her appetite for stimulating change so that everyone in the community—particularly our ageing population—reaps the health benefits of creative art is contagious. She has a reputation for effectively engaging with all levels of government on both the national and international stage, and her professionalism is second to none.

Each year Arts and Health Australia hosts the Art of Good Health and Well-Being Conference. Now in its fifth year, the conference will bring together a broad spectrum of health professionals, decision and policy makers representing government, executives in public and private hospitals, operators of retirement villages and



health care and palliative care facilities, as well as delegates from the arts and education sectors and community services. Margret is supported by similarly motivated local luminaries, including project manager Linda Hall, who has more than 20 years' experience in the tourism industry and who says she is excited to be involved in this cultural spectacle, which will undoubtedly make an indelible mark on our Port Macquarie-Hastings events calendar. Gabriella Carroll and Mitch McKay are also well known in the community for their knowledge and experience in cultural and heritage events.

I acknowledge and thank the principal sponsor, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, and commend the many other organisations and businesses that have enthusiastically partnered with Hello Koalas to ensure its success locally and nationally. The most exciting aspect of the Hello Koalas project is its broad appeal to people, young and old, to visitors from across Australia and around the world, and from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Like so many people in the community, I share the excitement and growing interest in this unique event and wholeheartedly wish Margret, Linda and the many others involved all the best for the months ahead as they advocate, campaign, showcase and encourage. I fully support this initiative and look forward to working with the energetic local team as they make history when those colourful and distinctive koalas come to life across our landscape.

I am pleased that Minister Souris had the opportunity to hear about the Hello Koala initiative during the recent Community Cabinet in Taree. I have no doubt he was as impressed as I was with its originality and potential. In closing, I will provide to the House the summation of the project as presented by the organisers of Hello Koalas. They describe it as a public art project that recognises the power that fun, innovation, quirkiness and creativity can have on the socioeconomic fabric of our community. In their words, it is "koalarageously clever!"

### **BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE EVENTS**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT** (Baulkham Hills) [7.24 p.m.]: The electorate of Baulkham Hills has experienced an extremely active couple of weeks with public events, engagements and festivities. I remind the House that the area of Baulkham Hills is not blessed with much public infrastructure—we do not have a courthouse, we do not have a hospital, we do not have a police station, we do not have a university and we do not have a train station. But we do have one fire station, and I hold that very dear to my heart. Other than the schools in my electorate, the fire station is really the only piece of public infrastructure in the seat of Baulkham Hills.

For that reason, our Fire and Rescue Open Day on 18 May was a day of great joy and festivity in the seat of Baulkham Hills. I was thrilled to join the many dozens of families and children at the new Baulkham Hills Fire Station, which was opened only last year by the Hon. Michael Gallacher, member of the other place. I commend fire officers Alex Scott and Mr Milburn, who run a great show at the station. The Baulkham Hills brigade put on a great sausage sizzle on the day and it was a wonderful opportunity for people to pay tribute to the brave work of the firefighters, not only in the electorate of Baulkham Hills but also throughout the State of New South Wales.

On the same day, 18 May, the Hills District Historical Society conducted one of its many open days. I was able to pop in to that event as a guest of the society, of which I and the member for Castle Hill are patrons. The day was held at Balcombe Heights Estate, where the society has a small museum. The 2013 theme was transportation. I pay tribute to the society's president, Julie Graham, and the two vice-presidents, Elaine White and Rod Harris. Rod Harris is a very old friend of mine and I am delighted that his passion over the many years that I have known him for things like art and history has not diminished. A few days later, on 20 May, I joined Her Worship the Mayor of Baulkham Hills, Councillor Dr Michelle Byrne, for a very special occasion at a party celebrating the 100th birthday of Ms Julia Serra.

The party was held at the Hills Community Care Social Club, where Julia was joined by many of her friends and family. Julia received a letter from the Queen and also from the Prime Minister, the Premier and the Vice Regal appointments in Australia. Julia, who was born in the Philippines, has a fascinating story. I spoke with her during her birthday party about the many changes that have taken place in her country over the century that she has lived: how it was very much influenced by the Spanish when she was born, its occupation by the Japanese, and of course the American influence, which is well known to current generations. I wish Julia and her family a wonderful time over this celebration of her centenary year.

Last week on 23 May the member for Castle Hill and I hosted the Hills District School Leaders Afternoon Tea and Forum, an annual event at which many school captains and principals from my electorate

and the electorate of Castle Hill come to Parliament and get the opportunity to meet a number of community leaders. Among the community leaders this year were Major General Warren Glenn, AC, the president of the Castle Hill RSL Club, Superintendent Phil Flogal from the Castle Hill Local Area Command, Lyall Gorman from the mighty Western Sydney Wanderers, and Colonel Don Tait, OAM, who is a leading member of our veterans community. I want to put on record my thanks for the wonderful contribution that Ministers Dominello, Roberts and Piccoli made when they arrived at that event. Minister Roberts took the opportunity to give a special presentation to Warren Glenn for the work that he does in the Department of Fair Trading.

I thank Minister Adrian Piccoli also for visiting the Jasper Road Public School last week on 24 May. School principal Ann Page should be commended for hosting us, particularly the Minister, at such short notice. The students sang, laughed and boasted about their garden and artwork during the ministerial visit, and the Minister and I enjoyed a wonderful morning tea afterwards. As you can tell, Madam Acting-Speaker, the Minister for Education and I attend the same gym and the same barber. Last weekend the Salvation Army held its Red Shield Appeal. I compliment the local Salvation Army for the wonderful work it does and the generosity of those in my electorate who supported the Red Shield Appeal. Last night the Western Sydney Academy of Sport presented its rugby league awards, and I take this opportunity to commend Martin Bullock and members of the junior rugby league community in my electorate for the wonderful work they do putting the local teams together.

### NEPEAN AREA DISABILITIES ORGANISATION

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES** (Mulgoa) [7.29 p.m.]: I inform the House of the truly dedicated workers and volunteers within Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation, a not-for-profit non-government community organisation that provides services and programs for people with a disability in the Penrith and Blue Mountains areas. The Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation has been operating for over 30 years and works closely with both local government and the State Government. Primarily the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation's projects and programs are funded by the New South Wales Government. However, some projects such as Tours 4 U are not funded by government.

For many people with a disability, travelling away on holidays is something that they rarely, if ever, get to experience as the costs for additional support to allow them to do so can be prohibitive. Often when they do go on holidays it is with their parents. The Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation's Tours 4 U provides to people with a disability the opportunity to go on an organised group holiday or day trip with the support of trained and highly skilled disability support workers who can ensure that every individual is supported in a safe and friendly environment whilst encouraging and empowering them to develop a more independent lifestyle. In order to facilitate more people with a disability accessing the Tours 4 U programs, the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation's team of workers and volunteers joined with members of the local community and business network to run a novel and successful fundraiser—a 24-hour physical activity challenge.

The 24 Hour Challenge included different events with over 100 people participating over the 24 hours. Points were scored for participation and bonus points allocated for the most enthusiastic participant at each event. I was privileged to be invited to attend and encourage those participants who were involved in a range of activities including drumming, Zumba, obstacle challenge, circuit training, boxing and fencing, with all activities designed to be accessible to all abilities. Thank you to Nathan Smith from Penrith Panthers who also popped by to support the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation's fundraising event. Special mention must be made of the sponsors of the 24 Hour Challenge without whose support the fundraising efforts of the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation's 24 Hour Challenge would not have been as successful: Reimer Winter Williamson Lawyers, National Disability Coordination Officer Program, buildinghelp, Access Vehicles Australia, Freedom Motors Australia, Kmart Tyre and Auto Service, Thurston Signs, Yellow Brick Road, Superior IT, 4 Communities and Toyota Penrith.

Thank you to the individual volunteers who took time out to run our activities, including Nordoff-Robbins, Penrith Academy of Fencing, Motivate You, Amanda Reid-Tucker from Inspire Strength, Jessica Alderson from Dance Dymension, Ryan Felsch from REF Fitness, Amanda Carr and the Westpac Bank. When the 24 Hour Challenge participants' energy or motivation lagged, electric performances from JRocc Hip Hop, Cadence Empire, Western Sydney Roller Derby and BT Audio Solutions raised everyone's spirits. Thank you to the following businesses for generously donating prizes to support the 24 Hour Challenge: Valley Fitness, Resolutions Gym, Sol Images, Hopewood Health Retreat, Richmond Race Club, Charity Paintball, Penrith Muffler Mart and Tyre, Guitar Factory, REF Fitness, Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Club, Luciano's Italian Restaurant, Woolworths, PartyLite Candles, King Henry's Court, Ultra Tune, Niche Beauty, Spa Sublime, Camel's Bins, K and A Quality Meats, Brady Australia Pty Ltd and Cath's Cakes.

Congratulations to Caroline Dwyer, who won the individual challenge, and congratulations to Motivate You, which won the team challenge. By the end of the 24 Hour Challenge, participants had raised between \$6,000 and \$7,000. A special acknowledgement must go to Denise Heath, Chief Executive Officer of the Nepean Area Disabilities Organisation, who led a dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers to organise and participate in this wonderful fundraising event. Western Sydney is a connected and extremely generous community; whether individuals, small businesses or corporations, western Sydney residents link arm in arm to support worthy causes. I am proud to be a local resident of western Sydney and even more proud to represent such wonderful people in the New South Wales Parliament.

I would like to extend my personal thanks to all members of the community and business community who supported the Penrith Panthers Women in League Pink Round, when money was raised for the family room at the Nepean hospital. Local members of the community and business community gave their personal finances to support the research conducted by the Australian Women and Children's Research Foundation. Western Sydney is an incredible region of the Sydney metropolitan area. It is filled with people who are connected with the community, who believe in community and who band together to support worthy causes. It is an honour and a privilege to represent them in the Parliament of New South Wales.

### CAMPBELLTOWN ROAD UPGRADE

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [7.34 p.m.]: Over the last few weeks residents of Denham Court have approached me with their concerns about the planned widening of Campbelltown Road and Denham Court. I received the following letter from Lyndell Painter:

My name is Lyndell Painter. I live with, and am carer to, my two elderly parents in their 80s whose home is located at 2 Blomfield Road on the corner of Campbelltown Road and Denham Court ...

In February 2012 my parents and I discovered a person trespassing on our property after having jumped the dividing fence separating my parents' property from their neighbour. That person was carrying out surveying on behalf of the RMS [Roads and Maritime Services] without a request or consent. We have retained photographic evidence of this trespass. When questioned, he denied that any road widening or resumptions were associated with his surveying of the property.

On Sunday 21 April 2013 at 5.30 p.m. we received a hand delivered flyer from the RMS entitled "Campbelltown Road Upgrade Camden Valley Way to Brooks Road April 2013". The flyer could easily pass for junk mail. My parents were shocked to find that it contained a photo with a large green line curving around two boundaries of their property. The key did not identify this line though it clearly indicated an intention to resume approximately one third of the property on which my parents' home stands.

The flyer stated community information sessions started 11 April 2013. The first two sessions had already passed before we got the flyer! The next session was in May, at Leppington, outside our area, and submissions closed just nine days later!

Both my elderly parents feel severely distressed at the lack of consultation, failure to notify them and the deceitful way they have been treated by the RMS when trespassing on their land. My Father built my parents' home with his own hands as a gift to my Mother, intending it as the home they would share in their final days. The RMS has acted untruthfully and demonstrated a lack of transparency causing unnecessary health issues for my parents and concern for their uncertain future, which up until then was stable and happy. The RMS has invaded their home and privacy and been discovered taking photos of neighbouring properties.

The community has asked for extensions to submission dates but the RMS has only provided an extra two weeks ending on Friday 31 May 2013, insufficient time given its late notification to residents, RMS untrue statements in the Review of Environmental Factors [REF] that it notified residents in February 2013, and the size of the three volumes thick REF of approximately 1,500 pages. The RMS says any extension will impact on delivery of the first stage, suggesting the expansion is imminent and already decided regardless of community sentiment.

The impact on the landscape character of my parents' home is considered by the REF to be moderate to high. It will more than double the width of the existing road corridor from two lanes to provision for six and result in removal of all healthy gum trees hundreds of years old at the side of the property which are significant to the character of the home and the landscape. Approximately one third of my parents' property will be either resumed or its landscape character destroyed yet they have been denied information, not consulted, and provided precious little time to respond. Elderly neighbours are similarly distressed by the actions and deceit of the RMS and the "Campbelltown Road Project Upgrade Team". The existing community has communicated that it believes any extension should stop north of McDonald Road.

Given the unethical way that the RMS has handled this I believe the Government should require the REF to be abandoned and a new study commenced, properly and transparently conducted, alternatives considered that will have low to no impact on the rural residential landscape character and retain curtilage with wider public input sought including consultation with the Denham Court community. The Government needs to demonstrate that it will hold to its word and put planning back in the hands of the community it affects, just as it promised before it was elected. Will the Government do this? Lyndell Painter.

That letter from Lyndell Painter is typical of many of the requests I have received from community members. The Roads and Maritime Services is demonstrating how not to build a road to nowhere: Do not consult with the community as to why and when it is being done; do not come clean with any time-line; and break the trust of the

community by hiding the facts and providing untruths. I ask the Minister to come clean on what is planned for this road, to consult with the community and, as a first mark of good faith, to extend the consultation period until 30 June. The Roads budget is under pressure. I have asked the Minister for Roads a variety of questions on notice and I request an answer to these questions. I urge him to stop what he is doing, to listen to the community and to reconsider the wisdom of this ridiculous project—this road to nowhere.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK**

**Matter of Public Importance**

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [7.40 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to recognise National Reconciliation Week, a time when we all have the opportunity to reflect on the events in Australia's history that symbolise the struggle for recognition and equality by Aboriginal Australians. Reconciliation is about justice, equality and the rights of Aboriginal people. National Reconciliation Week gives us the opportunity to reflect on significant events that have been major steps in shaping that future. Two major events have occurred in our history, the 1967 referendum and the 1992 High Court Mabo decision. These events gave the Australian Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, recognised them in the census and paved the way for land rights.

This week is also an opportunity to recognise the milestone of the thirtieth anniversary of the introduction of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act by the New South Wales Parliament, an Act that again recognises the importance of land in the culture of Aboriginal people and provides a major step in providing land rights in New South Wales to Aboriginal people. While it is important to reflect on the past and on our history, we must focus on the future. National Reconciliation Week represents this opportunity—to look to the future and to talk about the practical steps community and government are taking to improve the lives of Aboriginal people.

It is clear that only when Aboriginal people have equality of life expectancy, education and choice can reconciliation be truly meaningful. The New South Wales Government is committed to working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people to achieve these outcomes. This commitment is the basis of OCHRE, the Government's plan for Aboriginal Affairs. OCHRE stands for opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility and empowerment. The focus of OCHRE is on education, employment and accountability. It aims to help Aboriginal communities strengthen their identity, introduce greater accountability and support economic growth through key initiatives.

These initiatives include opportunity hubs to provide Aboriginal school students with pathways to real jobs through partnerships with local employers, mentoring and career planning; Aboriginal language and culture nests, which will serve as a springboard for school students to access language learning pathways, ensuring the continuation of Aboriginal languages and promoting improved interactions between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students; local decision-making that places a focus on empowering Aboriginal communities by investing in leadership and governance capabilities, representing a significant change in the way Aboriginal communities and government agencies interact and the way agencies identify, plan and implement services and programs; and an independent Aboriginal Council, which will be established to embed a strong Aboriginal voice in the design and delivery of the plan.

The council will be established through legislation to provide advice to government on strategic issues that impact on Aboriginal communities, including future areas for reform. It will have a Coordinator General to act as the full-time chair. The partnership with Aboriginal people in producing these outcomes is also clear in the historic review of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. The New South Wales Government has brought together a working group to undertake the first five-year statutory review of that Act. The working group includes representatives of Crown lands, Aboriginal Affairs and community members from the land council network. The recommendations of the working group have been the subject of wideranging public consultations.

The proposed reforms have the ability to increase the capability, productivity and sustainability of land councils, which will help to achieve a better future for Aboriginal people across New South Wales. The theme of this year's National Reconciliation Week is "Let's Talk Recognition", with a focus on how Australians can better recognise each other and recognise the contributions, cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander people. It is important to recognise the role of the New South Wales Reconciliation Council in raising awareness and understanding of reconciliation and Indigenous issues, and in advocacy for social justice, equity and Indigenous rights.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [7.45 p.m.]: I join with the Government on highlighting this matter of public importance on National Reconciliation Week. The member for most of New South Wales—the member for Murray-Darling—referred to the theme "Let's Talk Recognition", but it is broader than he outlined: It is a lead-up to constitutional reform, namely, an amendment to the Australian Constitution to recognise Aboriginal people as being the first peoples of this country. However, it is also about the things he highlighted. I am very experienced to talk on this matter of public importance. In 1996 I was appointed to the National Council for Reconciliation and became an executive member of that council. I was one of the chief organisers of the 1997 National Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne, Corroboree 2000 and the Reconciliation Australia Bridge Walk.

We must be conscious in this Parliament—and I think members of all political persuasions are—that racism lurks close to the surface of this nation. One need only remember the incendiary remarks of Pauline Hanson in the late 1990s that set off a major backlash to reconciliation and the 2005 riots at Cronulla to realise that it does not take much to scratch the surface of this nation for the bile to pour out. Whilst reconciliation in Australia has been rather remarkable because it was a legislated 10-year process involving bipartisan agreement, which does not happen very often, reconciliation must be considered in the international context, be it in Timor or in the Middle East, even though it is important to remember that it has a national focus. There are two aspects to reconciliation. One is the symbolic nature of reconciliation. Although Prime Minister Howard did not see it this way, I would argue that symbolism is important.

Clearly, we in this place regard symbolism as important otherwise the Aboriginal flag would not be hanging in this Chamber or we would not have recognition of country in this place at the beginning of each day. That is important to all of us. Practical reconciliation, which was the agenda the Howard Government pursued—and I do not say this to be political—is what governments should deliver to Aboriginal people anyhow. I know that you, Madam Acting-Speaker Hornery, as a teacher who has worked in many communities would relate to this, but some people argue that reconciliation has delivered very little to this country while others argue to the contrary. I think reconciliation has delivered something extraordinarily important to all people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. We have never been more informed about the truth of our story in Australia. It is not about saying who was right or who was wrong. It is something we should all understand and accept as part of building this country.

When I think about reconciliation I think about three things: I think about that notion of truth telling, I think about social justice issues for those peoples—and we have many roads to travel there—and I think about the three sets of rights that exist for Aboriginal people in this country. We all share those rights as people sharing this earth: human rights, rights under the Australian constitution—and the member for Murray-Darling referred to the 1967 referendum—because we are all Australian, and the inherent rights of Indigenous people because we are the first peoples. Those rights are not a challenge to anyone; they are rights that we all should recognise. This week, "Let's Talk Recognition", is an opportunity for all of us, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to celebrate and understand that truth is liberating for every country. I think we are on the road to understanding that truth.

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [7.50 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support my friends the member for Murray-Darling and the member for Canterbury in recognising the significance and history of Reconciliation Week. It is heartening to see that the people of New South Wales have embraced Reconciliation Week and that many communities and organisations are conducting their own celebrations and events around the occasion. On Monday 27 May the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs participated in a flag-raising ceremony to launch the University of Sydney's Reconciliation Week activities. These activities will involve a range of forums and live events, including the composition of a sea of hands on the university grounds. Importantly, the university has also invited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to explore the campus as part of the university's efforts to encourage more members of those communities to consider entering tertiary education.

Through my career as a chief inspector of police at Campbelltown we often hosted the Indigenous Police Recruiting Our Way Delivery [IPROWD] initiative, which my friend the member for Dubbo was also very involved in. The IPROWD program helps and encourages Aboriginal youth to consider a career in the NSW Police Force. The member for Dubbo and I have worked with many fine police officers of Aboriginal

heritage; it is a wonderful program. I commend the member for Dubbo for his support for that program. Initiatives such as this should be recognised and supported for their contribution to empowering and providing opportunities for the future leaders of Aboriginal communities in New South Wales.

Our communities will celebrate this week in a number of ways. The Moree Reconciliation Awards, which recognise individuals and groups that have made a contribution to the reconciliation process in the Moree region, were held today. A record 132 nominees were entered in the awards this year. I take this opportunity to congratulate all the winners and nominees in Moree and all the communities conducting similar events. This Friday I will lay wreaths at the Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Ceremony at the Pool of Reflection at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. In doing so I will be remembering, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, the sacrifices made by Indigenous soldiers in defence of our nation. Last Saturday at the Justices Association annual conference at Mittagong, Aunty Val Mulcahy gave a welcome to country and gave a very touching account of a lost love that spanned 50 years, separated by past prejudices and only just recently reunited. It is important to recognise these Government initiatives. The Government acknowledges the efforts that people across New South Wales are making to commemorate this important occasion.

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [7.53 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Canterbury and the member for Campbelltown for their input into this discussion. There is no doubt that the member for Canterbury well recognises the importance of this week. I still feel a great degree of frustration at what we have not done; I see examples every day of our failure to have true recognition and reconciliation. I see Aboriginal children in Wilcannia face a very grim future through lack of education and lack of guidance in their lives, and a lack of recognition that they are a very important part of our community, that they can participate in our community and that they can be part of that community for the long term. I do not think they understand that. I do not think they understand what governments want them to achieve with their lives—that we want to see them be successful and participate in what we enjoy every day.

What I see around the electorate of Murray-Darling are some great examples of Aboriginal leadership and some great people, but I also see the extremes: I see people who have made a success of their lives and who have participated in what is available to them through reconciliation, and I see people at the other extreme. We still have a lot of work to do. We must look towards the future and we must find a pathway to address the needs of the more disadvantaged Aboriginal people in this country. I have visited Wilcannia over many, many years and I can only say that we have gone backwards; we are doing worse today than we were probably 30 years ago. That is a real shame—it is a shame on us in this Parliament that we have not done more for these people. There are young people missing out on life. They are going to live and die, never having understood what life is really about.

**Discussion concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.56 p.m. until  
Wednesday 29 May 2013 at 10.00 a.m.**

---