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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 20 June 2013

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

COURTS AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (EARLY INTERVENTION) BILL 2013

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2013

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills with amendments.

Consideration in detail set down as orders of the day for a later hour.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL AMENDMENT (PINK-EARED DUCKS) BILL 2013

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 March 2013.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [10.13 a.m.]: I thank the member for Sydney for introducing the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared ducks) Bill 2013 and indicate at the outset that the Government opposes the bill. The object of the bill is to remove the pink-eared duck from the list of approved native game birds. The few valid points made by the member for Sydney in his second reading are not entirely correct; in fact, in some instances they are misleading. I am considered by many to be a conservationist. I have a great respect for nature and animals. I can inform the House that the pink-eared duck has a large spatulate bill and is a relative of a now extinct duck that was found in New Zealand. It is quite striking to look at. It has a brown-black crown and black and white barred sides.

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

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: The pink-eared duck is also known as the zebra duck because of its distinct feathering. It is very mobile and highly adaptive to various conditions, particularly in areas of standing waters in dry inland regions where the annual rainfall rarely exceeds 15 inches. The contention by the member for Sydney that the pink-eared duck has no effect on grain farmers is a fallacy. It is dependent on plankton, crustaceans, molluscs and insects. It also consumes soft fruit, berries, leaves and shrubs, small aquatic insects, cereals and grains, flowers, nectars, fish, snakes and lizards. It is well-known that if this duck finds itself in an area that does not have the food it traditionally eats it will start consuming other things. It is this adaptability to varying conditions that presents a problem. Although the pink-eared duck is widespread across Australia there were certain regions of Queensland where it was rarely seen. However, in recent times there have been many sightings of the pink-eared duck in Queensland.

The pink-eared duck is an inquisitive animal that tends to congregate in water ponds and shrubs. The concaves it makes to nest in also become home to other birds. For example, it is similar to the Indian myna birds that are often at loggerheads with doves that are nesting in pine trees. I acknowledge that the member for

Sydney is keen to protect this species of duck but it becomes an issue when it affects the livelihood of farmers. One only has to do a little research into the habits of this species of duck to understand its adaptability to varying environments and food sources. As I said earlier, the Government opposes the removal of the pink-eared duck from the list of approved native game birds.

Dr Andrew McDonald: I have ducks near my house.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I welcome the interjection of the member for Macquarie Fields.

Dr Andrew McDonald: I like ducks.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I am sure you do.

Dr Andrew McDonald: They don't do me any damage.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields may contribute to this debate very shortly. It is fine for the member to have an opinion, and we look forward to hearing it, but the member for Drummoyne has the call.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: It is like water off a duck's back. A number of native game birds were included in the schedule so that if agricultural product is at risk from these birds they can be managed in accordance with the quota arrangements. That is an important point. I note that the member for Balmain is also concerned about this matter, and I welcome my neighbour into the gallery. The zebra duck can in fact cause damage to crops, and that is the whole issue I have with this bill. Those opposite will argue otherwise, but that is a fact. Talk to some farmers and you will quickly find out that the zebra duck can cause damage to crops as a result of their foraging activities and the muddying of rice bays, disturbing the establishment of the crop. As I said earlier, that creates opportunities for other bird species to harvest the crop and it attracts other ducks to the crop as well. So not only does the zebra duck cause damage; its activity invites other species into the area.

The duck's conservation status is of least concern to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, so any culling under a native game bird management licence is unlikely to impact on this duck's sustainability and its numbers. The Act now includes provision for a Native Game Bird Management Committee, shared by the Department of Primary Industries, with the Office of Environment and Heritage and Game Council as members, to set quotas based on the best available science. The Game Council of New South Wales will be responsible for administering the system. I have nothing further to say on the bill other than that the Government will oppose it. While I understand the arguments in favour of the bill put forward by those opposite, I do not think they have taken the time and put in the effort to look at both sides of the argument on this bill. I think their position has been purely on the basis that—

Mr Mark Coure: They are centred on Sydney.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Exactly. The Nationals in this place are very close to the land, and they understand the problems associated with this particular species. Anything that is not controlled can over time get out of hand. That is the problem with the sheer numbers of this species. If they were confined to one particular region, that would be one story; but the adaptability of the species will create problems right across the board. On that note, the Government will oppose the bill.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [10.22 a.m.]: I note that the last speaker read a speech. He clearly did not believe what he said on a topic in which he has no expertise. I would like to know how those opposite would vote if given a conscience vote. If they were allowed a conscience vote this bill would pass.

Mr Rob Stokes: On every bill there is a conscience vote.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD: I note that the member says that on every bill there is a conscience vote. I no longer believe in Father Christmas. The pink-eared duck is a harmless native species that does not eat grain; not one expert in the field believes it does. This is all about a deal with the Shooters and Fishers to sell the ports. That deal has been done against the wishes of the people of New South Wales so that the Shooters and Fishers will allow the sale of the ports. That is what this bill seeks to address. The pink-eared duck has been included in the list of species that may be shot simply because of a stuff up, not a conspiracy. This duck should be removed

from the list of species permitted to be shot. I would like to know how many members opposite will even bother to speak in debate on the bill. There are 70 of them, and I want them to say when they last went duck shooting. None of them have. It is not a sport that people with any compassion for animals would actually follow.

These ducks do not do any damage to our community. I regularly spend a lot of time with ducks because there are a lot of ducks near my house, so I see more ducks than most members in this Parliament. This bill gives all members on the Government side who would like to support a bill to permit the shooting of the pink-eared duck an opportunity to say how often they have been duck shooting. Will they say that they support the continued shooting of a native species that does not do any conservation damage? They should listen to the experts who say this duck should not have been included on the list of ducks that may be shot. It is as simple as that. Government members can say whether they have any expertise, or they can just read further speeches prepared by someone else, on a topic that they know very little about, and on a sport that they will never actually take part in. Probably no members opposite have gone duck shooting or would want to go duck shooting. Only a very small proportion of the community want to go duck shooting. The position of Government members is all about the sale of the ports; it has nothing to do with conservation and the pink-eared duck. The Opposition will support the bill.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [10.26 a.m.]: I support the Government in opposing the bill introduced by the member for Sydney to remove the pink-eared duck, also called the zebra duck, from the schedule to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act, based on the claim that this duck does not cause damage to rice crops because the species is carnivorous. With all due respect, I wonder when the member for Sydney was last in a rice crop. When did the member for Sydney last put a foot outside the Sydney metropolitan region? When was the last time the member for Sydney stepped into regional New South Wales? When did the member for Sydney travel the Newell Highway? When did the member travel down to the Riverina or up to the north-west of New South Wales? I wonder whether the member for Sydney has ever seen the damage wreaked by birds on crops. I wonder whether the member for Sydney realises that bird damage causes the agricultural and horticultural industries in New South Wales \$300 million a year. It is all well and good to remain in the confines of a safe Sydney, with its bright lights and great restaurants, but I encourage the member for Sydney to travel around New South Wales and get a bit of a feel for native game birds.

Dr Andrew McDonald: When was the last time you went duck shooting?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Macquarie Fields. I last went shooting two weeks ago.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Duck shooting?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will not conduct debates across the Chamber. The member for Tamworth has the call, and he will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Macquarie Fields has had his opportunity to participate in the debate. The member for Baulkham Hills will have an opportunity to speak to the bill if he wishes.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I had the pleasure of going shooting about two weeks ago, as a guest of the Boggabri Gunnedah Gun Club. About 30 or 40 people attended this recreational sporting event. We had an absolutely fantastic day shooting and down-the-line skeet shooting. I spoke to these sporting shooters about their industry and their favourite pastime. All told me that a lot of the problems we face these days relate to feral animals and of the need to control feral animals. We need to control—

Mr Jamie Parker: This is a native animal; it is not a feral animal.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Balmain, who said it is not about feral animals. We are debating the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Ducks) Bill 2013. If The Greens and the Independents want to line up that is fine.

Mr John Sidoti: There are no ducks in Balmain.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Drummoyne, but there may be—perhaps a couple of sitting ducks. Bird damage is a significant problem. More than 60 bird species are known to damage horticultural crops, and the damage bill amounts to \$300 million annually. Some of those birds are cockatoos, starlings, raptors who prey, galahs, scarecrows, currawongs, blackbirds—the list goes on.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Not ducks, though.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I would like to correct the member for Macquarie Fields. The zebra duck, otherwise known as the pink-eared duck, can also cause damage to crops as a result of its foraging activity by muddying rice bays and paddies, disturbing the establishment of the crop, creating opportunities for other bird species to harvest the crop and attracting other ducks to the crop. It is not just one duck; it is not just one mouse. A plague of mice causes destruction and complete devastation of crops. It is the same with any feral animal, such as feral pigs. A herd of pigs can damage crops to the extent that they wipe thousands and thousands of dollars off the bottom line of an agricultural enterprise.

It is the same with ducks. When massive flocks of ducks forage, muddying rice bays and paddies, it impacts on the farmer's bottom line. The duck was assigned conservation status of least concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, so any culling under the authority of a native game bird management licence is unlikely to impact on its sustainability. It will not have any effect whatsoever. The Act established the Native Game Bird Management Committee, which is chaired by the Department of Primary Industries and comprises Office of Environment and Heritage and Game Council members, to set quotas based on the best available science. The Game Council New South Wales will be responsible for administering that system.

We must continue the game and feral animal control debate across New South Wales because feral animals are damaging our agricultural industry. We have had some pretty good seasons in regional New South Wales and wild dog numbers are increasing. The dogs are bigger and stronger, and they are devastating sheep flocks on the fringes of forests and national parks. They are a major problem. Pigs are starting to emerge on the Liverpool Plains around Tambar Springs and Mullaley. They are coming down from the ridges and onto the plains, devastating crops and then disappearing again. It is the same with birds. We must control the birds that can damage crops extensively.

We must stay on top of game and feral animal management. We can do that by making sure we do not let nonsensical bills such as this waste the Parliament's time. I have not yet heard why the member for Sydney is so passionate about the pink-eared duck and why he wants this particular bird removed from the list. I am waiting with anticipation to hear the member explain why he has such passion for the pink-eared duck. I invite the member for Sydney to come to the Tamworth electorate. I will be happy to take him for a drive out west to visit some grain and other crop farms that have been devastated by feral animals—whether they be birds, pigs, dogs or whatever. The offer is there. I am happy for the member to visit Tamworth any time he wishes; I am sure he would love a trip to the country. I am sure that members who represent electorates in the south-west of the State, around the Riverina where there are some rice paddies and other crops, would also welcome a visit from the member for Sydney—as they would from any other member of Parliament.

We must take a balanced view and consider the impact of our decisions. When someone has an idea we must consider the ramifications. What are the ramifications of the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Ducks) Bill 2013 introduced by the member for Sydney? Crop damage by game and feral animals is a significant problem and the pink-eared duck is part of that problem. Rice crops are particularly susceptible to damage by native water fowl. Different species impact on crops at various stages of their development. The black duck eats the grain upon sowing and the wood duck eats the shoots as the rice germinates. While some may think it is frivolous to talk about pink-eared ducks, this is a serious matter. It is about protecting our agricultural industry. Every day of the year farmers struggle to make ends meet. As legislators, we must pass laws that allow farmers to get on with their business. That is why the Government is standing up for farmers—as we do in most cases—and strongly opposing the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Ducks) Bill 2013. We should protect our agricultural and horticultural industries in regional New South Wales by preventing game and feral animals from devastating them.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.36 a.m.]: I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to debate on the private member's bill introduced by the member for Sydney. The Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Ducks) Bill 2013 is important not just because of the specific species to which it refers; there is a wider issue about how decisions are made in Parliament about the management of feral animals, in particular, and the arrangements that are put in place by the Government and other parties in this place. We are debating this issue today as a result of an arrangement, or deal, reached between the Government and the Shooters and Fishers Party. That is clear: it was announced publicly and the Premier has talked about it. There is no question that the Government needed to get its legislation through Parliament and so had to deliver something to the Shooters and Fishers Party. We understand that. As a member of The Greens I know that governments negotiate. That is part of how arrangements are made.

The challenge in this case is that it was a poor decision. It is not in the interests of farming communities or the environment and it is definitely not in the interests of the duck species to which the bill refers. During the last week of Parliament in 2012 the Government passed the Game and Feral Animal Control Further Amendment Bill to allow the hunting of native birds, including ducks, on private land by persons with a native game bird management licence. I spoke strongly against the bill, highlighting that it had been brought before the House for purely political reasons—namely, the privatisation of Port Botany. Recreational shooting was banned in New South Wales in 1994 for animal cruelty reasons, particularly in the case of ducks. However, landholders could obtain licences from the Office of Environment and Heritage to permit the shooting of native birds on private property if those birds were a pest and causing damage. While recreational shooters could be hired to do the shooting, it was prohibited to hunt using a licence that had recreation and sport as its primary purpose.

Government members have talked about the impact of feral animals, and I emphasise and highlight the importance of those contributions. Feral animals have a horrific impact on the environment and on farming communities and thus a significant impact on the economy. But feral pests should be dealt with through integrated professional programs, not by allowing a few shooters into our national parks or State forests on the weekend and letting them shoot away. It is about professional shooting: it is about detailed, integrated eradication programs. That is why we have been debating this issue for some time. The legislation that passed last year allows duck hunting purely for fun, for recreational purposes, on private property and it puts, of all people, the Game Council—that discredited organisation—in charge of licences. The bill before the House today gives us an opportunity to make that legislation slightly less awful by removing the pink-eared duck from the list of approved native game birds. I emphasise that there is no sustainable agriculture argument that supports shooting this duck. One can make an argument about sustainable agriculture in relation to those ducks that feed on grains. That argument would be plausible—

Mr Daryl Maguire: How do you divide them up when they're all in one pack?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The divide is that one species is carnivorous. Also, this duck is quite helpful. Chironomid larva has a major impact on rice crops and farmers use pesticides to control it. The pink-eared duck feeds on these larvae. We know that this duck is important because it does not impact negatively by feeding on the grain. It is not a grain-eating species and it does not cause the type of damage to grain stocks that others have highlighted. As we know, grain-eating birds cause damage to grain stocks, but this species is not in that category. If the Government is serious in its claim that it will only issue licences for the shooting of ducks—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Balmain will be heard in silence.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: —that harm agricultural crops it should remove the pink-eared duck from the list or at least make sure that the shooting of these ducks is not permitted during the rice-growing season. This is a very simple bill that the Government should support. The Government has claimed that its hunting legislation is for the purpose of controlling animals that harm crops. The Government should support this bill because that is a spurious argument in this case. If that argument is true it should amend the legislation to say that these ducks cannot be shot outside the rice-growing season. That would then prove this Government is serious about feral and pest animal control and is not just about delivering an arrangement with the Shooters and Fishers Party.

The Government argues that ducks can muddy the waters around rice crops and that can be a nuisance. Let us then ban the hunting of these ducks outside the rice-growing season. That is an obvious solution, but it is clear the Government will not do that because it wants to hold together the arrangement with the Shooters and Fishers Party. I understand the Government does not control the upper House in the New South Wales Parliament and that it will do deals in order to get its bills through, but the legislation the Government agreed to that allows recreational hunting of ducks—hunting for fun—should not be supported by the Government. It is not supported by the majority of people in New South Wales. The member for Sydney has responded to the obvious problem with the pink-eared duck being included in the list when it does not fit the criteria that apply to the other ducks. Those ducks obviously feed on grains and as a result damage rice crops. If the Government is serious let it say that it will welcome a bill that excludes pink-eared ducks from being hunted for recreational purposes outside the rice-growing season.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Who is going to police that?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The Game Council. Apparently it is an amazing organisation. Let us just knock them out; that is the best way to do it. I appreciate the fact that members are approaching the bill with goodwill but the focus needs to be on feral animals that are causing a problem and minimising any impact on

those animals that are not causing significant problems in the farming community. On that basis the Government needs to get serious about feral pest control, not by allowing recreational hunters into national parks or allowing the shooting of these ducks but by managing our environment and farming communities. That means investment in integrated pest management control programs, which this Government is reluctant to do and which the former Government was hopeless at. It is important that members of Parliament focus on the fact that the pink-eared duck does not have the impact that other ducks have. It does not fit the criteria and therefore should be excluded.

I support the proposal by the member for Sydney. We often hear members from rural and regional New South Wales say, "If you haven't driven down the highway you have nothing to say about it." The philosophy and the facts stand alone. It does not matter whether one is on a highway in Broken Hill or on Macquarie Street outside Parliament House. We are here to represent the views of our community and I can tell members that my community is not in favour of the Government's legislation and therefore we are supporting the bill introduced by the member for Sydney. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [10.43 a.m.]: I respect the views of members and those of the member for Sydney in putting forward the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Ducks) Bill 2013. The former member for Sydney quite often brought bills to this House that were unacceptable for the reason that little on-the-ground research had been done. They merely reflected the views of the member's electorate. That is the job of the member for Sydney; I understand that. The fact is that on this side of the House there are far more members of Parliament who represent a great land area that is agriculture based. I ask the member for Sydney to tell us when he replies what rice farm he went to in his electorate in the Sydney area to do some research and where he visited in regional New South Wales in the past 12 months to talk to farmers to find out about the impact of ducks and feral animals, particularly ducks.

I understand where the member for Balmain is coming from in some of the suggestions he made, but the fact is we are sick to death of bills being brought to this Parliament that exclude industries from red gum forests, for instance, and close down perfectly good industries that have been managed sustainably for 100 years or so, and that allow the inner-city Greens and the member for Sydney to debate the issues and close things down. Voila! Hundreds of people are thrown out of a job, industries close and rural towns are decimated. Members have only to look at the situation down Balranald way and at Dubbo and in the Pilliga forest. Those areas show the detrimental effect of well-intentioned people who live in the Sydney central business district and do not derive an income from rural-based economies.

The member for Balmain said he wanted to remove the pink-eared duck from the list. I ask him: How are you going to determine which are the pink-eared ducks that are destroying your crop and which are the other varieties of duck? The fact is that ducks congregate. I live on the land near a river. There are enormous flocks of birds—galahs and parrots—and we encourage many of them. But some flocks have reached such proportions that they are destroying the city. The cockatoos are chewing the buildings to pieces and eating through electrical wiring, causing enormous damage. We cannot touch them because they are protected. When you plant or harvest a crop the cockatoos come in in their millions and from my back door to the river there is not a tree that is not covered by cockatoos. Then they land on olive trees and what do they do to the olive farms? They chew every olive off the tree and farmers are left with a pile of olives on the ground that would have been valuable. It is not just one tree; it is hundreds of trees.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Everywhere.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: It is everywhere. That is what happens. Ducks descend en masse: they hunt in flocks. They will make their home in a dam in the corner of a paddock on a dry-area farm—they love it because the foxes cannot get them. They live on the dam and every day they go on an excursion. They toddle off—Mr Duck and Mrs Duck and all the little ducks—into the crop. They chew their way through the crop that you have spent money on to plant and hopefully harvest. It is not just one mother duck and one father duck and 10 or 12 ducklings; there are thousands of them. With rice crops, ducks dig down into the mud and disturb the rice. That creates the opportunity for other scavenging birds to descend and feed. You will see a rice crop absolutely black with ducks. When that is finished they move on. It is not just one rice paddock. Members can drive towards Deniliquin and the Murrumbidgee when there is water around and they will find ducks as far as the eye can see. They will lift off in a great flock and go to the next spot. That is what happens.

How can members opposite tell me that a farmer should not take action to try to reduce in some way the numbers of a bird that has been protected since 1995? Farmers are conservationists. Members should look at the work they have done to protect the landscape, in partnership with Landcare and catchment management authorities. They will see that farmers are conservationists. We are fencing the landscape and protecting the

waterways, and this occurs daily. Just last week I went to the local Landcare organisation presentations, which I am passionate about. I do not want to see animals killed everywhere. But when we decided that we would not remove timber from the roadsides and would plant there we created a killing field for birds. Modern motor cars kill them. Such is the speed and quietness of a car that beautiful birds are being slaughtered on the roads. Our good intentions sometimes may not work as we might have liked.

I said to the member for Sydney in my opening remarks that we are sick and tired of people telling us what is good for us without fully understanding the impacts that a bill like this can have, whether it be on red gum forests or harvesting timber in the Pilliga forest or elsewhere. There is a real impact on families. It impacts their ability to earn an income and pay their bills. We members are lucky: we have an employment contract that has to be renewed every four years. Our pay is in the bank and we can go about representing the views of our communities. Farmers and landholders do not have that luxury. They have to make a profit and the only way to do that on a farm is to plant a crop and reap the harvest. The market price of wheat or rice fluctuates, which is always a risk. If using appropriate sprays to protect crops reduces the risk then the income will be maximised. In Griffith farmers planted a brilliant rice crop. We have finally had good rainy seasons and irrigators have water and are employing people. The rice mill has been reopened and is now processing rice. That is good news.

Australia produces and markets the best rice in the world. For example, SunRice exports its rice and local farmers and people who rely on jobs in the community are making money. Coleambally is a good example. The town was established in the late 1950s on the back of the rice industry. The town suffered enormously—it almost became a ghost town—when farmers lost their water allocations through buyback programs and other initiatives that resulted from decisions made by people who did not rely on water for their income. Coleambally is again actively processing rice. Farmers have jobs. They are employing people, receiving incomes, buying cars, and tractors and other machinery that were locked up and covered in dust and cobwebs are being repaired.

I respect the member for Sydney, but I say to him in closing that, although the bill is well intentioned, I cannot support it for the reasons I have mentioned. I am more than happy for the member for Sydney and the member for Balmain to consider the real impact that birds and feral animals have on the rural landscape and incomes. Flocks of ibis are causing enormous problems in parks and gardens in the electorate of Sydney. Although there are programs to control them, those flocks do not just stay in Sydney; they migrate to harvest in our paddocks. They are often seen near the river, on rice farms and in other places in my electorate. Birds migrate, so we must deal with the consequences. The reluctance to reduce their numbers means that the impact on our community is greater. Therefore, I cannot support this bill. The member for Sydney has good intentions in representing his community, but our community will suffer a greater impact. Therefore, I oppose the bill.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [10.53 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Balmain, the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Tamworth for their contributions to the debate. The member for Drummoyne made the astute comment that ducks are a mobile animal. I appreciate that contribution. In this debate we have heard a lot about different types of birds, mice and recently ibis. The discussion has focused on animals that cause damage to crops, but the pink-eared duck is not one of them, because it eats pests. Because of the way the bill is structured the pink-eared ducks cannot impact on crops. The Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Pink-eared Ducks) Bill 2013 gives the Government the opportunity to demonstrate whether its plan to let recreational hunters shoot ducks on farms is about pest management or about letting hunters expand their blood sport.

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

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: Unfortunately, it appears to be the latter. We know the public is opposed to recreational hunters being given more opportunities to shoot animals. Polls, surveys, petitions and protests constantly prove this. It was demonstrated in the recent city by-election when it was revealed there was a 6 per cent swing against the Government. A key comment repeated to me was outrage at the expansion of hunting in national parks. I do not support duck hunting. It was banned almost 20 years ago.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I have already placed the member for Dubbo on a call to order. The member for Sydney will be heard in silence.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: I do not support duck hunting. It was banned almost 20 years ago because it is cruel. It is difficult to ensure that a clean shot will kill a duck instantly. Many are wounded and suffer a slow, painful death. Following a deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party last year the Government supported the introduction of native game bird management licences, which allow the shooting of native fowl on private property. The purpose of the legislation was to permit duck hunting only for the purpose of sustainable

agricultural management. Those claims have been totally discredited by the Government's opposition to this bill. The pink-eared duck does not eat crops; it eats animal-based foods, including known grain-eating rice pests such as chironomid larvae and ostracods. In fact, it helps rice farmers. The argument that pink-eared ducks should be shot because they muddy the waters with seeds and attract other ducks is a shameful response. Surely the fact that they eat the bugs that harm the crops is reason enough to delist them.

The member for Balmain made a good point: The bill that was introduced last year allows ducks to be hunted all year round, not just during rice season. I met with the Minister's staff and asked them to provide me with the research to back up the Government's opposition to the bill. I was told they did not have any but that I would be sent industry research. This did not happen and I am not sure whether such research exists. I am also concerned about the precedent that a native bird that is a valuable pest destroyer can be shot because of its association with a species that eats crops. The death-by-association logic is completely flawed. What other native animals will be targeted next? Will this process be followed again to achieve the support of the Shooters and Fishers Party to privatise yet another port? There are now 14 native species listed as "game" under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002.

It is in the best interests of the Shooters and Fishers Party to increase this number. The Shooters and Fishers Party no doubt has a long list of other native species that it thinks its members should be able to shoot. While the pink-eared duck is not a vulnerable species, shooting them is no less cruel. I am disappointed that the Government's opposition to this bill means that it will not be passed and the pink-eared duck will be killed under the native game bird management licences, despite its contribution to crop pest management. It is clear that the Government's legislative agenda is being held hostage by the Shooters and Fishers Party and its radical anti-animal welfare agenda. The pink-eared duck does not eat grains; it is carnivorous. It should not be killed in the name of sustainable agricultural management. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 23

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

Noes, 61

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Bill not read a second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2013

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2013

STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BUDGET MEASURES) BILL 2013

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 June 2013.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [11.07 a.m.], in reply: I will address the budget on behalf of the Opposition. This is the Government's third budget, and that is significant. In the life of any government it marks a turning point. In a first budget governments can claim they are just assessing the lay of the land. They might even adopt the old chestnut of expressing shock and dismay about what they have inherited. Even in a second budget a government can refer backwards, still able to claim that it is sorting the situation out. I say this because there has been a question of form here, given the phantom black hole of Baird budget 1 and the billion dollar bungle of Baird budget 2 identified by the Auditor-General. But by a third budget there is no looking back. It is now time for the O'Farrell Government to throw away the rear-view mirror. The Treasurer now owns the budget, the Government owns it. The people know it. So what is it that this Government owns? What has it really delivered? And not just on paper, but what has it delivered in reality on our streets, trains—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that there is a fairly clear convention in this place that a Budget Speech and a budget-in-reply speech are heard in silence. I will remove members from the Chamber if there are further interjections.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I have just become used to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition does not have to become used to it.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: But in reality what had the Government delivered on our streets, our trains, our roads and in our waiting rooms? There is often a disparity between this Government on paper and this Government in the real world. That disparity is writ large in this budget. It is a budget of great varnish and spin, but scratch the surface and what is underneath is a government that is allergic to transparency and addicted to tax. Let us start with the allergy. There is no Standard and Poor's meter recorded in the New South Wales budget papers to show the strength of our State's credit rating. That sounds ordinary, but it is extraordinary. This is the first time in recent memory that the State's credit rating has not been reported in the State Budget.

Based on our calculations the New South Wales economy has breached the trigger point for a credit rating review so the allergy to transparency flares up. The transparency allergy is also evident in the Government's attempt to spin its tax addiction. The Treasurer claims once again that the failure to deliver the intergovernmental tax cuts promised to our businesses is simply deferment. Treasurer, it is an indefinite deferment. These taxes will stay in New South Wales, with no end date proposed. They cost New South Wales businesses \$300 million every year. Despite being removed in every other State and Territory, New South Wales businesses are still stuck with them years after they were supposed to end. Out in the real world there is a word for promises that are indefinitely deferred: they are broken.

In the same spin the Treasurer says this \$300 million slug to business is "needed for Gonski", yet only \$26 million is allocated to education reform in the next year. Where is the other \$274 million headed? It is headed into the coffers of a government addicted to tax. But the Treasurer says, "Never mind that. Look over here at our shiny, new small business tax cut." Once again it sounds good, but scratch the surface and we have a tax incentive that will benefit fewer than one in every 500 businesses. Meanwhile, every business continues to suffer an unfair tax penalty by being slugged with \$300 million worth of taxes that have been abolished in every other State. Making New South Wales number one again? Making it number one in taxes,

that is for sure. What a contrast this is to the Barry O'Farrell of February 2009, the Barry O'Farrell who announced a Coalition policy to deliver a one-off 15 per cent cut to payroll tax, the Barry O'Farrell who said:

... unless we cut taxes ... the State's economic interests won't be served. This policy ... is about protecting families and the jobs they rely on ...

If the Premier was serious about making New South Wales businesses number one again he would honour that promise. He would lower the payroll tax rate for New South Wales businesses. Forget about rebates for one in 500, honour the promise and cut the tax. The Premier's words have proved quite prophetic.

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

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: This Government has failed to create a fair playing field for New South Wales businesses and this is hitting families through increased unemployment. Unemployment has risen to 5.6 per cent, up from 5.1 per cent two years ago. That means there are now 22,860 more unemployed people in this State than there were in March 2011. In a State that is meant to be number one, with a Government that says it is fixing the problems, unemployment, perhaps the most critical measure of both economic confidence and family security, is steadily heading in the wrong direction. Either no-one has told the Treasurer this—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come to order.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: —or maybe he does not understand what the figure means, and while unemployment consistently climbs the Treasurer consistently trumpets his achievements in jobs growth. Take this media release of 3 June that declares:

Treasurer Mike Baird today said NSW's strong jobs growth is encouraging New South Wales households to spend!

I would like those opposite briefed on the fact that the unemployment rate defines the rate of unemployment. If it is going up, that is bad—bad for families, bad for retail and bad for business. No pie chart, spin or media release can change that. Increasing unemployment in this State is a serious and concerning trend, and reversing it should be number one priority. Instead, the Government continues to cut jobs, services and infrastructure spending while once again displaying a mastery of spin. Let us take the pea and thimble trick of budget versus actual spends. The rules are simple: Announce a record investment in services; do not invest it all; announce a record increase in investment, which is easy because you did not spend enough last year; and keep repeating it each budget, while services decline in every direction.

The hypocrisy of this approach is nowhere more evident than in the Health portfolio. Last year the Treasurer celebrated a record Health budget. The Government promised to spend \$17.3 billion on health services. Remarkably it underspent it, even during a time of closed beds, shut wards and cancelled surgeries. Even the brand-new operating theatres at Royal North Shore Hospital were being used as storage rooms. This year the same fanfare of "record health spending" is splashed across media releases. Let us take the much-trumpeted 10 per cent increase in health capital expenditure which ran in the *Sydney Morning Herald* last week. We had all the usual hallmarks. The Treasurer talked of his phantom revenue challenge and tough decisions. He moaned about 16 years of Labor. Treasurer, you have to stop looking in the rear-view mirror; you are driving now.

The Treasurer did all this before announcing a business-as-usual capital commitment that does nothing to address the backlog of patients. Because that is a question of recurrent funding and, as the Australian Medical Association has pointed out, this needs a 7 per cent increase per annum or it is going backwards. That means this budget's funding increase of 3.4 per cent is a real funding cut. Meanwhile, New South Wales emergency departments are already failing to meet Federal waiting time benchmarks and New South Wales has the longest wait for elective surgery in mainland Australia. But in order to invest in hospitals we also need to invest in nurses, porters and cleaners to keep them going. That is what matters at 2.00 a.m. when a child has a fever. Promising new hospital infrastructure in the distant future, when there is no staff today, is the tail wagging the dog. It is giving with one hand while taking away with both.

The Government takes the same approach to Newcastle, offering a much-trumpeted light rail line, but only after the heart of Newcastle has been sold off from under the people there. The Government is removing the world's largest coal port and a key employer in the Hunter from public hands to fund a light rail line it should have promised to build anyway. We have no costings and no detail. We only have confirmation that the

port is being sold off and legislation that has been rammed through the Parliament. This is an appalling strategy to effectively force Novocastrians to accept the sale of their port and loss of local jobs. Let us not forget that most of the port sale money is actually bound for Sydney. It speaks volumes about the respect the O'Farrell Government really has for the region. How can Hunter communities trust this Government to deliver on promised infrastructure when its track record on delivering any infrastructure is abysmal? Three budgets in and not a single new major project is started—that is a fact.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Kiama that if he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Yet once again the spin is running way ahead of reality. On Tuesday in this Chamber the Treasurer said:

The Government has embraced Infrastructure NSW's key recommendation, the 33 kilometre WestConnex project. The recent ports transaction has secured the funding.

From reading that you would think WestConnex is a done deal, locked and loaded. But it is not. The funding is not secured; 1 per cent of it is. Only \$111 million is allocated to WestConnex next financial year. And meanwhile there is no route, no business case, no start date and no end date. On Tuesday the Premier told the Ben Fordham radio program that he had a date on his hard drive. Well, that is all we have to show for three budgets: a date on a hard drive the Government will not tell the public about and a blurry line on a map. Meanwhile the people of western Sydney continue to stew in ever-increasing congestion.

No wonder the Treasurer is trying to hide the lack of achievements by inventing phantom "revenue shortfalls". The fact is that there is plenty of good news for the Government on the revenue front. Although you would not think so to hear the Treasurer, GST revenue is up. The budget papers clearly showed GST revenues are up—and growing at 4 per cent per annum, well beyond inflation. New South Wales will receive \$942 million in extra Commonwealth funding in 2013-14. In fact there is \$735 million more Commonwealth revenue than was forecast in the Treasurer's own 2012-13 half yearly review, so his talk of "GST write downs" is utter nonsense. That allergy to transparency is flaring up yet again. And let us not also forget the \$1 million per day that this Government is raking in through overdue fines.

All in all, it is a pretty rosy picture for a Treasurer. So why hide it? Well, the answer to that is plain to any New South Wales citizen who is stuck in traffic, or waiting for a train or for surgery, or trying to get their child ahead through better schooling. The answer is that, for all the promises of an "infrastructure revolution", for all the times that the Premier's index finger went up in the air to signal that New South Wales would be number one again, for all the promises to fix the problems, there is nothing to show. The truth is that three budgets in, in a time of growth and with a record mandate for change, this is a Government that has fixed nothing.

As I have said many times, the people of New South Wales never get it wrong. In 2011 they clearly voted for change. But where is it? Those opposite promised to "fix New South Wales" to make it number one again. What have they delivered? First, an economy that is slowing and stagnating. The Treasurer's budget cuts, higher fees, uncertainty around business tax commitments, and lack of stimulus are slowing the New South Wales economy. Job growth has failed to keep up with population growth in New South Wales and unemployment is now 5.6 per cent. No wonder first home buying is at a 20-year low, with new home buyers abandoning the market due to massive cuts to the First Home Buyers Scheme. How is that making New South Wales number one?

Meanwhile the Government is making it harder for families to make ends meet, with massive increases in electricity bills, water bills and public transport fares. Train fares are up by \$208 a year, bus fares up by \$83 a year, green slips up 15 per cent, and electricity bills up 42 per cent. And there is more—higher electricity dividends, higher speeding fines and more speed cameras, a new fire services charge imposed on households is on the cards, and for the first time public preschool fees will be levied. You might ask: For all this largess, have services improved? The answer is: No, they have not. They have diminished.

Before the election this Premier dismissed Labor's talk of slashed services as an unfounded "scare campaign". He said there would be more public sector workers, not fewer, under a Coalition Government. Yet the Premier will continue cutting jobs—and will not even come clean on how many public sector workers will lose their jobs next year, hiding instead behind the euphemism of an "efficiency dividend". Families should make no mistake: this means further cuts to jobs and services. The Government has cut \$3 billion from our

health system, causing hospital waiting lists to blow out, slowing emergency treatment times, and delaying ambulance response times. Budget cuts are also leading to fire station closures and critical police shortages on our streets. It is no wonder gun crime is such a concern for families in south-west and western Sydney.

Incredibly, during this period of razor gangs Government debt has skyrocketed. Government sector net debt more than doubled from \$6.2 billion in March 2011 to \$13 billion. Net debt continues to increase despite asset sales and massive cuts. No wonder Standard and Poor's has placed New South Wales on negative outlook, and no wonder the Treasurer wants to wipe it from his budget papers. But the biggest concern is that, for all the revenue, for all the pain New South Wales families have borne, for all the additional debt, there is still nothing to show for it. And even when this Government claims to be delivering there is always a catch. Three budgets in, and it is still all about the varnish. Three budgets in, and both businesses and families alike are asking: Where are the results? Where is the change?

Three budgets in, and this Premier would still rather talk than do, would still rather consult than decide, is still keener on plans than on delivery. In some cases he is even taking funded plans and putting them back on the shelf. Just look at the disgrace of the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link—a vital project to link west and south-west Sydney with the employment and education centres of Macquarie Park. The Federal Government offered \$2.1 billion, 80 per cent of the funding. That was a very generous offer, recognising the critical nature of this link in Sydney's rail network. But this Premier knocked it back. Let the people of western Sydney, who voted in droves on the promise by Barry O'Farrell of a better transport deal for them, never forget that. They had a heavy rail line planned, shovel ready, and all but paid for by Canberra—and Barry O'Farrell's first order of business was to kill it.

So what does Western Sydney get now? Very little. Meanwhile the Coalition's one signature project, the North West Rail Link, has already become a shadow of its promise—not a train to the city, but a train to Chatswood, where you can join the crush in an attempt to get a train to the city. I think it is time we called it what it is—a privatised north-west shuttle. And though not a piece of earth has been moved for this shuttle, the cost is already blowing out, with tenders for legal, financial and geotechnical services ballooning from \$33 million to \$68 million.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: There is a train heading out there all right—a gravy train. Word of the Transport Minister's well-known obsession with the north-west shuttle has reached the consultant community with a clear message: Quote what you like; money is no object. And why would they think otherwise when this Government has this year already spent \$83 million on consultants? Why would they think otherwise when the New South Wales Government has now become so bereft of technical expertise that it is regarded as an "uninformed buyer"? This, of course, has an impact on future project costs as the Government loses technical experience. Engineering consultants know they can charge massive rates, and in some cases government agencies will receive advice from the same people who were previously employed by the Government.

We need builders, not consultants. We need construction, not reports. We need more skilled trades and experts, not more management gurus. This, after all, is one of the reasons New South Wales has the third-highest infrastructure cost in the world. We need more skilled engineering and construction workers in New South Wales and, without action from this Government, glossy plans for these projects will suffer from delays and cost blowouts, and all the while nothing gets built and nothing gets fixed for New South Wales families. The answer to this is obvious. The true reform needed is clear. To build the State you need to skill the State. Building New South Wales infrastructure over the next 20 years requires rapidly investing in skills and expertise today.

Without the right experience in government, without the right jobs and skills in our State, the consequences will be delays, massive cost blowouts and more ill-conceived plans that go nowhere. It should be obvious that if a lack of construction skills and expertise is the reason for our infrastructure costs being so high then addressing this deficit will be the solution. Incredibly, the O'Farrell Government is deskilling the State: apprenticeship numbers have fallen by 12.5 per cent; 800 jobs have been cut from TAFE; the rising cost of TAFE courses has put qualifications out of the reach of many; funding for the Joint Group Training Scheme, which supported over 8,000 apprentices and trainees, has been abandoned; and this Government has increased fees for apprentices by nearly 10 per cent this year—four times the rate of inflation.

To be serious about building the economic foundations to promote future sustainable growth a responsible New South Wales Government must invest in people and communities. That is exactly what Labor

wants to do. That is why I have announced that we will hold a skills summit to address the skills issues constricting our economic future and hear from the experts and stakeholders to inform the development of policies we take to the next election. As part of our consultation with communities, the skills summit will allow experts to put forward solutions to raise the skills level for workers in New South Wales, increase the number of people in New South Wales with post-school qualifications, increase employment participation, improve hours of work for those who are underemployed, ensure we continue to have a high quality public provider of vocational training that can respond to our economic and social priorities and, in particular, how New South Wales addresses the demand for infrastructure delivery and the shortage of engineering and related skills.

I do not expect those opposite will show any interest. They seem more interested in booking flights to their next interstate sporting event. But if the Government does not want to help deliver real solutions the least it can do is stop making the problem worse. That is why today I call on the Government to reverse its funding cuts to TAFE and vocational education, to increase the use of apprentices in New South Wales Government building and civil works, to commit to increasing the number of students studying engineering degrees, to recruit experienced engineers at senior levels in permanent positions to avoid the massive blowout in consultant costs this Government is already overseeing, to stop massive fee increases for apprentices to undertake training, and to restore the Joint Group Training Scheme, which I can today announce Labor will commit \$1.7 million each year towards to fund and support. Supporting programs such as the Joint Group Training Scheme, which assists more than 8,000 apprentices with training and employment, is vital if we are to build the skills our State needs. That is why Labor would reinvest the funding that has been ripped out of this program and skills training for apprentices.

We need long-term reform and investment in our people and communities that can truly rebuild New South Wales. We need to grow the economy to give people who want to work the opportunity to get a job. We need the kind of reform that New South Wales communities are looking for, the kind for which they gave this Government a mandate. We accept the people's verdict from 2011—the question is: Has the Coalition? Coalition members are continually looking in the rear view mirror, still talking about what they are going to do when by now they should be doing it, and still too busy criticising a government that is no longer there. That is not what the people of New South Wales voted for. They voted for improved services. They voted for less talk and more delivery. They voted for a Government that said it would fix the problems. To date, they have not got what they ordered.

The Premier may wish to look longingly back at his halcyon days of opposition when he promised anything and was accountable for nothing, but the people of New South Wales voted otherwise. The real questions are: Where is the transparency they voted for? It is certainly not in this budget. Where are the improved front-line services in everything from our hospitals to our public transport system? They are not in this budget. Where is the promise of less talk and more delivery? It is missing as well. The people of New South Wales have handed this Government the levers, and it has had them for three budgets, but there is still no sign in this third budget of any of these problems ever being fixed.

Question—That these bills be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Mike Baird agreed to:

That these bills be now read a third time.

Bills read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bills.

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial Year 2013-14

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [11.35 a.m.]: I move:

That this House take note of the Budget Estimates and Related Papers for 2013-14.

Pursuant to resolution, debate adjourned and set down as an order of the day for a later time.

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (VACCINATION OF CHILDREN ATTENDING CHILD CARE FACILITIES) BILL 2013

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

KIAMA DOWNS SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Debate resumed from 30 May 2013.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [11.36 a.m.], in reply: I acknowledge those members who contributed to debate on this motion—the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wyong. I acknowledge in particular the great contribution by the member for Wyong, who has been very active in the surf life saving movement. I know how strongly he feels about his surf life saving community, and he continues to support it. I also acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the member for Heathcote and the member for Miranda, the Minister for Sport and Recreation.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: A good Minister.

Mr Stuart Ayres: He is a good Minister.

Mr GARETH WARD: I was delighted when the member for Miranda, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, came to Kiama to present the grant, the subject of this motion, for lifts at Kiama Downs. As the member for Penrith and the member for Burrinjuck just said, he is a very good Minister—an exceptional Minister—because he understands the needs of surf life saving clubs and the hard work that those charities do. We want to encourage people to be out saving lives, not selling raffle tickets, and that is why the Minister came to Kiama Downs to present a cheque to Josh Douglas and members of the surf life saving club, and to tour the facilities. I know how much he appreciated the opportunity to do that as well as to support surf life saving clubs up and down the coast.

I am pleased that my wonderful friend the member for Heathcote is present in the Chamber. Only last week we attended the Illawarra Branch Surf Life Saving awards presentation. Mr Lee Evans was there with his lovely wife, Gail, and we were accompanied by the Liberal candidate for Cunningham, Phil Clifford, and the Liberal candidate for Throsby, Larissa Mallinson. There were no Labor representatives at that event. They were all invited but not one bothered to attend, which I think is a great shame because surf life saving is something on which that part of our community relies heavily.

Mr Matt Kean: You and your budgie smugglers.

Mr GARETH WARD: I will not acknowledge the interjection of the member for Hornsby, which was a gratuitous remark relating to budgie smugglers. I will leave that one alone. For so many of us surf life saving clubs are the backbone of our beaches. They provide the volunteer effort on the front line in coastal New South Wales. In Kiama we have a very active surf life saving movement. Given that there is a heavy influx of tourists, we rely on the surf life saving movement to support those tourists and provide water safety messages as well as assistance for those who get into trouble. So many lives undoubtedly would be lost if it were not for the dedication and training of these volunteers. I commend particularly the nippers who start at a young age and work their way up through the movement and continue to serve surf life saving up and down the coast.

Kiama Downs Surf Life Saving Club is a particularly active club. As I mentioned, it is not just surf life saving with which it is involved. During the storms in Kiama in February, Kiama Downs Surf Life Saving Club became the evacuation centre when the Kiama Leagues Club could not be accessed because of lack of power and a roof was removed by the strong winds. It was interesting to note that in the emergency command centre the surf life saving movement was on hand to give support and provide whatever was needed by the State Emergency Service and the police.

I thank all members of this House who have continued to support surf life saving in their electorates. There is no doubt that anywhere on the coast the red and yellow colours are synonymous with the surf life saving movement. This is an important opportunity, even though it is not the season, to remind people always to swim within the flags, to adhere to the directions of surf lifesavers, and to continue to support them. I thank the House for its support, the Minister and the member for Heathcote for their continued advocacy of surf life saving. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

HOSPITAL WAITING TIMES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [11.41 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the statistics from several hospitals indicate that waiting times for gravely ill patients in New South Wales rose in 2012;
- (2) recognises the \$3 billion cut from health care will hinder improving these waiting times; and
- (3) urges the Minister for Health to take all necessary steps to ensure that waiting times for gravely ill patients decrease.

Last year waiting times for gravely ill patients tripled at some of our State's busiest hospitals. Unfortunately, this 2012 increase was only the tip of the iceberg and a small foreshadowing of the plethora of waiting time issues that this State's hospitals are now being crippled with. Inadequate funding, leading to a waiting time crisis, is one of those issues that affect the whole of New South Wales. It also is one that is painfully relevant to me and my constituents thanks to the sorry state of Hunter region hospitals and the appalling conditions our healthcare workers are forced to endure.

I believe it is important to give credit where credit is due. I am therefore happy to praise the Government for its decision to give hospitals a much-needed funding boost of 3.4 per cent in this year's State budget. I would be remiss in my duties as representative of the Wallsend electorate if I did not strive my absolute hardest to hold this Government to account and demand it do better when decisions made by those opposite do not meet the needs of the people of New South Wales. Unfortunately, this 3.4 per cent increase is one such instance. A step in the right direction? Yes. A step far enough? No. To put it bluntly, I say to the Treasurer, the Minister for Health and all those opposite that the current state of the healthcare system in New South Wales is not good enough. This Government needs to do more to fix the waiting list crises in which the people of New South Wales currently find themselves.

This budget might have seen a 3.4 per cent increase in hospital funding but that is unacceptably lower than the 7 per cent called for by the New South Wales branch of the Australian Medical Association. This increase in funding, which the Government has not deemed important enough to meet, is vitally important in covering the cost of population growth, ageing, wage increases and new technologies. The Treasurer in his Budget Speech on Tuesday compared the Government's budgeting choices to those of Australian families. According to Mr Baird, the Government has managed to protect the budget by the simple expedient followed by families across New South Wales—controlling expenses and living within its means. I ask members: What family across New South Wales has ever controlled its expenses by denying medical care to one of its children when he or she is sick? What family would refuse its children health care or stop them from seeing a doctor because of fiscal concerns? Surely health funding is not an area of the budget where it is appropriate to be frugal.

In the words of the editor of the *Newcastle Herald*, how many alarming Hunter hospital statistics will it take to bring action and reform? The *Newcastle Herald* has reported an ongoing stream of disturbing figures in recent months that should have been enough to make any Government member sit up and take notice. Over the past six years almost 40,000 people have waited so long for care in the Hunter's emergency departments that they got up and went elsewhere. One in 25 patients attending the Calvary Mater, Maitland, Belmont and John Hunter hospital emergency departments left untreated. One of the main reasons people are leaving is the lack of staff. The main reason for the lack of staff is lack of funding from this Government.

According to the Bureau of Health Information hospital quarterly report, the John Hunter is well under the emergency department target of 71 per cent of patients being seen within four hours. Currently only 48 per cent of patients are being seen in this time frame. The Council of Australian Governments report has found New South Wales to be the least likely State to treat or discharge people from emergency departments within four hours. Tuesday's budget includes funding for an extra 69,000 emergency department visits next financial year. Unfortunately, this is in effect a decrease on the real rate of growth this year. There were 73,000 more emergency department visits this financial year than in the last financial year in New South Wales.

New South Wales is in a waiting list crisis. Up to 10,000 people are on a hidden waiting list to see doctors in some parts of the State. Hospital clinics are refusing new public patients because their waiting lists are so long, leaving people without private health care insurance stuck without care at all. Hospitals are shutting outpatient clinics and doctors are moving into private practice. The Minister for Health has delivered no substantial increase in funding for outpatient clinics. This reckless inaction by the Government will ensure there is no improvement in the hidden waiting list crisis currently facing New South Wales.

This comes after the health Minister's March 2011 claim that she would abolish the waiting lists for waiting lists. Hunter patients are still waiting more than 200 days in some cases for much-needed elective surgery. Some Hunter patients wait the better part of a year to have cataracts removed or hip or knee replacements. The staff at our hospitals are run ragged. It is a miracle that the hospitals in the Hunter manage to function as well as they do given the critical lack of financial support from this Government and the appalling conditions that our healthcare workers are forced to endure.

I called on the O'Farrell Government to provide the necessary funding to reopen the eye care clinic at John Hunter Hospital following its closure last year due to lack of funding for equipment and staff. The Minister's response was appalling. The Minister for Health indicated that the patients can continue to see ophthalmologists in their private rooms. Pensioners are now paying exorbitant costs for this care or just not being treated. The budget unveiled on Tuesday allocates no funding for the reopening of the eye clinic at John Hunter Hospital. The Minister for Health needs to guarantee that in 2013 she will reduce waiting times for elective surgery, increase funding for emergency departments visits in line with the actual increase in occurrence, develop measurements for the hidden waiting lists and provide funding for the reopening of the John Hunter eye clinic. In other words, do no more than what needs to be done to meet the vital needs of the people of New South Wales.

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [11.48 a.m.]: When I read the wording of the motion moved by the member for Wallsend I was mystified by what she meant when she referred to "gravely ill patients". Gravely ill can be interpreted as "seriously ill" or "severely ill"; a patient could be close to death; or the term could be used to maximise someone's illness to make it clear to others how they see the situation. What conventional category or classification do we take into account when checking hospital waiting time data? This motion indicates a serious lack of understanding of how hospitals deal with patients. These broad definitions are used to score political points rather than being constructive in nature. This further demonstrates Labor falsehoods regarding funding in the New South Wales health system. After listening to the reply of the Leader of the Opposition to the Treasurer's Budget Speech it appears as though Opposition members believe that if they say something often enough it will become true, which is not correct.

New South Wales has a world-class public health system—the biggest public health system in Australia, with more than 220 public hospitals and more than 100,000 dedicated staff comprising the health workforce. We should all be extremely proud of our health system which employs staff members who always aim to deliver priority care to those with a life-threatening illness who present to our health services. The 2013-14 State budget includes a record recurrent Health budget with \$884 million in growth funding—a 5.2 per cent increase—to a record \$17.9 billion. Capital projects worth in excess of \$1.2 billion have been invested, which is an increase of 10 per cent on last year's capital works spend. The fact that this Government has to provide funding to catch up is a reflection of 16 years of inaction by the former Labor Government. In total, the New South Wales Health budget for 2013-14 is more than \$19 billion. That figure of \$884 million takes into account \$220 million for increased activity, including 69,000 extra emergency department attendances, 34,000 overnight stays and 3,000 extra elective surgeries. In summary, the Health budget of New South Wales has grown in tough economic circumstances. Our growth of 5.2 per cent compares favourably with Health budget growth in other jurisdictions.

Contrary to the member's assertions, this Government has recruited 4,000 extra nurses since it came to power, and this year more than 2,000 new graduate registered nurses and midwives have been employed to work in 112 hospitals across New South Wales, many of them in regional and country areas. I inform the House that eight new graduate nurses have been placed in the Blue Mountains Hospital at Katoomba, as well as three new interns, which is the first time that Katoomba hospital has received interns. I was pleased to welcome the interns at Nepean Hospital earlier this year. Overall, 47,500 nurses work in hospitals in New South Wales. On 6 June this year the Bureau of Health Information, which independently reviews the health system's performance, released its hospital quarterly report for the period January to March 2013. This is one of a number of reports published in New South Wales regarding hospital performance. The hard work of the State's doctors, nurses and hospital staff has continued to ensure the best patient care for what has been a busy period of activity in our hospitals. Despite this background of increasing workload during the quarter, emergency access and off stretcher time for patients requiring emergency care improved. The on-time performance for elective surgery improved by 2 per cent, with 95 per cent of all patients admitted for their elective surgery within clinically recommended time frames.

The bureau's June report has highlighted the persistent and increasing demand in the number of patients attending emergency departments in New South Wales. The bureau's report highlights a substantial increase that

is 16 per cent higher than the same period last year in triage 2 patients—people who need to have treatment within 10 minutes—or those patients with imminently life-threatening conditions. Over 50,000 triage 2 patients attended an emergency department during the most recent quarter. While New South Wales finished just below the recently imposed Commonwealth National Emergency Access Target, our hospitals strongly improved emergency access performance to 65 per cent during this reporting period. Local health district and hospital strategies are focused on improving patient flow within the hospital through implementation of the patient flow portal and the predictive modelling tool.

The bureau's most recent June report also highlighted that more than 48,000 elective surgery cases were performed during the quarter. For the member's benefit, these patients are categorised as urgent, semi-urgent or non-urgent. It is expected that the majority of urgent patients receive surgery within seven days; semi-urgent patients are scheduled to receive their surgery within 90 days; and non-urgent patients are scheduled to receive their surgery within 365 days. The on-time performance for elective surgery increased by 2 per cent and continues to be maintained at a high level. The fact is that New South Wales is the best performing State in this category, which is something about which we should all be proud.

Let us compare what happened under Labor with the recent statistics for elective surgery. Under Labor "urgent" was determined to be 92 per cent on time; under the Liberal-Nationals Coalition it is 99 per cent on time. Under Labor "semi-urgent" was determined to be 87 per cent on time; under the Liberal-Nationals Coalition it is 94 per cent on time. Under Labor "non-urgent" was determined to be 92 per cent on time; under the Liberal-Nationals Coalition it is 94 per cent on time. It is clear that the performance of the hospitals under this Government has improved and is improving and will continue to serve the people of New South Wales well.

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [11.55 a.m.]: For the benefit of the people in the audience, the member for Blue Mountains just read a speech that was prepared by the Minister's office. None of her speech was original. Last month the Australian Medical Association asked 1,200 doctors who presently work in the New South Wales health system whether they thought conditions had improved in the past 12 months. Only 7 per cent of doctors said that they felt conditions had improved and the response from 66 per cent of doctors was a resounding no. There is the prospect of further cuts to the Health budget. The Minister for Health has cooked the books and has not fronted up to explain to the people of New South Wales her reading of the figures in the budget. That is in stark contrast to what she said was Coalition policy in 2011:

The facts should always be on the table and allowed to speak for themselves, no matter how embarrassing or uncomfortable they may be, people have a right to know what things cost and why decisions are made.

On page 6-1 of the 2013-2014 budget papers the revised budget figure for this year is \$16.99 billion. This figure is based on the promised figure in last year's budget of \$17.28 billion, which is a \$290 million discrepancy for the same financial year. A reasonable person would ask: What happened to the \$290 million? Where has the money gone? It is a simple question to which the Minister could provide a simple answer. When it comes to inpatient care, the difference is even more stark. An amount of \$730 million has been wiped from the budget papers for inpatient care compared to the figures in last year's budget papers. The Minister said that these figures are a result of technical changes such as adjustment in long service leave liabilities and did not affect front-line services, which is clearly wrong. Patients who have previously been sent home are having babies in car parks, cancer patients are having their surgery cancelled at St George Hospital and beds are being closed in hospitals all over the city, for example, Prince of Wales and Mount Druitt. Clearly front-line services are being affected. That is why only 7 per cent of doctors surveyed by the Australian Medical Association said that the situation had improved.

At the very least the people of New South Wales deserve an explanation from the Minister. In 2008 she said there was a need for more openness, honesty and accountability surrounding the reporting of what is happening in the hospital system. She was right then and she is right now. The Minister needs to explain what happened to \$300 million of the Health budget as opposed to giving us spin. The Government trumpets a \$17.9 billion budget this year compared with \$17.3 billion last year, which is a 3.4 per cent increase and nowhere near the 5.2 per cent increase that it has claimed. An amount of \$290 million has disappeared from the budget papers. New South Wales has closed beds, the longest waiting time for elective surgery in Australia and nurses who are unable to get jobs. The least we deserve is a clear and concise explanation from the Minister about what has happened to the taxpayers' \$300 million.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [11.59 a.m.]: I am pleased to have this opportunity to give some facts about our world-class public healthcare system. I am disappointed that yet again members of the Opposition are scaremongering and perpetuating myths. This motion ignores the fact that the Minister for

Health and this Government are taking action to address the crisis in health care that was left to them by the Labor Government. This Government has done more in two years than the Labor Government did in the past decade. I will take this opportunity to highlight some of the facts.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Opposition members will have an opportunity to participate in the debate. I ask them to extend courtesy to the member for Port Macquarie.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: I know from experience that conditions for nurses in our public hospitals are not appalling. I am disappointed that the Opposition continues to be negative about our public hospitals. We have a world-class public health system, with outstanding professional and dedicated nurses, clinicians and allied health staff. The Minister for Health is working extremely hard to improve our health system further. I will dispel some of the myths that are continually perpetuated by those opposite. In 2013-14 the NSW Health budget increased by 5.2 per cent, to a record \$17.9 billion—a record spent in health. I reiterate: There is no \$3-billion cut to the health system. New South Wales is performing better than any other State in relation to on-time elective surgery. Patients wait less time for surgery now than they did under the Labor Government. There is no underspend in relation to the Health budget. The \$290 million difference between the 2012-13 budget and the revised 2012-13 budget has been explained by accounting changes, none of which affect front-line services.

Under this Government front-line service has improved and increased—I know that from experience. When I worked at Port Macquarie hospital the former Government cut 400 jobs from the North Coast Area Health Service. Mr Deputy-Speaker knows that is a fact because the area health service also serves his electorate. Under this Government we have seen an increase of 234 nurses, for example, not in the larger North Coast Area Health Service but in the Mid North Coast Local Health District. What does that mean for those on the front line? It means that their conditions are improving. I commend the Minister for Health for that improvement and for her continuing work to ensure that our already world-class public health system gets even better.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [12.03 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Wallsend, who has consistently raised issues about gravely ill patient waiting times on behalf of her electorate. She presented clear evidence about the delay in patient waiting times and the significance of that delay for families and carers of the critically ill. I refer particularly to the waiting times for those with mental health issues. This week's budget has been scrutinised closely and, despite the media release from the Minister for Mental Health, Mr Kevin Humphries, it represents a step backwards for mental health. Last year's budget was \$1.41 billion and this year's budget is \$1.45 billion. That is hardly a significant increase to meet demand, and latest calculations put the health consumer price index figure at approximately 7 per cent to 8 per cent. There is a funding increase for treatment for eating disorders, which is definitely a start. But it is still nowhere enough to deal with patients who are acutely unwell and at the crisis end of the disease.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order: The motion does not mention mental health. I ask that the member for Auburn be drawn back to the leave of the motion.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I ask the member for Auburn to address her comments to the motion.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY: I hope that health includes mental health. Waiting times for gravely ill patients were set out in an article by Amy Corderoy of 19 May 2013, which referred to "23 people on the waiting list for admission to the only two public hospital beds that treat eating disorder patients from across the State". In fact, as of today, more than 30 people are on the waiting list for hospital admission—and that does not include people who are on the waiting list for private hospitals or those who are not on lists but who are gravely ill. I received an email from a person, whom I will not name, who raised grave concerns with me. She wanted to contribute to the debate and articulate the needs of people suffering from eating disorders. She welcomed the \$1.6 million in desperately needed funds, and stated:

I have been fighting for my life over these last two years especially due to lack of treatment available. I have had anorexia since I was 10, but the last two years have been the worst ever encountered as no one could help me. I was too sick for the private system, so the public system was where the treatment was, but the waiting list of two years I was not going to make. It is so hard to die, day by day at home in front of your children and husband ... Had some beds been allocated and a few staff, it would make the difference between life and death.

I know the Minister is acutely aware of this need and that people like Ella Graham of Fed Up NSW Health and the Butterfly Foundation are amazing in raising awareness of this issue. A number of people have written to me following Amy Corderoy's article and I am concerned that we must do more as a State to provide the inpatient services that are needed so desperately. I do not have sufficient time to read the rest of the email, but its author is at home receiving nasogastric feeding. She needs to be in an inpatient bed.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.07 p.m.], by leave: I congratulate the member for Wallsend on again raising the important issue of waiting times for gravely ill patient. It is interesting that Government members who have spoken in this debate seem to be unaware of what members of the then Opposition said just over two years ago about health in New South Wales. They are also aware of the promises that have not been kept by the now Government to rectify problems. For example, I cite the cancellation of lifesaving peritonectomy surgery at St George Hospital in order to stay within budget. I was informed of this by a constituent who was affected directly by that decision. This is the sort of thing that happens when \$3 billion is cut from the Health budget. I am amazed when people who formerly worked in the Health portfolio talk about how great this Government is, particularly now that people are being placed on lists to go onto waiting lists. As the Leader of the Opposition said in his response to the State budget earlier day, Health funding is going backwards and there is spin coming from Government members about how everything is rosy.

I recall the current Minister for Health talking in opposition about a woman who had a baby in a hospital toilet. Since those opposite came to government women have had babies in car parks. Instead of cutting funding and reducing services the O'Farrell Government should deliver on its commitment to fix the problems in the health service. For the first time that I recall paramedics in Wollongong have taken industrial action and nurses have put bans in place because they were being expected to clean instead of fulfil surgical duties. It should never be acceptable in this country for operating theatres to be used as storerooms, and it should be a massive wake-up call for the Government that that was occurring at Royal North Shore Hospital.

It should also be a wake-up call for the Government that the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 8 June that patients were being placed on lists to go onto waiting lists. The O'Farrell Government can shuffle things around all it likes to hide the numbers, but the fact is that it has cut \$3 billion from the Health budget and services will be reduced. When Government members were in opposition they made a big fanfare about how all the problems would be fixed. The Coalition has been in office for more than two years. It is time for the O'Farrell Government to put its money where its mouth is and get on with the job of improving services in our hospitals.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [12.11 p.m.], by leave: I thank the House for allowing me the opportunity to make a contribution to this important motion. In 2012-13 the Hunter New England Local Health District was allocated in initial expense budget of \$1.81 billion—an increase of 3.2 per cent on the 2011-12 budget. Included in the district's budget were specific additional funds for the following services: \$3.3 million to employ 51 additional nurses; \$829,000 to employ 13 additional operating theatre nurses; \$338,000 to employ three additional clinical nurse/midwife educators and clinical nurse/midwife specialists; and \$1 million to support the establishment of radiotherapy services at the New England and North West Regional Cancer Centre at Tamworth.

The Hunter New England Local Health District also continues to benefit from this Government's commitment to ensuring that state-of-the-art health facilities are available for patients in the Hunter-New England community as part of the Government's \$1.16 billion capital works program. Some \$81.6 million has been allocated to the Hunter New England Local Health District this financial year from that program, including \$17.7 million to commence the stage two Tamworth Hospital redevelopment, at an estimated cost of \$220 million; \$1.5 million to commence the upgrade of the emergency department at Cessnock Hospital, at an estimated total cost of \$2 million; and \$1.6 million to continue the emergency department upgrades at Gunnedah, Scone, Glen Innes, Muswellbrook and Singleton hospitals, at an estimated total cost of \$4.4 million.

Clinicians in the Hunter New England Local Health District serve our communities with distinction—they do remarkable work every single day. They monitor activity on workplace levels and deploy strategies when and where needed to help meet patients' needs. National standards indicate that 100 per cent of triage category one patients—those with immediate life-threatening conditions—must be treated within two minutes of arrival, and every month for the past 2½ years the John Hunter Hospital has met that target. For triage category two—where patients are to be treated within 10 minutes—the most recent Bureau of Health Information Quarterly Report indicates that the time taken at John Hunter Hospital for the treatment of emergency cases was six minutes. That is faster than the New South Wales average and one minute faster than for the same period in 2010.

When it comes to the National Emergency Access Target it is important to remember that emergency access is not solely an emergency department responsibility. It is a whole-of-hospital issue and a priority for each and every hospital in the local health district. The emergency department at John Hunter Hospital is supported by a dedicated trauma team as well as by physicians from the division of medicine, the intensive care unit and other specialty areas across the hospital. The most recent Bureau of Health Information data for John Hunter puts the hospital's National Emergency Access Target performance at 51 per cent—a 7 per cent improvement compared with the same period last year. While the district as a whole met the 2012 National Emergency Access Target, the Hunter New England Local Health District acknowledges that John Hunter Hospital still has some work to do to improve its current performance levels.

I refute the continual accusations by members opposite that the Government has supposedly cut budgets: The Government has redirected funds to the front line. I am pleased to inform the House that the Government has employed 5,000 additional nurses, teachers and police and put them on the front line. That is helping to reduce waiting times. I congratulate the hardworking doctors and nurses who give dedicated service, and I pour scorn on members who are trying to misinterpret what is occurring.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [12.15 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Blue Mountains, Macquarie Fields, Port Macquarie, Auburn, Wollongong and Wagga Wagga for their contributions to the debate. I join the member for Wagga Wagga in congratulating all clinicians and staff in New South Wales hospitals, including cleaners and porters, on their excellent job. They all work very hard. I am not going to stand in this place and tell them how good they have got it; I am going to bless them with the truth because that is what they want. The member for Blue Mountains was mystified by the term "gravely ill". She tried to spin that there are no problems in New South Wales hospitals. I ask the member to inquire of her sick constituents about the term. I have no doubt they will tell her about their experience of waiting times for the "gravely ill".

This is an issue for all hospitals in New South Wales and it behoves us as members of Parliament to be honest with our constituents. The member for Blue Mountains trotted out a lot of spin—I do not know who wrote her speech. She told us how good hospitals and their staff have it. Unfortunately, the evidence does not verify that. Indeed, she contradicts the genuine concerns expressed by the Australian Medical Association. Like me, the member referred to the Bureau of Health Information. The bureau found that, at 48 per cent, John Hunter Hospital is well below the emergency department target of 71 per cent of patients being seen within four hours. I wonder why the member for Blue Mountains did not attempt to address the substance of this motion—namely, that hospital statistics indicate a blowout in waiting times. I will let the gravely ill patients in New South Wales answer that question.

The member for Macquarie Fields spoke about discrepancies in assertions by the Minister for Health that there had been big increases in health funding. That is not the case. Worryingly, he spoke about bed closures at the Prince of Wales and Mount Druitt hospitals. He called on the Minister for Health to display more of the honesty and transparency that she promised to show when she was in opposition. The member for Port Macquarie promoted the action taken by this Government and gave us a good dose of Government spin. I agree that our nurses and clinicians are dedicated; they have to be to survive their very stressful jobs.

According to the member for Port Macquarie, patients are waiting less time for treatment under a Liberal Government. Again, recent research does not back up the member's assertions. The member for Auburn voiced concerns about delays in patient waiting times. She made the important point that there are critical delays in waiting times for patients who have mental illness. The member for Wollongong spoke about the forced cancellation of peritonectomy surgery as a result of cuts in services and funding at St George Hospital. Those cuts have hit that hospital hard, and that is really sad.

Finally, it is sad that every time I put a motion before this House the Coalition Government does not even seek to identify the problem, let alone try to solve it. This is about Labor members looking for solutions, not only in government but in opposition. I say to comrades on the other side of the House: You are in government now. The Government needs to seek a solution to the real problems of waiting times for the gravely ill. People in New South Wales who are sick do not want spin; they want reality and they want to see improvements.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 20

Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Burton
Mr Daley
Mr Furolo
Mr Greenwich
Ms Hay

Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Mr Lynch
Dr McDonald
Mr Park
Mr Parker
Mrs Perry

Mr Rees
Ms Tebbutt
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari
Tellers,
Mr Amery
Mr Lalich

Noes, 60

Mr Anderson
Mr Annesley
Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres
Mr Baird
Mr Barilaro
Mr Bassett
Mr Baumann
Ms Berejiklian
Mr Bromhead
Mr Brookes
Mr Casuscelli
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Cornwell
Mrs Davies
Mr Dominello
Mr Doyle
Mr Edwards
Mr Elliott
Mr Evans

Mr Flowers
Mr Gee
Mr George
Ms Gibbons
Ms Goward
Mr Grant
Mr Gulaptis
Mr Hartcher
Ms Hodgkinson
Mr Holstein
Mr Humphries
Mr Issa
Mr Kean
Dr Lee
Mr Marshall
Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea
Mr Page
Mr Patterson
Mr Perrottet
Mr Piper

Mr Provest
Mr Roberts
Mr Rowell
Mrs Sage
Mr Sidoti
Mrs Skinner
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Stoner
Mr Toole
Mr Ward
Mr Webber
Mr R. C. Williams
Mrs Williams

Tellers,
Mr Maguire
Mr J. D. Williams

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.28 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the vital role of social housing for people on low incomes, especially in areas of high housing cost such as the inner city;
- (2) congratulates the Government on its ongoing support for the Northcott Community Development Worker and renumbering of the estate to improve safety and amenity;
- (3) notes concerns about an increasing backlog of repairs and maintenance, especially for older housing stock; and
- (4) calls on the Government to invest needed funds to properly maintain its residential stock.

Stable, low-cost housing is vital to people with very low incomes, especially those with mental illness, and drug and alcohol problems, those suffering from trauma and abuse, and prisoners who have been released back into the community. The inner city is close to health and welfare support services, and jobs and public transport, which can help people who cannot afford housing in the private market to get back on their feet and contribute to the community.

Inner-city social housing should be retained and expanded. Alarming, the current Government is considering selling Millers Point homes and moving tenants who may have lived there for years. This will have

a major impact on the community and will push more tenants with health and welfare problems to the fringes of the city, where there is limited public transport, jobs and support services. Reports have suggested that tenants may be relocated in the inner city, but Housing NSW reports that inner city urgent waiting times are up to two years or five years or 15 years, particularly for those needing larger family homes—such as those being sold in Millers Point. The proposal would displace Millers Point tenants, expand the already lengthy waiting list and reduce available stock.

The State Heritage Register includes the Millers Point and Dawes Point village precinct and describes the area as unique in Australia because of a strong sense of cohesion facilitated by a range of complementary architectural, structural, physical and social elements. The precinct should be maintained. Selling high-value inner-city properties is like selling the family silver. We know it is very unlikely that these properties will ever be able to be replaced with additional social housing in the inner city. Selling these properties will also cleanse the area of lower-income people—something that I clearly oppose.

The Surry Hills Northcott community has been assisted by a community development worker since 2002, when the former Labor Government finally agreed to the call by my predecessor, Clover Moore, for practical support for the then troubled estate that had an entrenched sense of hopelessness following a period of significant crime and antisocial behaviour. The community development worker position has built community capacity and supported Housing NSW projects with an active community room, arts projects, partnerships with support services, safety audits, mental health recovery projects, World Health Organization accreditation as a safe community, recycling and waste education, tenant computer facilities and tenant gardening groups.

The positive changes in Surry Hills have reduced transfer requests and neighbour disputes, cutting costs and demands on the Government. When the community was without this position during much of 2012 there was a breakdown in projects, communication and relationships. While I strongly believe the role should be permanent, I welcome the extension of the role by the Government until June next year. The current community development worker, Kira Weiss, is very well respected by the Surry Hills housing community and works hard to deliver outcomes. Woolloomooloo and other larger estates would also benefit from having a community development worker. Police, ambulance, fire brigade, health and welfare services, and numerous safety audits have called for the renumbering of the Northcott estate to improve safety and security.

I commend the work by this Government to finally commence this project, and I understand that it should be completed within the new financial year. This means that ambulances, police and other key services will be able to access residents faster and without the confusion that currently exists, which delays vital help. I thank the relevant Ministers for their commitment to ensuring that this process happens and also acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Clover Moore, in campaigning for this for many years. A long-term lack of funding for social housing has left a backlog of maintenance and repair work, and the inner city has some of the oldest social housing properties where this is having significant impacts.

Older heritage properties are becoming expensive to maintain and some homes have been left vacant to deteriorate and be vandalised. As of November 2012, of the 168 maintenance requests for Woolloomooloo alone, 44 were outstanding. In the program of works for this financial year, 38 properties for priority works totalling \$252,844 were identified. This situation became so bad that the Redfern Legal Centre produced a repair kit to help Housing NSW tenants understand the process involved in getting action from Housing NSW, including taking their landlord—the New South Wales Government—to the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal. Funding from the Clover Moore Lord Mayoral Salary Trust helped to get this kit printed and distributed to tenants with serious maintenance problems.

Many tenants are too scared to report maintenance issues in fear of this being used as an excuse to evict them. I stress to them at my regular public tenant meetings the importance of reporting to get outcomes. Tenants say that this practice is demolition by neglect, forcing low-income people out of the inner city. The local community has rallied to oppose the New South Wales Government evaluation of housing for sale in Millers Point, where many tenants are fearful of losing their homes and of breaking up their community. I note that in this year's budget \$158 million is allocated to upgrading existing public housing and \$119 million to new supply of social housing. I hope the inner city receives a fair share so that vital projects can be completed.

From my very first day in Parliament I have spoken about Sydney's inspiring public housing community. Residents in areas including Millers Point, The Rocks, Woolloomooloo, Potts Point, Ultimo, Chippendale, Paddington, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills have taught me a lot about the importance of community

and the strength of their communities. Public housing tenants actively contribute to the fabric of our city and many, who have little themselves, do much to help others in need. They deserve greater respect and security. I commend this motion to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.35 p.m.]: I commend the member for Sydney for his motion and his very kind attitude and genuine compassion for those not as fortunate as we are. Through our economic and fiscal responsibility we can deliver many programs that we otherwise could not deliver, and a society will be judged on how well it looks after its most vulnerable people. I am proud to say that this Government is committed to improving services and lives. This includes people living in social housing in the inner city. I am pleased to take this opportunity to inform the House about the recent reforms that the Liberal-Nationals Government has undertaken to make the social housing system fairer and more transparent after 16 years of mismanagement of the State by Labor, perpetuated by its revolving door of housing Ministers.

We have made the social housing waiting list honest and accurate, as well as transparent, so applicants can make the best informed decisions about their housing options. We publish waiting list data each year and we make applicants keep their contact details up to date if they want to receive assistance. Waiting list information is also made available annually. This details information about the times people can expect to wait for social housing, including the location-by-location breakdown of waiting times, the type of dwelling, whether it be one bedroom or two bedrooms, et cetera.

More recently, the Government gave tenants who were doing the wrong thing the chance to do the right thing and declare any other unauthorised occupants in their property. Tenants who came forward during the amnesty period or who had been identified through a concerned neighbour or community member will now have to pay the correct amount of rent. This is only fair. It is fair to New South Wales taxpayers, who heavily subsidise the public housing system; otherwise that money could go toward other housing repairs that have not been undertaken. We have a responsibility to spend taxpayer dollars in a responsible fashion. We expect this initiative to generate an additional \$6.5 million in revenue per year.

Not only are we taking action to make the social housing system fairer and more transparent, but also the Liberal Party and The Nationals will take action to meet the safety concerns of our tenants. For years, frustration and concerns expressed by residents of the Northcott estate were ignored by State Labor. As members may be aware, the numbering system for Northcott was devised when it was constructed in 1960 and was the subject of longstanding concerns. Proposed solutions have been discussed and endorsed at open tenant meetings. Delivering this new improved numbering system is a common-sense solution that will improve lives and services for public housing tenants in the inner city. I am very happy that in the 2013-14 budget just announced \$547,000 in social housing upgrade has been set aside for housing issues in the Drummoyne electorate as well. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [12.39 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak to this motion and I thank the member for Sydney for bringing it to the House. There is no doubt the provision and maintenance of social housing in New South Wales is an enormous challenge. The Liberal Party and The Nationals came to government facing a \$300 million backlog of maintenance works and 46,000 people on the waiting list for housing because of underinvestment in this sector over the previous 16 years. Why is the provision of social housing so important? It is because we know that poor housing leads to disrupted childhoods and there is a need to ensure that vulnerable people in our community have access to suitable housing to break the tragic cycle of disadvantage. The Government is committed to helping children realise their potential and to ensuring they have a bright future, and social housing is one way of doing that.

It also is important to ensure that victims of domestic violence can remain in their homes and are not subjected to continuing threats. As part of that the Government is committed to ensuring that housing not only meets shelter needs but also is a gateway to accessing crucial services. The Government is working to improve services and lives for our social housing clients by progressing reforms that make access to social housing fairer and more transparent. The good news is that in Tuesday's budget the Government announced \$138 million for specialist homelessness services to 53,500 people. That includes crisis and transitional support and assistance to help break the cycle of repeated homelessness.

There is \$162 million for tenancy management to improve the social, economic and physical environments of social housing and to deliver opportunities for greater participation of tenants. There is also \$36 million for the Land and Housing Corporation to contribute towards the delivery of 196 community housing dwellings for vulnerable clients, to be managed by the non-government sector. In 2012-13, the Department of

Finance and Services' Land and Housing Corporation estimated it would spend \$365 million on responsive and planned maintenance, and upgrading of homes. Of this, \$103 million is budgeted for responsive maintenance and \$262 million for planned maintenance and upgrading works. So there is good news in the budget.

I will leave it to other speakers to speak about tenant safety at the Northcott estate, what has been happening there and the work done by the Surry Hills Safety Working Party. We want to ensure that management of New South Wales housing stock, both construction and maintenance and coordination with social housing providers, including in particular the non-government sector, will facilitate better provision of housing services in the long term. It is the Government's aim to ensure that social housing in New South Wales is both sustainable and affordable, and fair and transparent. I note the vital role of social housing for people on low incomes not only in the inner city but across New South Wales. I also note there is a \$300-million backlog of repairs and maintenance that we inherited from the previous Government, which I hope this Government can fix in the years ahead.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [12.43 p.m.]: I commend the member for Sydney for bringing this motion forward. I say with all sincerity that he has proved to be a wonderful member in his short time here. I am sure his mother was very proud to be in the gallery to hear him speak. The issues he has raised are real issues and he is a very caring member. The first point of the motion refers to social housing for people on low incomes, especially in areas of high housing cost such as the inner city. I understand where the member for Sydney is coming from; however, to take the issue a little further, social housing is social housing anywhere. I think of some parts of my electorate and, as the member for Drummoyne said, we need to do everything we possibly can for people who need our help and who are the most disadvantaged in our community for any number of reasons. We need to be very cognisant of that as a Government. As has been stated, we have been left with a tremendous backlog in social housing, whether in its provision or maintenance, or other aspects of social housing.

However, that was in the past. We are very aware of it and we need to ensure we put money back into social housing, and the budget announced by the Treasurer on Tuesday reinforces that. We are doing that across the State, and it is very much needed. One of the cruellest things that happened in my electorate during the 2010 Federal election campaign was that the former Labor Government pulled an election stunt. They went to the people of Claymore, the biggest social housing area in my electorate, and told them—I have the newspaper articles—that the State Labor Government would completely redevelop Claymore. It was a cheap election promise. The former Labor Government did not say, but it has since come out, that at no stage was that ever costed or funded.

The redevelopment was described as a \$110-million project, but that amount was to knock down the homes. It is a \$500 million-plus project to fix the problem. We as a Government acknowledge that the Claymore housing development, like all housing developments across the State, is under review. Social housing is very important, as the motion moved by the member for Sydney makes clear. We must look after the most vulnerable in our community. I commend the member for Sydney for bringing the motion forward. I am sure the member for Hornsby will discuss the social housing initiatives in the budget; I am running out of time. Commitment to social housing is something members on all sides of the political spectrum need to be cognisant of and we must work together to achieve outcomes.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [12.47 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak about the vital role that social housing plays in our community, whether in Hornsby, Sydney or elsewhere in New South Wales. It is critical to ensuring that people on low incomes who have often fallen through the gaps are able to take advantage of that safety net and have the protection that the rest of us sometimes take for granted. I am also delighted to say that this Government takes seriously the role of public housing and the contribution it makes to those who need it. That is why, in Tuesday's budget, the Coalition Government announced \$138 million for specialist homelessness services to cater for 53,500 people, including crisis and transitional support and assistance to help break the cycle of repeat homelessness.

Again, I am delighted that the budget allocated \$162 million for tenancy management to improve social, economic and physical environments of social housing and deliver options for greater participation of tenants. An additional \$36 million is to be provided for the Land and Housing Corporation to contribute towards the delivery of 196 community housing dwellings for vulnerable clients, to be managed by the non-government sector. This is important because the Government takes seriously the role that social housing plays. But it is not all about the dollars. We have to be smarter about how we provide social housing and we have to be fairer to

ensure that people can access it when they need it. This Government needs to work better and smarter to improve the services and lives of our social housing tenants and to progress reforms that make access to social housing fairer and more transparent. I am keen to support that.

As a Coalition member of Parliament, I make one point about yesterday's budget. It is fine to talk about allocating funding to social programs and a whole range of initiatives, but the Liberal Party believes that creating a more productive and competitive economy that achieves economic growth will mean more prosperity for us all to share. This budget aims to achieve economic growth in New South Wales. When that happens, we are better able to provide the safety nets and support structures that are needed for the most vulnerable persons in our communities. I am delighted to say that this Government is delivering funds to important social housing programs. I want to be part of a government that continues to protect the most vulnerable in our society. This can be achieved by having dry economics but warm hearts. That is what the Coalition Government is seeking to do.

I commend the member for Sydney for his continued advocacy for those residents in the social housing community. As the member for Hornsby I will always stand up for those in social housing in my community, as all members of this Parliament should do for their electorates. Those vulnerable people who live in social housing have no alternative. The measure of a good government should be determined by how it protects the most vulnerable in its society. It is our responsibility to protect them and to deliver the social services that they need.

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [12.51 p.m.]: I was born into social housing and spent 28 years in social housing with my mum. When my dad returned from his army service in Malaysia we had nowhere to live, so it was very important for us. We were brought up in a community of social housing. Regardless of the fact that a lot of people could not survive without social housing, many people are homeless. The Housing NSW portfolio shows that 153,000 properties are provided for social housing but still more are needed. A strong government can achieve more for the less fortunate people. Areas such as Minto are struggling. It is not a matter of building social houses and making what is commonly known as ghettos; it is about providing a community in which people can live and work, and call home. Social housing is not for everyone. It is not a handout; it is a stepping stone. It is what some people need. A lot of people move out of social housing once they can afford to buy their own house.

Social housing was first introduced to provide people with an opportunity to get their life in order and back on track so they could work towards the purchase of their own house. Once that was achieved, another family would then have the benefit of social housing. That family could then use those premises to improve their lifestyle. I often hear people complaining about social housing. It is a hand-up, not a handout. Many families have prospered as a result of the provision of social housing by Housing NSW and have had the opportunity to enter the marketplace and purchase their own homes. The New South Wales Government has a huge maintenance backlog, but money does not grow on trees. The backlog originates from 2008, which was a figure of more than \$300 million. I do not think that number has come down, but this Government is doing all it can to pump money into social housing. It will give people hope and a place off the streets; will keep a roof over their heads. I support the member for Sydney in bringing this motion before the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.55 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Drummoyne, the member for Cronulla, the member for Camden, the member for Hornsby and the member for East Hills for their contributions, and for their respect for social housing residents and their communities. It is also important to note the commitment of the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, the shadow Minister for Housing, my Independent colleague the member for Lake Macquarie and The Greens member for his commitment to social housing. Vulnerable people on low incomes who cannot afford private rental market prices need access to stable low-cost housing that is close to health and welfare services, jobs and public transport.

Inner-city social housing is essential and the Government should look at ways to expand and maintain inner-city stock for the long term. Millers Point is not a large public housing estate but it has problems that need to be addressed. It sustains a supportive and caring community for many tenants who are fearful they will be forced to move away from the support and services they receive if the Government decides to sell occupied homes. The inner city already has a long waiting list for housing; the Government should not be selling existing stock.

The Government's work in Surry Hills to appoint an effective and respected community development worker shows what can be achieved when resources are dedicated to social housing. The 12-month extension of

the role will help to continue to build the Northcott community to ensure that tenants feel safe, supported and valued. It will also continue to reduce the burden on Housing NSW. Happier tenants are less likely to request transfers and thus get caught up in disputes. I call for this position to be made permanent and for other suburbs like Woolloomooloo to have one. Renumbering of the Northcott estate is on track, which is a credit to this Government after years of inaction from the former Labor Government.

It will be easier and quicker for ambulances, police and other key services to access residents when urgent help is needed. Maintenance in a large portion of inner-city housing continues to be a problem with large and increasing backlogs. The Sydney electorate has some of the oldest building properties that pose maintenance challenges on large estates. Backlogs must be addressed to prevent their deterioration so problems do not increase in the future. Social housing tenants contribute to the fabric of our city. They care for their neighbourhoods and create a strong sense of community, providing support for each other. Inner-city housing needs increased long-term investment. This motion is a sign of respect to the people who live in social housing and acknowledges their great contribution to our State. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report: Procurement and Management of ICT Services in the NSW Public Sector

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

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [1.00 p.m.]: At the outset of my speech on Public Accounts Committee report No. 7/55 entitled "Procurement and Management of ICT Services in the NSW Public Sector", which is dated May 2013, I make the observation that because information and communications technology, or ICT, has become embedded in our daily lives both at home and at work, it is incumbent upon any government to keep pace with this constantly changing world and to provide effective services to the community. The way information and communications technology is procured and managed in the New South Wales public sector is undergoing rapid and fundamental change. Cloud-based computing is being introduced as we move from purchasing assets to purchasing services. This transitional phase, which is guided by the implementation of the New South Wales ICT Strategy and recent procurement reforms, presents opportunities for the New South Wales Government to improve service delivery and increase engagement with the community.

This morning I visited a new Service NSW centre at The Rocks which will be opened in the near future. The new model of service delivery offered by Service NSW bodes well for increased community service and connectedness. I was very impressed. Concerns related to the high costs and poor delivery of information and communications technology projects have been expressed repeatedly by the Auditor-General. Information and communications technology projects have run over time, with ever-increasing budgets, and sometimes have failed to deliver any meaningful business benefits or improvements. The classic example is the Tcard project under the previous Government. While acknowledging that the governance of individual projects sits with the agencies, there is scope for a sharper focus by central government agencies to scrutinise and oversee information and communications technology projects, particularly delayed projects. The Department of Finance and Services in particular has a strong focus on project performance. I note the presence in the House of the Acting Minister for Finance and Services. Delayed projects can be extremely expensive and run the risk of implementing out-of-date technology.

Moving to the new world of purchasing services potentially brings with it a number of benefits and cost savings. It should enable agencies to keep up to date with the latest technologies and allow flexible workplace options. However, storage of information in the cloud raised concerns for participants in the committee's inquiry, particularly in relation to the security of personal information. My colleague the member for Londonderry, Mr Bassett, will deal with that subject in greater detail. People must be confident that if they interact with the Government online, their personal information will remain safe and secure. Historically, agencies have entered into an annual funding cycle by submitting business cases for capital funding from Treasury, with some recurrent funding for ongoing maintenance and licensing. To support the shift to a service model, changes need to be made to the manner in which projects are funded. When purchasing a service, the initial capital outlay is reduced, and the main focus is on ongoing operational expenditure. To ensure the success of reforms in this area, improved communication between the information and communications technology industry and government agencies is essential.

The new governance structure under the ICT Strategy, comprising the ICT Board, the Procurement Board, the leadership group as well as industry advisory groups, should promote communication. While many of the concerns raised during the inquiry and evident in the case studies examined by the Public Accounts Committee have been addressed through the ICT Strategy, some challenges remain for government. Training the existing workforce and recruiting suitably qualified people, who have the right skills and competencies particularly around procurement and contract management, are fundamental. For that reason, improved take-up of the new capability framework must be prioritised. The committee engaged in an extensive process of briefings that included taking evidence and holding two public hearings in November 2012 and March 2013 when we heard evidence from key stakeholders. As usual, that was a wonderful opportunity to inform the committee's deliberations.

I thank all individuals and organisations who contributed to that process by sending submissions and/or gave evidence at the committee's public hearings. There is no doubt that the information gathered during the inquiry was invaluable in formulating the report's final recommendations. I thank my committee colleagues—the member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee, the member for Londonderry, Bart Bassett, the member for Murray-Darling, John Williams, the member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, and the member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper—for the support and insight they contributed to the inquiry. In conclusion, I thank the secretariat, including Pauline Painter and Rachel Simpson, for their assistance in the conduct of the inquiry and in the preparation of the committee's final report.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [1.05 p.m.]: I participate in discussion of the Public Accounts Committee work in conducting an investigation into procurement and management of information and communications technology commencing in August 2012. The committee's report on the inquiry was tabled in Parliament on 30 May. The committee conducted two briefing sessions with the Auditor-General and government agencies and held two public hearings where we heard from a range of stakeholders involved with information technology. The committee received 22 submissions. Stakeholders consisted of groups and individuals from both public and private sectors. The committee received submissions from government departments and agencies such as the Public Service Commission, Sydney Water, the Department of Finance and Services, among many others, and received a number of submissions from private firms, information technology consultants as well as professional and industry bodies, such as the Australian Information Industry Association.

Hearings were conducted over two days with 22 witnesses giving presentations to the committee and one utilising modern technology by giving evidence via an internet video-camera link. The committee requested information from the Department of Education and Training and Roads and Maritime Services relating to some of their projects. The committee also accepted public evidence from industry groups that had not made formal submissions, including the Australian Institute of Project Management and the Australian Computer Society. The terms of reference for the inquiry were wide ranging, which reflects the complex and rapidly changing nature of information technology management and procurement. There were five terms of reference that the committee was requested to inquire into and report upon to Parliament, including issues arising from reports by the Auditor-General on the procurement and management of information and communications technology by New South Wales government agencies. We must ensure that we have best practice in all areas of government procurement, but especially with information and communications technologies.

The New South Wales State Government invests a massive amount of public money on information and communications technology, as evidenced by the annual budget for just one agency, Roads and Maritime Services, exceeding \$400 million. This morning I joined several members to inspect the Service NSW pilot one-stop shop at The Rocks. The Premier and Government have made Service NSW a priority to make it easier for people to interact with government departments, agencies and services. Industry bodies, such as the Australian Computer Association, welcomed the Government's commitment to information and communications technology as set out in the budget. The association said that the New South Wales Government was ahead of other States and Territories in expenditure on information and communications technology. However, we must ensure that the policies, procedures and management systems are in place to get best value for the high area of public expenditure.

The inquiry made 41 recommendations in relation to a range of issues. While I would like to cover them all, time does not permit. Threats to governments, industry, commerce, defence and individuals from cyber security issues are very real and far reaching. Our whole economic structure is now built around the effective and safe operation of information and communications technologies. A major breach could have far wider ramifications than any act of terrorism we have seen to date. Recommendation 19 in the final report that was tabled during the last sitting calls for the Government to conduct annual testing of disaster recovery plans as a

mandatory part of agency reporting. Recommendations 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 all relate to the integrity and security of information and communications technology systems across the public sector. We must ensure that we are constantly investing money in information and communications technology capital works to upgrade the operating systems to fireproof them against potential breaches.

We live in a globalised economy where actions in a far corner of the world can have ramifications. For that reason, we must be at the front line in the fight against global cyber security threats. We especially should provide assistance and interaction with emerging economies. Sharing ideas and experiences is essential for the future of a healthy and secure information technology economy. I again call on the Federal Government to become a member of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation to ensure that New South Wales works in conjunction with the rest of the world. In conclusion, I thank secretariat members for their work in the preparation of this report.

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

Report noted.

LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report: Law Reform Issues regarding Synthetic Drugs

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Castle Hill) [1.10 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the report of the Legal Affairs Committee entitled "Law Reform Issues regarding Synthetic Drugs." I thank all the members of the committee: the deputy chair and member for Campbelltown, Bryan Doyle; the member for Myall Lakes, Stephen Bromhead; the member for Wallsend, Sonia Hornery; and the member for Cessnock, Clayton Barr, for their involvement in the inquiry. This complex and difficult inquiry recently received much attention. Lawmakers in New South Wales, throughout the country and across the globe are struggling to deal with the emerging issue of synthetic drugs. We heard evidence about the harmful effects of these products, ranging from psychosis, paranoia, hallucinations, kidney failure, seizures and, unfortunately, even death. On the second day of the public hearings of this inquiry a man in Coffs Harbour went into cardiac arrest after taking one of these products and died. More recently there was the tragic death of a young schoolboy, Henry Kwan, who took a synthetic drug that mimicked the effects of LSD.

One of the issues relating to synthetic drugs that posed a real problem for lawmakers in jurisdictions around the world was the ability of the manufacturers of these products to tweak the ingredients to circumvent the laws of the relevant jurisdiction in which they find themselves. In New South Wales synthetic drugs come under the auspices of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act. Through regulation we are able to add prohibited substances to schedule 1 under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act and in that way avoid the need to pass legislation as new and emerging harmful substances are identified. These products fall within three main categories. First, synthetic cannabinoids are products that mimic the effects of cannabis; secondly, hallucinogens mimic the effects of prohibited drugs such as LSD; and, thirdly, stimulants mimic the effects of drugs such as speed.

We made a number of recommendations that we believed would deal successfully with products that until recently have been widely available for purchase from various retailers across this State. It is the belief of committee members that we needed a multifaceted approach to bring together a number of State government departments and various Federal agencies. The committee made two recommendations for legislative change in New South Wales. The first was to adopt into law in New South Wales schedule 9 of the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons. It was the committee's view that by adopting that schedule we would capture those products pre-emptively and incorporate broad categories of substances that would be particularly effective in governing the issue of synthetic cannabinoids—an area in which manufacturers can change compounds to circumvent the law. Another recommendation was to change the analogue provision in the schedule to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act thus removing the requirement to prove that any prohibited substance had psychotropic properties. It was the view of the committee that that would lead to a subjective test and create a lack of certainty in the law.

One of the major recommendations made by the committee related to consumer law. There is no doubt that these products are sold by retailers. One way of addressing this issue is to automatically enliven consumer

law. We recommended that the Minister for Fair Trading immediately place interim bans on these products in New South Wales, which he is entitled to do for a limited period, and that the Federal Government place permanent bans on the same products. To date, the Federal Government has failed to do that and we continue to call on it to do so. I congratulate the Minister for Fair Trading on acting swiftly to ensure that these products are off the shelf. There has been a 94 per cent compliance rate with retailers across the State taking products off the shelves. The most effective enforcement in this country and around the world has been to take those products off the shelves; it has been extremely successful. However, this cannot be done in isolation; it needs a whole-of-government approach. I congratulate the staff and members of the committee on the great work they have done. The report and recommendations we have made should be adopted by the Government. I look forward to the Government's response

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [1.16 p.m.]: Synthetic drugs have well and truly surfaced and their effects on our community can no longer be ignored. The general public first heard about them about two years ago when the use of synthetic marijuana, which was called Kronic, was a problem in the mining industry in my area. Apparently, Kronic was appealing because it was unable to be detected by workplace drug testing. Since then—and seemingly very quickly—synthetic drugs, which mimic cannabis, cocaine and hallucinogens, have taken hold in our region, and indeed around our nation and the world. They are in the news for all the wrong reasons. We have learned how addictive they are, the violent and psychotic behaviours they can trigger, and the sometimes fatal consequences of using them.

Looking further, we can see the strain that they put on police and hospital staff and on our legal and health systems, not to mention, closer to home, the families of users and the victims of drug crimes. Regulation of these chemical cocktails, which are sold at certain shops and online, has been difficult. In the past certain products have been banned but in a neat sidestep manufacturers simply tweak the ingredients, and the products return to the shelves for legal sale under a new guise. Then there is the internet, a worldwide shopping network for anything one wants. This method of synthetic drug supply has presented its own perplexing challenges to law enforcers and to our committee. Perhaps the most frightening thing about synthetic drugs is that insufficient knowledge is available about their effects on humans, and in particular on long-term users.

What is being done to address the problem? Being a member of the parliamentary committee that for more than a year oversaw an inquiry into synthetic drugs was worthwhile. We heard from scores of people—qualified through their professional and personal experience—who contributed to this important debate. We tabled 13 recommendations, some of which were outlined earlier by the committee chairman. The synthetic drugs industry is shady and shifting and difficult for the police to monitor. But gratifyingly, and probably because of the present amount of negative publicity, it has not taken six months for the powers that be to act. This month the Department of Fair Trading announced that a three-month statewide ban on 19 synthetic drug brands and their chemical equivalents would begin immediately and that 120 departmental officers would hit the streets to enforce the ban. Retailers in breach would risk fines up to \$1.1 million.

Officers have already paid the Hunter a visit targeting stores in Newcastle, Hamilton, Mayfield and Charlestown, which are located in my electorate. I note that the chair of the committee and the Minister visited Newcastle, but the invitation for the two Hunter members of the committee must still be in the mail. I applaud this move. Gone are the days when retailers can plead ignorance about the potential effects of synthetic drugs on customers. I was quoted in the *Newcastle Herald* as saying that selling synthetic drugs is profitable, but that profit is mixed with doom. I urge anybody who is aware of retailers breaching the bans to phone 13 32 20 or contact my office or the office of any New South Wales member of Parliament. People should be aware that the banned products sell under a range of names. I acknowledge the hard work of the committee staff and the goodwill established by this bipartisan committee. I mention finally that the Federal Government had banned 19 drugs for up to 120 days from 19 June under consumer law. I thank the committee for its hard work.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [1.20 p.m.]: I commend the report of the Chair and members of the Legal Affairs Committee. Drugs, from cannabis to synthetics, are again in the news. Henry Kwan, who was a top student at Killara High School in my electorate of Davidson, jumped to his death after ingesting a tab of synthetic substance and thinking he could fly. He was 17 years old and a bright, promising young man. His father and other relevant people, particularly drug experts, will be speaking at a forum on drugs at Ku-ring-gai Council chambers on the evening of Monday 24 June. The forum has been convened by David Citer, manager of KYDS, an organisation centred around youth counselling on the North Shore. Also reported in the news recently was that Joel Madden, a judge on the hit television show *The Voice*, was asked to leave his hotel after a cleaner allegedly discovered a small amount of cannabis in his room. I understand no charges were laid against Madden, with authorities issuing a simple caution, as New South Wales law permits.

Indeed, if that caution was issued for his first detected offence, Madden would have been informed of a telephone counselling helpline to call. However, based on past statistics, the likelihood of him calling would be less than 2 per cent. If in the future Madden receives a second caution, it will be mandatory that he call the counselling helpline—although only 38 per cent of second offenders actually do. Late last month the New South Wales parliamentary Legal Affairs Committee tabled its report entitled "Law Reform Issues Regarding Synthetic Drugs", which highlighted how synthetic drugs contain chemical substances artificially developed to mimic the effects of illegal drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and methamphetamines. In Monday's *Daily Telegraph* Dr Gordian Fulde wrote about treating a young woman who had taken a synthetic drug called "meow meow", which is "derived from a chemical fertiliser used to grow tomatoes".

As has been observed, the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments recently introduced temporary bans on a range of synthetic drugs, including cannabinoids. While these steps are important to protect the community, government cannot oversee every person who contemplates using drugs, nor monitor every shop or internet site that might sell them. The best preventative measure is for people to realise that such drugs are dangerous and to avoid the risk of harm by not using them. Recently, the Public Accounts Committee tabled a report reviewing the cannabis cautioning scheme, which saves in court and police costs. That report will be the subject of a take-note debate at a later date. A weekend *Sydney Morning Herald* article suggested that the Deputy Director of the National Drug Research Institute and some Local Court magistrates support extending this scheme to other drugs. The law on cannabis cautioning should not be extended to synthetic drugs. That scheme is a farce and currently should not apply to synthetic drugs of the nature discussed in the Legal Affairs Committee report.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.24 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to this take-note debate as a member of the Legal Affairs Committee. Synthetic drugs are a scourge on our society and we should do everything to eradicate them. It was interesting to hear from various groups, particularly the Eros Foundation, which spoke about drugs being of significant value to its members, bringing in over \$700 million a year Australia-wide and around \$200 million to New South Wales shops. Members must remember that those shops sell these legal drugs, which make people high and who then think they can drive a car, bus, plane, perform an operation or undertake any other activity. The contradiction is that it is a legal high of cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines and LSD.

It is wrong for people to think it is acceptable to sell those drugs from their establishments. Synthetic drugs just through the tweak of a molecule can change the substance and, therefore, avoid legal testing. We heard about the significant drug problem in the mining industry. No doubt after further investigation we will learn that drugs are a problem also in the trucking industry. The committee made a number of recommendations, one of which is to ban the family of the drug rather than just the drug. The tweaking of molecules will fall under the family group and would be banned consequently. I commend the Chair of the committee, the member for Castle Hill, for an outstanding job in bringing all the evidence and witnesses together to produce the report. I congratulate him and commend the report to the House.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [1.26 p.m.]: As deputy chair of the Legal Affairs Committee I support the report entitled "Law Reform Issues Regarding Synthetic Drugs". The report already has had an effect nationally and will have an international effect. Synthetic drugs are a scourge on our community. They are designed to avoid the law and target people who would not ordinarily be drawn to them. During the inquiry the committee engaged with the mining industry in which synthetic drugs is a huge issue. We engaged with the community, which also is concerned, and with policing. Synthetic drugs are designed to mimic the effect of cannabis, LSD and other illicit drugs, and are sold without testing, safety or concern. These drugs cause harm and even death.

The committee, led well by my good friend the member for Castle Hill as Chair, conducted international literature research, received submissions from international bodies, heard evidence, toured the Hunter region and made several recommendations in its report tabled in this House in May. The committee's report has since taken on a life of its own. On 9 June the Minister for Fair Trading, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, issued an interim ban and the power of Fair Trading swung into effect to protect the children and residents of New South Wales. Pressure was brought to bear on the Federal Government to assist. On 16 June the Federal Government followed the New South Wales Government by issuing an Australia-wide interim ban on this scourge. Fair Trading inspectors attended to inspect all retail places. As the Chair stated, the ban compliance rate was at 94 per cent. I know that in Campbelltown, the great opal of the south-west and best part of the Macarthur region, when Fair Trading inspectors attended the ban compliance rate was 100 per cent.

These bans carry some fairly significant penalties for breaches: \$220,000 for individuals and \$1.1 million for corporations. The Minister for Fair Trading has a sting in the tail: I am pleased that Assistant Commissioner of Fair Trading, Robert Vellar, will head an interdepartmental committee that is furthering and developing on the recommendations of the New South Wales parliamentary Legal Affairs Committee. The Legal Affairs Committee has made a huge impact and its report will have similar implications to those of the committee report on random breath testing. The Law Reform Issues Regarding Synthetic Drugs will save many lives and many people from falling into the traps of synthetic drugs. I commend the report to the House.

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

Report noted.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report

Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) tabled, pursuant to section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled, "Report of an Audit of Applications for and Execution of Search Warrants by the Independent Commission Against Corruption", dated June 2013.

Ordered to be printed.

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

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Mr James McCall, who, as many members appreciate, is a well-respected leader in the motor vehicle industry whose wealth of experience and knowledge has contributed to the strength of the industry. As at 5 July Mr McCall will retire from his position as Chief Executive Officer of the Motor Traders Association of New South Wales, following 11 years in the position. He is guest of the Premier and the Minister for Fair Trading.

I draw the attention of members also to the presence in the gallery today of Mr Geoff Corrigan, former member for Camden.

RETIREMENT OF MARK FAULKNER, EDITOR OF DEBATES

The SPEAKER: I wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution made to the Parliament of New South Wales by the retiring Editor of Debates, Mark Faulkner. When Mark retires on 9 August 2013 he will have served the Parliament for 29 years and two days. Mark will have also served 43 years in the public service. He commenced his career as a clerk in the Housing Commission in Newcastle in March 1970. Later that year he was accepted into a trainee court reporters course and at the age of 19 passed the court reporters entrance examination. Unfortunately, at the time one had to be at least 21 years of age to be appointed as a court reporter, so he worked in petty sessions as a shorthand writer until his appointment, at the age of 21, to the State Conciliation Commission and later to the Court Reporting Branch in 1974, where he reported the proceedings of the State's District Court, Industrial Courts, Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal. He was appointed Justice Lusher's permanent reporter in the Common Law Division of the Supreme Court, and worked with him for eight years.

Mark was appointed to the position of reporter on the New South Wales Hansard staff on 7 August 1984. When Mark started work as a Hansard reporter Neville Wran was Premier. Mark has also served under Premiers Unsworth, Greiner, Fahey, Carr, Iemma, Rees, Keneally and O'Farrell. He has served under Speakers Kelly, Rozzoli, Murray, Aquilina, Torbay and Hancock, and under Presidents Johnson, Willis, Chadwick, Burgmann, Primrose, Fazio and Harwin.

Mark has held every position on the New South Wales Hansard staff. He was appointed to the position of Senior Reporter in September 1991 and later appointed to the position of Subeditor in March 1992. In this role Mark devised training programs and prepared comprehensive instruction publications and manuals. He was appointed to the position of Senior Subeditor in September 1994, overseeing all Hansard operations in the

Legislative Assembly. Mark was appointed to the position of Deputy Editor in April 1996, overseeing all Hansard operations in the Legislative Council and, as the Hansard day-to-day operations manager, keeping a keen eye on workflow to ensure that Hansard met its publication deadlines. Mark was appointed Editor of Debates on 22 November 2011, maintaining the editorial standard of parliamentary debates.

In 2010 Mark's distinguished career was recognised when he was awarded the New South Wales Service Medallion for 40 years of service to New South Wales. There has been considerable change during Mark's 29 years of service to the New South Wales Parliament, particularly in relation to technology. He has been instrumental in introducing new initiatives, such as implementing the first computerised *Hansard* production system. In addition, under Mark's guidance New South Wales Hansard was the first parliamentary reporting service in the country to implement voice recognition technology to assist in transcription, and he developed the first electronic calendar system for committee bookings.

Mark has represented New South Wales Hansard internationally at various conferences, including a number of Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association conferences comprising more than 50 Hansards, with representatives and observers from across the entire Commonwealth and beyond. New South Wales Hansard is held in high regard both internationally and nationally due in no small part to Mark's participation in, and presentations at, the conferences.

In 2012 Mark and the Director, Information Services, Simon Chalmers, conducted a comprehensive 12-month review of Hansard operations and services involving consultation with a range of members, the Clerks and departmental staff to ensure contemporary and sustainable service delivery for Hansard services into the future. As a result of the review, Mark's legacy will have a lasting impact long after he has retired. He has performed his roles and responsibilities with honourable conduct and a strong commitment to serve the Parliament of New South Wales at the highest possible standard. His exceptional knowledge of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary reporting is valued by his staff and the Parliament. His staff will miss him and the place certainly will not be the same without him. I thank him for all his years of service and assistance. Congratulations, Mark!

Members stood in acclamation.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES MCCALL

Ministerial Statement

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.25 p.m.]: It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge James McCall, who is seated in the public gallery. James is retiring after 12 years as Chief Executive Office of the Motor Traders Association. I take this opportunity because I owe him an apology. As the Leader of the Opposition I attended the centenary of the Motor Traders Association—from memory, it was the first function held at the renovated Sydney Town Hall. My wife, who was interested in the renovations, accompanied me. I joked that night that it always seemed as if James had been at the start of the Motor Traders Association 100 years earlier.

[Interruption]

Richard Amery was still in his teens. But it was a tribute to James McCall. He dealt with all of us present that night with his normal pull-no-punches approach. He acknowledged those of us from the Liberal Party and The Nationals who were present and then made his views clear about the fact that he had not heard from the other side of politics. That is James McCall. He always told you if it was us or those on the other side of the House who had offended him. James McCall started at the Motor Traders Association as a Deputy Chief Executive Officer and he moved on within a year to become Chief Executive Officer. Prior to that James had familiarity with government across this State for a very long time. He worked for Ministers in a series of governments. Prior to that time he was an English and history teacher at high school.

James, I thank you for your efforts over the past two and a bit years in steering the latest Minister for Fair Trading in the right direction for motor traders. I know that you have had the same role with many fair trading Ministers during your time at the association. I am certain that all governments have understood that you not only had the interests of your members at heart but also the interests of those that they serve. I thank you for your efforts, as the Speaker has indicated, not only with regard to motor traders but also in growing the State's economy and delivering those jobs that are so important to families across this State.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [2.28 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I join the Premier in congratulating James McCall, and I also thank him on behalf of the people of New South Wales for his public advocacy. James has always been a terrific advocate for his members. Indeed, he has been more than that; he has been a very good asset to all members of Parliament and Ministers in relevant portfolios over a very long time. Those of us who make it into this place often think we have all the answers; we do not. We rely on good public advocates, people who are vigilant about the development of good social policy. James McCall is just that. He has been an advocate of motor vehicle safety for a very long time. When I was the Minister for Roads I had the pleasure of working with him on the development of some policies that still stand the test of time.

I remember James talking to me about motor vehicle theft and DataDot Technology and the re-registration of written-off vehicles policy that was introduced and universally accepted. James had a lot to do with that policy. Widening of the REVS check to a vehicle history check, to protect consumers, was another matter that James came knocking on our door about. He is apolitical, he is genuine, he is knowledgeable, he is firm but never affronting, and he is persistent but not annoying. I know that he will not be lost to the people of New South Wales because he is energetic and he does care about good public policy. At the end of the day he is, above all, a gentleman. It is always a pleasure in this place to work with people of the kind nature and the knowledge of a gentleman like James McCall. On behalf of the Opposition, James, I congratulate you on all your work. I know that you will not be lost to the people of New South Wales.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.30 p.m.]

PAYROLL TAX

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. The New South Wales Business Chamber has criticised his budget decision to renege on the State's commitment to abolish intergovernmental agreement taxes, which will cost business \$300 million a year. When will the Premier deliver on his 2009 pre-election promise to introduce a one-off 15 per cent payroll tax cut?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: That is an attack upon the Federal Labor Party. The good news is that, although Julia Gillard might have many challengers and problems in Canberra, that patsy is not one of them. The fact is—and we have been very upfront about this—that, in order to sign up to the National Education Agreement, in order to deliver those additional resources in a more fair and equitable way, in order to assist us in raising standards, not just amongst students but also amongst teachers, in order to assist us in delivering greater local control of our schools, we have had to put \$1.7 billion on the table. At a time when revenues and finances are tight, that is no easy thing to do.

We were very upfront about that. It was announced on the day on which we announced we would sign the agreement that that meant the intergovernmental agreements taxes that were meant to be abolished while Labor was in office more than a decade ago would be further delayed. But, as the Treasurer made clear with the President of the New South Wales Business Chamber this morning, should the Federal Government reform the GST to ensure that it does apply to online orders—something that will not only enable the intergovernmental agreement taxes to be abolished sooner but also support jobs in New South Wales and across Australia—we will do so. But it is hypocritical of those opposite to be talking about economic growth when, on any measure, prior to our coming to office this State was lagging. This State was doing it tough because those opposite, like the Federal Government, were too preoccupied—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point is taken on relevance, under Standing Order 129. Only \$26 million is going into Gonski and \$274 million is going somewhere else.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is arguing the point. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Mr John Robertson: This is about a one-off promise of the Premier.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: On every economic measure in the country prior to our coming to office—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock and the member for Monaro will cease arguing across the Chamber.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —this State lagged on just about all economic indices across the country. I am pleased that under Mike Baird's economic stewardship, under the responsible ministerial roles of members of my team, this State is slowly but surely lifting itself. Whilst it may not matter today to the Leader of the Opposition, who claimed that job growth is not a factor in economic or family wellbeing, it certainly matters to people across New South Wales. Having jobs is what pays the bills.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not the time for the Leader of the Opposition to argue the point.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Having jobs is what puts food on the table. Having jobs provides families with the security to get on with their lives. We can attest to the fact that under this Government over the past 2¼ years more jobs have been created in this State than in any other State. This State has the strongest jobs growth in the nation. Yet the Leader of the Opposition, the friend of the union bosses but not the workers, wants to attack that record. It is a record that should be celebrated, just as should the Treasurer's record in relation to balancing budgets, investing in infrastructure and in paying down Labor's debt. But I was asked about the New South Wales Business Chamber.

Mr Michael Daley: More debt.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: There is \$9 billion less debt—a reduction of almost 15 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that this is not a time to argue.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am interested in that comment from the member for Maroubra, because there was another interesting thing I heard in the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition this morning that I thought could not be right. But then I heard the interjection of the member for Maroubra, the man who has asked only one question on the budget in budget week—the first time in living memory, the first time in the memory of even the member for Mount Druitt, indeed, the very first time that a shadow Treasurer has not asked more than one question on the budget in budget week. I heard the Leader of the Opposition peddling another untruth in his budget speech, but then something comes to me from the member for Maroubra. He said there is no Standard and Poor's metric record of the New South Wales budget papers to show the strength of our State credit rating. He claimed this was the first time in history. I commend to the Leader of the Opposition page 1-30 of Budget Paper No. 2 where reference is made to "Credit Metrics". Well done, Michael; you are setting up the Leader of the Opposition perfectly. But I want him to stay: you don't get a patsy every day in this place.

JOB CREATION

Mr LEE EVANS: My question is directed to the Premier. What is the Government doing to create new jobs in New South Wales?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Is it not terrific that at least some members of the House understand the importance of jobs growth? I note that the former member for Camden is in the gallery; I remember running into him when he was with his grandchild at Campbelltown hospital not that long ago. Regrettably, the mismanagement of those opposite led to fewer jobs for people like Geoff Corrigan and his colleagues. So that is their record—and they are still doing it. Look at what they are doing to poor Nathan—a redistribution that turns Toongabbie, which he hung onto by his fingernails, into a safe Liberal seat. What on earth will Sam Dastyari stop at to keep Robbo in his job? Come and join us, Nathan.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Premier has the call. He does not need any anyone's assistance.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Did I say that out loud? For too long under Labor, New South Wales languished behind the country in so many areas, including jobs growth—but since 2011 some 130,000 jobs have been created. Compare that with what has happened in Victoria.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The 130,000 figure for jobs created in New South Wales is to be compared with the 57,500 jobs in Victoria.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order. He will cease interjecting.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: But let us go to State of origin: 130,000 jobs in New South Wales, and only 28,200 jobs north of the border, in Queensland. The member for Lismore will take that on board. In Tasmania, where Labor is in charge, 7,500 jobs were lost. This Government has put in place policies to allow businesses to grow and employ more people.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: That is because we understand, unlike those opposite, that it is private sector enterprises, not government, that creates the jobs that employ the bulk of people across this State. That is why we announced in this year's budget new measures to ensure that New South Wales continues to lead the nation in jobs growth. We are increasing the payroll tax threshold, from \$689,000 to \$750,000 from 1 July. Immediately 1,300 businesses across the State will be relieved of any payroll tax liability, and every other business that pays payroll tax will receive a \$3,000 reduction in their bills. That is taking the foot off the neck of businesses across this State. We have also increased the payroll tax rebate, as the Treasurer announced two days ago, from \$4,000 to \$5,000.

So businesses subject to payroll tax that employ new staff will get a \$5,000 rebate. It is part of our Jobs Action Plan and a key element of the Government's employment strategy, which is why we are extending it for two years, until July 2015. The changes announced in the budget come on top of the WorkCover reforms we made last year, which were important changes made not only to ensure that those who were able to get back to work did so as soon as possible and that the benefits available to people who were injured at work were increased, but also to take some extra pressure off businesses across the State. Not only did those reforms save a potential 28 per cent increase in premiums, but also since then we have seen an average reduction in WorkCover premiums across the board.

I was pleased this morning to visit one of the businesses that will benefit from the policies of this Government in relation to payroll tax. Classic Sportswear at Camperdown began operations, to the best of their knowledge, in 1934. I think it has had five owners over all those decades. I spoke to staff who were busily preparing the New South Wales State of Origin jerseys for the clash next Wednesday night in Brisbane against our Queensland foes. I was particularly pleased to be there as they were putting the name of Aaron Woods, the great New South Wales representative and Wests Tigers player, on his jersey. I was with the Treasurer, who was equally proud to see the name of Anthony Watmough put on his jersey—No. 17. Classic Sportswear was also kind enough to present us with jerseys. Mine, of course, had my name and the number 13 on the back—not unlucky for some, just the year—but I was particularly concerned to check what name was going on the Treasurer's jersey. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I was particularly concerned to make sure that the name "Baird" went on the back of the Treasurer's jersey, which also had the number 13 on it. I was worried that they would confuse him with Daly Cherry Evans, not because of his hairstyle—which is much better—and not because the Treasurer supports Queensland as he is a strong New South Wales supporter, which almost makes up for the team he supports in the National Rugby League competition, but because he is the Daly Cherry Evans of the team. He is the game-changer on this side, and this week's budget demonstrates why I say that. Queensland might have its King Wally. Those opposite have their kings too, and in the Leader of the Opposition they have the king of wallies in this country. Classic Sportswear is determined to do its bit to ensure that New South Wales wins the State of Origin competition. The Treasurer and I, and the entirety of our Government, are determined to ensure that New South Wales continues to win the real State of origin contest: the creation of jobs that give people across this State hope, opportunities and security.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Minister for Education will come to order.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given the budget appears to confirm that the North West Rail Link will be nothing more than a privatised shuttle service, has the Minister received any advice that the tunnels for the North West Rail Link could be bored to a width that would accommodate double-deck trains at no additional cost to the project?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members of the New South Wales Labor Party should hang their heads in shame in relation to the North West Rail Link.

Mr Richard Amery: We'll have to, to get through the tunnel.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Not only should they hang their heads in shame but I call on the Leader of the Opposition to state his position on the rail link because previously he yelled across the Chamber, "I support the project." That is what he said. I call on him and the shadow Minister for middle management to state today whether the Labor Party supports the North West Rail Link, because the people of the north-west do. If the Leader of the Opposition bothered to doorknock his own constituents in Blacktown he would know that they support the project too.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: One thing that we can all be proud of, no matter which—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: This is the same speech over and over again, and there is still no detail. I refer to Standing Order 129. The question is very simple: Has the Minister received advice that the tunnels could be bored to allow for double-deck trains? Forget about the Leader of the Opposition. Has the Minister received advice?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the member will let me answer, I will tell him. I am calling on the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party to state their position today. Do they support the north-west rail line? All the constituents of the Leader of the Opposition do. I also place on record how proud I am that the North West Rail Link will be the start of a rapid transit network in New South Wales. When the North West Rail Link is completed, customers will be able to go to any one of the eight brand-new railway stations and in peak times they will be able to catch a train every five minutes.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is unprecedented in the history of New South Wales. It is a project of which we can all be very proud. But it still distresses me that the Leader of the Opposition and his members have not visited the north-west lately. They keep telling people that we have not started the project. That is very sad because thousands of people have gone to the community information centre. We have had construction zones—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. Surely the Minister is not going to use a prop when she cannot even answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked.

Mr Michael Daley: She is not.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for Maroubra canvassing my ruling?

Mr Michael Daley: The question was about whether she received advice.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: It is a very simple question. What is the Minister hiding?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Maroubra knows the rules and will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Regrettably, the Labor Party wants us to be behind world's best practice. Those opposite want to subject Sydney in the future to the same backward transport system they left us when we came to government. That is not on. We will make sure we have the best available technology—

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

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that I have ruled three times that the Minister is being relevant to the question she was asked.

Ms Linda Burney: I think she has not been relevant.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for Canterbury canvassing the ruling?

Ms Linda Burney: The question was about the tunnels. Has the Minister received advice?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Clearly no-one on the other side of the House has read our 20-year Sydney's Rail Future document, otherwise the member would not have asked that silly question. It pains me to note that when those opposite talk to their constituents they stress the importance of building the North West Rail Link at every opportunity, yet in this House they continue to criticise it. It disappoints me that the shadow Minister for middle management keeps telling people on radio—as do all of his colleagues—that the North West Rail Link does not have a start date. Yet if we look at the *Hills News* not from this year but the edition from October last year we will see the headline, "It's happening". We on this side of the House—not those opposite—are finally building that rail link. We can go back even to August last year, when the very reputable *Rouse Hill-Stanhope Gardens News* said, "It's started". Those opposite should hang their heads in shame. The North West Rail Link will be an icon; it will be a beacon for what public transport infrastructure should be about. Frankly, those opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

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

PAROLE SYSTEM REVIEW

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: My question is directed to the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. What action is the Government taking to ensure the integrity of the parole system?

Mr GREG SMITH: I thank the member for his question and his continuing interest in matters legal and matters of criminal justice. Last night a young woman was attacked at a bus stop in Hunters Hill. An alleged offender has now been charged with a range of offences in connection with the incident. The woman and an injured officer were treated at the scene by ambulance paramedics and taken to Royal North Shore Hospital for treatment. The woman remains in hospital after suffering a punctured lung, a fractured cheekbone and bruising. The probationary constable received two stitches to a laceration to his lip and was later released from hospital. I thank members of the public for their vigilance and police for their quick response to this terrifying incident.

This matter raises some serious issues, and I can inform the House that I have already asked my department for an urgent briefing about the case. The alleged offender was released on parole in August last year after being refused parole on six different occasions between 2005 and 2010. His 15-year non-parole period expired on 13 January 2005. He was released under strict conditions, which included abstaining from alcohol, undergoing psychological assessment and counselling, no contact with the victim's family, and not frequenting or visiting nominated local government areas. He had served 22½ years of a 24-year sentence. He had almost seven months remaining on his balance of parole. The State Parole Authority originally decided to grant parole after considering submissions from the Serious Offenders Review Council and the victim's family. The State Parole Authority immediately revoked the alleged offender's parole this morning.

In light of recent attacks in Victoria, last week I asked Corrective Services NSW for a review of the handling of serious sex offenders on parole. This review has now been widened to include the handling of serious offenders whose offence had a sexual component. Earlier this year I also asked the Law Reform Commission to review our parole system to see how we can do better. This will be a detailed and broad review. The review will recommend ways in which we can improve the parole decision-making process and consideration of the needs and interests of the community and victims.

Earlier this year the Government introduced reforms to ensure that violent prisoners who pose an unacceptable risk to the community on their release will be kept in jail. We need to protect the community from

hardened violent criminals who have shown no remorse and participated in no rehabilitation. Offenders with a history of violence who are nearing the end of their sentences and who have not taken part in rehabilitation programs or who have not achieved satisfactory outcomes from them will have their likelihood of reoffending assessed by psychologists or psychiatrists. An application can be made to the Supreme Court for those who are considered to pose a continued unacceptable risk to the community to be placed in continuing detention or on an extended supervision order.

Laws allowing the detention or extended supervision of serious sex offenders have already existed for several years. When used correctly, parole provides a more effective way of protecting the public than would a more sudden release of offenders, at sentence expiry, without monitoring and supervision. The Government wants to ensure that parole is used effectively without compromising public safety. Any recommendations regarding how we can improve our system of parole arising from the reviews we have instigated will be welcome and considered closely.

STATE BUDGET AND TAFE

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given the negative long-term impact of the State's skills crisis on infrastructure costs and delivery, how can the Minister justify budget and job cuts at New South Wales TAFE and his failure to restore funding to the Joint Group Training Program?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: As always, I welcome questions from the Opposition about education, but it has never been clearer that there is one area of skills shortage. I do not think anybody in New South Wales would underestimate the skills shortage in this area—we are looking at it: if ever a group needed training it is the group sitting opposite. I joined the rest of the Labor Party and did not listen to the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech today. I believe they were in the cafeteria enjoying a hot chocolate or a cafe latte—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: It is standing order 129. This is a serious question and the Minister is not taking it seriously. I think he should do so.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has made some introductory remarks and will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: In his speech today the Leader of the Opposition said that he was going to have a skills summit. I am sure every member of the Labor Party will be joining that skills summit to get a handle on their lack of skills. They have convinced everyone else in New South Wales of their lack of skills. They prove it to us every day. This is a fascinating question about group training. Yes, we cut that program last year as part of the budget—acting responsibly and living within our means. That has been our mantra and, as the Treasurer said, we have delivered on that this year through infrastructure spending. I have a letter from the Commonwealth—because that program was funded jointly—to my department on 30 May, which said it was now "timely to review the outcomes we are trying to achieve through the investment we are making in the Joint Group Training Program and also the mechanisms for providing this money". So the Commonwealth is also reconsidering funding that program. The member for Marrickville might talk to her Federal counterparts.

On the issue of TAFE fees, yes, we have increased fees this year but I point out that in 2000 John Aquilina increased them by 9.4 per cent, when Labor was in government. In 2002 John Watkins increased them by 11.5 per cent. That was an administrative charge. But in 2004 they changed it to a fee, which led to an increase of 38 per cent. When John Della Bosca was a Minister—among other things he was doing—fees increased by 10.3 per cent. So members opposite have a bit of form. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned a couple of areas with what we would regard as skills shortages. He said there was declining training in building construction and mechanical technology. I am sorry to disappoint the Leader of the Opposition with the facts—we on this side always have the facts—but building construction enrolments are up by 2 per cent and mechanical technology enrolments are up by 11 per cent. Again, they are wrong; they cannot get their facts right.

In relation to trainees and apprentices, completions are up in 2012 compared with 2011. There were 12,128 in 2011 and 12,462 in 2012. Training is heading in the right direction. The Leader of the Opposition is putting up \$1.7 million—which apparently is going to solve every training problem we have—on top of the \$2.5 billion we are already spending. That is not the solution. It goes with his other non-solution policies including keeping open schools with no students—one of their gems from last year—and keeping the Higher

School Certificate telephone advice line open. It costs more than \$200 per phone call because people now use the internet. Shock, horror! That is what the Opposition wants to spend money on. They are the kinds of reasons there was a change of government in 2011. We stand by the reforms we have made in the vocational education and training sector and TAFE. TAFE needs to be competitive, and that is what we are going to achieve under this Government.

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ROB STOKES: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services. How is the Government supporting the fortieth anniversary of the Sydney Opera House?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Pittwater for a very good question. This morning I was pleased to demonstrate yet another example of this Government getting on with the job of driving economic growth for the entire State while investing in our unique cultural assets. On 20 October this year the Sydney Opera House will celebrate its fortieth anniversary. The story of the Opera House—arguably the greatest building of the twentieth century—is well known to us all. For a young Danish architect, Jorn Utzon, its design was his master work. For a nation slowly turning to face the world, its construction represented a new cosmopolitan vision of ourselves and overturned the various stereotypes of Australia as some kind of cultural desert.

In recognition of the Opera House's Danish heritage, this morning I was delighted to announce that their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Frederick and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark will visit Sydney in October and act as patrons for the anniversary celebrations. A series of celebrations will be held as part of this special event, culminating in the recreation of the concert that officially opened the Opera House 40 years ago in 1973. There will be a number of free events open to the public and, of course, opportunities for people not only to see but also to meet and greet the Crown Prince and Crown Princess during their walk around the city. It is worth nothing that today's announcement represents the settling of an historical debt between the National Party and Denmark. In 1966 Sir Davis Hughes, a Country Party Minister, locked horns with Jorn Utzon over escalating costs, once again demonstrating responsible fiscal management.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Of course, it is a matter of history that this dispute caused Jorn Utzon to leave Australia, never having set eyes on the completed building. Today the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing and Minister for the Arts and I are entrusted with overseeing the next stage of its development. We are very pleased to be hosting the Danish Crown Prince and Crown Princess in Sydney to be part of the celebration.

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

Mr ANDREW STONER: I know that the chardonnay socialists opposite get very excited when we mention royalty. In fact, I will never forget back in 2006 when the colonnade was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II. Meredith Burgmann and all the other great republican socialists of the Labor Party lined up in the front row, salivating in the presence of the royals. They will get a chance to do that once again when the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Denmark are here for this terrific event.

Tuesday's budget papers revealed that the Government has allocated \$13.7 million for design works to develop the major renewal plan of the Sydney Opera House. This Government has invested in an economic asset that is our most-recognised cultural building in arguably our greatest tourist attraction. The numbers are indeed compelling. Each year 8.2 million people visit the World Heritage—listed site. Some 1.4 million people attend around 1800 shows, including those offered as part of the enormously successful Vivid Sydney festival.

In line with this Government's commitment to use our competitive advantages in international markets, the visit of the royal couple marks a further stage in the strengthening relationship between New South Wales and Denmark. In fact, Australia and Denmark have a significant trading relationship, with two-way trade in 2012 exceeding \$1.3 billion. The royal couple's visit in October follows on from their last visit in 2011 and represents a fantastic opportunity to promote New South Wales to local, national and international audiences, boosting tourism numbers and supporting local businesses and commemorating a special milestone as one of our best-loved cultural and tourism assets celebrates its fortieth anniversary.

TERRENCE LEARY PAROLE SUPERVISION

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question is directed to the Attorney General. Was paroled murderer and convicted sex offender Terrence Leary subject to electronic monitoring or any other form of intensive supervision by your department before he allegedly carried out a vicious attack in Hunters Hill?

Mr GREG SMITH: I thank the member for Canterbury for her question. Mr Leary had been released on parole and was under regular supervision. I do not have full details, but I am awaiting that brief. I reassure the community and the House that all of us rely on protection from violence, and I take that job seriously. We will do our utmost to carry out our primary job to protect the community, women and other vulnerable people against predators. Be assured that we will leave no stone unturned. I am sure the Opposition will join us in supporting any good initiatives that make things better.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business. What is the status of negotiations on the Murray-Darling Basin intergovernmental agreement?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: I thank the member for Murray-Darling for his question and commend him for his continued interest in this important matter. Disappointingly, progress on resolving the outstanding matters of concern between the Commonwealth and New South Wales is proceeding at a glacial speed. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals believe strongly in the potential of regional New South Wales. We recognise the significant and vital contribution of irrigated agriculture not only to the economies of rural communities but also to the State and national economies. Our water management policies are focused on achieving true triple bottom line approaches. Instead of looking just at the environmental outcomes behind water policy, we are looking at the impact on the regional community and the economic impact on the State as a result of those policies. That is the cornerstone of what we believe in, and it is what is required from the intergovernmental agreement before we sign it.

The whole process has been a set-up to achieve a preconceived outcome from day one. It has already wasted hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of taxpayers' dollars, but New South Wales will maintain its focus to ensure good science and sensible measures are included in the Murray-Darling intergovernmental agreement. During this process we have been faced with fanciful aspirations in New South Wales. We are continually trying to bring the process back to earth to make the people in Canberra understand that what happens has a real and genuine impact on regional communities, particularly those in areas such as the member for Murray-Darling represents.

In our dealings with the Commonwealth, this Government has been consistent and firm. I have let the responsible Minister know, in no uncertain terms, what we require before we can sign the intergovernmental agreement. A few of these things include the issue that we have in relation to sustainable diversion limits on groundwater for the eastern porous rocks and the western porous rocks regions of New South Wales. The Chairman of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority did an enormous backflip on our earlier agreement. That is still an outstanding issue and one that is close to the heart of my colleague, the Minister for Resources and Energy. A key component is the commitment to recover water through infrastructure. The only way that communities will survive is if jobs are associated with this initiative. The Government does not support carte blanche water buybacks, which are referred to as "non-strategic buybacks". We support strategic buybacks, but non-strategic buybacks have had disastrous impacts on communities in the Murray-Darling area.

The Commonwealth is offering the communities of New South Wales a slap in the face. New South Wales has 56 per cent of the basin area within its borders but it is being offered only \$28 million to adjust to reduced water allocations. South Australia has just 7 per cent of the Murray-Darling—one-eighth of the New South Wales component—but it is being offered \$24 million. That is fundamentally unfair. This Government is working with the Commonwealth to implement sensible measures to recover the 2,750-gigalititre target that the Commonwealth set. Members opposite might not care about western New South Wales, but The Nationals and the Liberal Party do.

The SPEAKER: Order! If Opposition members are not interested in the proceedings, they can leave the Chamber at any time.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: This is important because progress on this issue has been frustratingly slow.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra can leave the Chamber at any time.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: We are very reluctant to sign up our communities to an intergovernmental agreement that is not realistic and that does not meet community expectations. If the Commonwealth commits to the high-priority infrastructure project at Nimmie-Caira, Menindee Lakes, some other identified environmental works and measures and the sustainable diversion limit offsets, then the water recovery targets set under the basin plan will be achievable within this State's preferred limit of 3 per cent per valley per decade, which I announced in a ministerial order on 15 January. Commitments to these projects are fundamental to the Government's further considering the intergovernmental agreement. It has consistently put forward sensible, cost-effective and widely supported water-savings projects underpinned by good science and sound business cases. The staff of the New South Wales Office of Water are unbeatable in this area. *[Extension of time granted.]*

Those officers have an impeccable record in this area; they know their stuff extremely well and I stand by them. The New South Wales Government's position is clear: The intergovernmental agreement must move to a triple bottom-line approach. It is almost one year since the Government submitted its business case for Nimmie-Caira, but we still have not received the Commonwealth's due diligence assessment. We must be provided with strong evidence that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's sustainable diversion limits will result in significant environmental improvements without devastating rural communities. That evidence has not yet been provided and it is highly unlikely that the Commonwealth will be able to meet the flow targets for the downstream reaches of the Murray River floodplain using regulated releases irrespective of the amount of water recovered.

Given what has happened to date, an observer could easily conclude that the Commonwealth has a clouded view when it comes to water management. It has very little appreciation of what value for money means and it has a low commitment to sustaining communities in regional New South Wales. I will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth Government as I have for more than two years. New South Wales is ready to resolve the issues that I have outlined and I encourage the Commonwealth to work quickly to meet our requirements.

LIQUOR ACT REVIEW

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I direct my question to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. Given that the Government is due to review the Liquor Act and to table its report by December this year, when will it develop and release the terms of reference of that review to ensure there is meaningful consultation with the community, police, health and public health professionals?

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I thank the member for his question and note his interest in these matters. The Government will be undertaking a statutory five-year review of the Liquor Act this year. Section 162 of the Act requires that the review be undertaken and that a report be tabled in Parliament by 13 December this year. The review will examine whether the policy objectives of the Liquor Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act are still appropriate to deliver those objectives. Stakeholders, including industry, regulators, the health sector, community and advocacy groups and the groups that the member mentioned will have an opportunity to contribute to the review and their views will be carefully considered. I have asked my department to call for public submissions as widely as possible, and I expect that to occur after 1 July this year. In conjunction with the call for public submissions, a departmental discussion paper will be available to inform and assist submission makers.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr GREG APLIN: I direct my question to the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations. What are the economic choices facing New South Wales?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and his interest in responsible economic management. Given what we saw today, we now have a very clear choice in New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition presented a cracker budget reply speech. Unlike last year, his entire team was in the Chamber for his speech, but one could be forgiven for not noticing. They were nodding off, using their phones and looking

bored. At 11.22 a.m. there was one "Hear, hear." We waited 22 minutes, but we finally heard it. I think it came from someone on the backbench who is trying to get onto the frontbench. At 11.33 a.m. we all jumped and said, "Hear, hear. Let's get out of here." Everyone went nuts.

The Opposition spent 72 hours trying to work out what the Government did in the budget. To put it simply, we have reduced expenses, increased spending on infrastructure and reduced net debt. The leadership team opposite has been going back and forth trying to work out how we did it. They have produced charts and graphs in an attempt to work it out. The good news for the State is that they have not managed to do so. The Opposition has put together an interesting plan. Two words come to mind in response, "Oh dear!" The Leader of the Opposition started by saying that the Labor Party opposes the Gonski reforms. The Opposition does not understand that policies must be funded and it is not interested in understanding. Members opposite should tell the Prime Minister that the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition does not support the Gonski reforms. Members on this side of the House are proud to provide another \$1.76 billion over six years to implement reforms that will help our schoolkids.

The Leader of the Opposition went on to rubbish the tax relief that this Government is proudly providing for businesses across the State. We understand that that is how one drives the economy. He then spent an inordinate amount of time arguing against jobs growth. He should be applauding the 128,000 jobs created by the O'Farrell Government. However, I remember his cunning plan: his policy is to abolish 20,000 jobs in this State. There were many firsts in the Leader of the Opposition's speech, but one of the most striking was his plan to argue against building new hospitals. It is amazing, but he does not want any new hospitals. Members opposite are on a winner. I had not heard that before from the Leader of the Opposition and it took the cake. He then argued against revitalisation of Newcastle.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock and the member for Kiama will stop shouting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government has proudly found the funds to revitalise Newcastle to take advantage of a once-in-a-generation opportunity. They are not my words. The mayor said that the changes foreshadowed by this Government are transformative and fantastic for Newcastle. That is what they are talking about in Newcastle: not your plan, the plan over here.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will stop shouting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They then spent time complaining about funds going to the WestConnex project. For some reason they are upset that we are putting money into the WestConnex project. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We make no excuse on this side of the House for putting aside funds to deliver the WestConnex to the community of Western Sydney. They might argue against it, but we are happy to do it. The piece de resistance in the speech was when the Leader of the Opposition complained about using experts for the North West Rail Link. We know their model, the Metro; we know about that cracker. We make no apologies under this Minister for building the North West Rail Link. The member for Maroubra spoke about the North West Rail Link in budget week. In 1998 the former Labor Government announced it was going to build it and complete it by 2010. In two years under the current Minister we are almost there. By the end of the speech there was one policy announcement that we need more skills—we certainly need more skills than the Leader of the Opposition has. Even that one policy is not funded. For the people of the State, it is very clear that once we get to the bottom line that is it. The bottom line for the Opposition is billions and billions of dollars in deficit. We are proud to secure the future of New South Wales, to reduce debt, reduce expenditure and invest in more infrastructure because that is exactly what the State needs.

Question time concluded at 3.22 p.m.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Membership

Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That Alexander Hart Greenwich be appointed to serve on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure in place of Gregory Michael Piper, discharged.

PRINTING OF PAPERS

Motion by Mr Brad Hazzard agreed to:

That the following reports be printed:

Report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission entitled, "Report on the Conduct of the Election, Heffron State By-election"

Report of the Independent Transport Safety Regulator entitled, "Rail Industry Safety Report 2011-12"

Report of the Community Relations Commission entitled, "Community Relations Report 2012"

Report by the New South Wales State Coroner into deaths in custody/police operations for 2012

Report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission entitled, "Report on the Conduct of the Election, Sydney State By-election", dated 20 May 2013

Report of the Technical Education Trust Fund for 2011

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2012 of:

Animal Research Review Panel

Public Defenders

Office of the Legal Services Commissioner

Official Community Visitors

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

Professional Standards Department of the Law Society of New South Wales

Livestock Health and Pest Authorities

National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner

Public Interest Disclosure Steering Committee

Education and Care Services Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioners for the period January to 30 June 2012

Consolidated Financial Report of Snowy Hydro Limited for the period 3 July 2011 to 30 June 2012

Financial report of Restart NSW Fund for the period 1 September 2011 to 30 June 2012

Half Yearly Reports for the period ended 31 December 2012 of:

Delta Electricity

Eraring Energy

Hunter Water Corporation

Macquarie Generation

The Central Coast Water Corporation

Reports for 2012 of:

Department of Education and Communities

Charles Sturt University

Macquarie University (Volumes One and Two)

Southern Cross University

University of Newcastle (Volumes One and Two)

University of New England

University of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two)

University of Sydney (Volumes One and Two)

University of Technology, Sydney (Volumes One and Two)

University of Western Sydney (Volumes One and Two)

University of Wollongong (Volumes One and Two)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.24 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit:

- (1) consideration of further Government business after the conclusion of the routine business;
- (2) the Speaker to leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell, no earlier than 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 27 June 2013, for the continuation of Government business.
- (3) the House to adjourn on motion.

We will soon commence Government business and deal with the Local Government Amendment (Conduct of Elections) Bill 2013 and any other bills returned from the Legislative Council for consideration, which will occur in the usual order until 4.30 p.m. We will then discuss the petition and then take community recognition

statements. If we move through Government business fairly quickly then, within the time remaining for Government business, we will take as many as possible private members' statements that were not able to be given yesterday. Further private members' statements will be taken after community recognition statements.

Some bills that are currently being debated by our most learned brethren in the Legislative Council, with the full weight of their wisdom, are likely to be subject to amendment and will have to be returned to this Chamber next week for finality. I regret to advise members that in all likelihood there will have to be another sitting day next week, most likely Thursday after the ringing of a long bell. These arrangements are reflected in the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2012-13

The Treasurer tabled, pursuant to section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, variations in the Consolidated Fund of receipts and payments estimates and appropriations for 2012-13 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.

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 20 June 2013.

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**.

Public School Funding

Petition stating that the quality of public education is determined by teachers having security of employment, career mobility and competitive salaries, and calling on the Government to support school communities and provide adequate funding for public schools, received from **Mr Andrew Fraser**.

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**.

Pet Shops

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

Low-cost Housing and Homelessness

Petition requesting increased funding for low-cost housing and homelessness services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Container Deposit Levy

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

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

St George Public Hospital

Petition requesting increased funding for St George Public Hospital, received from **Mr Anthony Roberts**.

Unanderra Railway Station Easy Access Upgrade

Petition requesting the urgent completion of stage two of the Unanderra railway station easy access upgrade in line with promises made in the lead-up to the 2011 State election, received from **Ms Noreen Hay**.

Eastern Suburbs Ferry Services

Petition requesting improved daily ferry services to the eastern suburbs, particularly to and from Rose Bay ferry wharf during peak hours, received from **Ms Gabrielle Upton**.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (EARLY INTERVENTION) BILL 2013

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of the amendments referred to in message of 19 June 2013

No. 1 Page 10, schedule 1 [41]. Insert after line 18:

438B Criteria to be considered by Minister

- (1) The regulations may make provision for or with respect to the criteria to be considered by the Minister in issuing performance improvement orders (*performance improvement criteria*).
- (2) A performance improvement order may be issued only after consideration of the performance improvement criteria.

No. 2 Page 13, schedule 1 [41], line 10. Omit "improve or".

No. 3 Page 13, schedule 1 [41]. Insert after line 13:

438I Criteria to be considered by Minister

- (1) The regulations may make provision for or with respect to the criteria to be considered by the Minister in suspending councils under this Part (*suspension criteria*).
- (2) A council may be suspended under this Part only after consideration of the suspension criteria.

No. 4 Page 15, schedule 1 [41], line 26. Omit "improve or".

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [3.30 p.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Government has taken a great bill and made it even better. I gave an undertaking when the bill was being debated in this House that I would look at the provisions in section 438. I have done that. As a result the

amendments put forward by the Government in the other place, and unanimously agreed to, are designed to address concerns about potential abuse of the powers to issue performance improvement orders and suspension orders by future Ministers. The amendments to the bill provide that the regulations may prescribe criteria that the Minister is to consider prior to issuing performance improvement orders and suspension orders. The effect of the amendments is that the Minister will be able to issue orders only on the basis of the prescribed criteria.

The draft criteria proposed to be prescribed by the Local Government General Regulation 2005 was talked about in the other place and those draft criteria were tabled in the Legislative Council. We also removed the words "improve or" from clause 438H (1) to make it clear that the purpose of a performance improvement order is to restore the proper functioning of council. I will now place on record some of the comments made in the other place as to the extensive consultation that has taken place in relation to this bill. I appreciate also the kind words from the Opposition and the crossbenches in recognising the important reform processes that this Government is achieving and the consultation that has taken place. Mr David Shoebridge said:

The Minister and his staff engaged in widespread consultation with stakeholders after the initial bill was circulated. I give the Minister and his staff genuine due credit for introducing a bill on which, I accept, they consulted with Local Government NSW ... I accept that the Minister's consultation with Local Government NSW was genuine with the belief that that organisation had signed off on the amendments.

In a homely way the Hon. Paul Green said:

... to his credit [the Minister] put it in the oven and let it take its course and it has come out the perfect butter cake. I congratulate the Minister on this legislation which will enable councils to be accountable and to maintain the integrity of their functions in the valuable contribution they make to local communities.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis even said:

I agree with most of the comments of the Hon. Paul Green.

It is relevant to note that the four government amendments we are now considering were unanimously supported in the Legislative Council. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [3.33 p.m.]: The Opposition notes that these amendments were agreed to in the upper House and we also agree to them. However, I understood that the Minister's undertaking was also to provide a definition of "dysfunction" as it appears in the legislation. It is of concern that that definition still does not exist.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [3.33 p.m.]: I did indicate that I would do some research as to whether we could define "dysfunction" in the legislation. Currently sections 438A (4) and 438H (1) use the following expression:

... or restore the proper and effective functioning of the council.

That has now been amended. It may be argued that "dysfunction" has the opposite meaning to the "proper and effective functioning of the council". It has been the Government's position that the bill should not provide a definition of what constitutes the proper and effective functioning of council so that the Minister's discretion is not unnecessarily limited. There may well be circumstances when it would be appropriate to use these new powers but those circumstances are difficult to define and/or anticipate.

In line with the Government's position, the framework for implementing early intervention will contain the necessary criteria for the Minister to consider when making a decision. The bill specifically refers to the criteria, and the criteria the Minister must consider are specified in the regulations that have been tabled in the upper House. It is clear that the parameters of the criteria must be used by the Minister in determining whether a performance improvement order or a suspension of a council needs to be put in place. The Government has overcome the issue of how to define when the powers should be used.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2013**Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

Schedule of the amendments referred to in message of 19 June 2013

No. 1 Page 20, schedule 1.26, lines 31–35. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 Page 27, schedule 1.32, lines 13–21. Omit all words on those lines.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.36 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Barry O'Farrell: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Government has considered the amendments and is agreeable to allowing those amendments to proceed.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS) BILL 2013**Second Reading**

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [3.37 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill was introduced in the other place on 29 May 2013; the second reading speech appears in the Hansard gallery for that day. This bill is in the same form as it was in the other place. The purpose of the bill is to increase the flexibility of councils to manage their own elections and to address timing issues that have become apparent following the implementation of the 2011 amendments to the Local Government Act 1993. The practical impacts of the current provisions in the Act are to require councils to decide whether to use the services of the Electoral Commissioner for the September 2016 elections three years in advance—that is, by September 2013; and bind councils that engaged the Electoral Commissioner to conduct a by-election in the first 12 months following the 2012 election to continue using the services of the Electoral Commissioner for all subsequent elections, including the next ordinary election.

Clearly these time frames do not allow councils sufficient time to test the market and make a fully informed decision about an event that is to occur three years in the future. Similarly, the Electoral Commissioner is not in a position to determine and quote service levels and costs for an election to be conducted three years in the future. Reducing the cost of local elections to ratepayers was one of the key reasons for returning the conduct of elections to councils. It is essential that councils have the ability to test the market in order to choose the most cost-effective option. This ability is currently unnecessarily limited in the Act and risks undermining the original policy intent.

The bill deals with this by permitting a council to make a decision on the conduct of all of its elections, referendums and polls up to 18 months prior to an ordinary election—so for the next election that will be March 2015—with a view to finalising all election arrangements, by contract or otherwise, with the Electoral Commissioner no later than 15 months before the election. That would be June 2015 for the next election. The contract will expire 18 months prior to the next ordinary election unless terminated by either party at any time by notice in writing following the ordinary election. This proposal also allows councils to opt out of any contract with the Electoral Commissioner after the ordinary election if they want to, thereby freeing them to conduct any

by-election, polls or referendums that arise in the new term of the council. The bill further provides that a council may decide to enter into an election arrangement with the Electoral Commissioner to conduct the council's individual elections, other than ordinary elections. This arrangement may be made at any time and will provide increased flexibility for councils.

Another important proposal in the bill is designed to limit the risk of a failed election. It provides that the Electoral Commissioner may agree to conduct a council's ordinary election even after the 15-month deadline if the Electoral Commissioner is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances that make it necessary or desirable for the election to be administered by the Electoral Commissioner. Clearly, the expectation is that this provision will only be used in emergency situations where, for example, a council having determined to conduct its election is no longer able to do so for reasons that are beyond its control. The decision on whether to conduct an election for a council in such circumstances ultimately rests solely with the Electoral Commissioner.

Further, it is proposed that all first elections of a council for an area after its constitution and following the establishment of a new council are to be conducted by the Electoral Commissioner. This is because new councils are unlikely to have the resources or capacity in place to allow the first election to be conducted in-house. In the case of first elections, a new council will be charged by the Electoral Commission on a cost-recovery basis. This will avoid the need for what may be complex commercial negotiations between the Electoral Commission and an administrator during a short period between the constitution of a new area and the council election date.

The Division of Local Government has consulted the local government sector and the Electoral Commissioner on the proposals in the bill. The Government has accepted the advice from the Electoral Commissioner that he needs contracts to be signed 15 months before the general election to enable him to do the necessary preparations to successfully conduct the election. The Government recognises the importance, given its election commitment to return powers to councils to conduct elections, to maximise the opportunity for councils to use these powers. However, this should not be at the expense of ensuring council elections are conducted appropriately and effectively. The proposals in the bill strike an appropriate balance between these positions. They are designed to reconcile councils' desire for greater flexibility with the Electoral Commissioner's need for certainty to allow forward planning and to put in place the logistical arrangements necessary to ensure council elections are properly and effectively conducted. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [3.42 p.m.]: The Local Government Amendment (Conduct of Elections) Bill 2013 has been the subject of debate in the upper House. I note that in the upper House the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, the shadow Minister for Local Government, led for the Opposition in that debate. As a matter of background, might I indicate that the Government amended the Local Government Act in 2011 to allow councils to run their own elections for the 2012 election and subsequent elections. The Opposition opposed the principle in that bill of allowing councils to run their own elections. I make it clear from the outset that we will not oppose the amending bill now before the House. This bill is about fixing up some of the mechanics of councils conducting their own elections. In 2014, 14 of 152 councils opted to conduct their own elections. That indicates to me that councils sensibly believe that the appropriate method of conducting elections is through the Electoral Commissioner. I suspect the reason underpinning that fact is that councils feel that provides openness and transparency in the conduct of their elections, giving the community confidence in the way their elections are run.

The reasons for these changes appear to be that councils and the New South Wales Electoral Commissioner have raised concerns about councils being required to enter into binding arrangements for the conduct of the next election three years ahead of the election, and that that probably would have happened around this time if this amending legislation was not to pass. Some councils obviously were concerned that this did not give them sufficient time to test the market, and I understand the New South Wales Electoral Commissioner has expressed concern that that time frame did not permit the commissioner to negotiate the service levels to be provided to councils and indicate costs. This measure is sensible because it will enable the commissioner to undertake those tasks, and to put the negotiated arrangements to councils, the body politic and the councils so that they can assess those arrangements.

I understand that both the Electoral Commissioner and councils agree that there is a need to change the timescale for a decision to a date much closer to the next election. It is for that reason that the bill amends the 2011 changes to allow councils to make a decision up to 18 months prior to an ordinary election, with a view to finalising all election arrangements, including its own elections, referenda and polls, by contract with the Electoral Commissioner or otherwise no later than 15 months before the upcoming election. That contract will

expire 18 months prior to the next ordinary election unless terminated by either party at any time. In my view, these arrangements will provide ample notice to the Electoral Commissioner to plan logistics for elections, as I expect he will continue to conduct the majority of council elections in this State.

I note that the parliamentary committee is due to publish the report on its inquiry into the 2012 local council elections. I do not know whether the committee will be commenting on the 14 elections that were conducted by the councils themselves or otherwise, and whether any concerns have been expressed by the community, the councils, or both, in relation to the conduct of those elections. It will be interesting to know what was raised with the committee on that matter. In summary, I repeat that the Opposition does not resile from its strongly held principle that council elections should be conducted by the Electoral Commissioner. However, the Opposition will not oppose these amendments as they will facilitate what was passed by the Parliament previously.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [3.47 p.m.]: I support the Local Government Amendment (Conduct of Elections) Bill 2013. Having served on council and having been a mayor at a time when it was compulsory for councils to use the Electoral Commission to conduct their elections, I think local government had a number of concerns at the time. The first was what it saw as escalating costs of elections conducted by the Electoral Commissioner compared with the costs involved when local government predominantly conducted its own elections. A lot of factors could have affected those comparisons. For instance, it could have been that many internal costs were not included as part of the cost of council-conducted elections. Inclusion of those costs following an election campaign would tend to better show what the true costs were, whereas the Electoral Commissioner showed all costs involved. That could have been part of the reason that local government was concerned about escalating costs.

It was important that the Coalition made a commitment before the last elections to free up choice for local government, so that councils could decide whether they would conduct their own elections or whether they would negotiate a contract for the Electoral Commissioner to conduct their elections. I think that not only provided the sector and individual local government bodies with confidence that this Government would have faith in councils conducting their own elections if they chose to do so, but also let the Electoral Commission know that it did not have a monopoly in the running of elections for local government. It will assist them to remain competitive in price for local government, which is why so many councils decided to use the Electoral Commissioner in the last election.

The price became much more competitive because the Electoral Commissioner looked closely at their costs and tried to be as competitive as possible, knowing full well that if their costs escalated local government would conduct the elections itself. I think local government looked at the cost, administration and resources required to conduct the election at the local level and felt that it was more cost effective to have it done externally by the Electoral Commissioner. I agree with what the member for Auburn, the Opposition spokeswoman, said about the confidence of the public in regard to the Electoral Commissioner. I think any local government or council that conducts an election does it in a transparent, open and professional way. From what I can see I do not think there is any question about that but it is about public perception.

The public has complete and total faith in the Electoral Commissioner conducting elections, very few questions are asked about it and the community tends to be very confident with the outcome. However, if local government or a particular council runs its own election there could be ongoing criticism and suggestions for the whole period of the council, especially from activist groups that are unhappy with the outcome of the election. They might suggest all sorts of things in the local paper, write letters to the editor about the election not being transparent or conducted properly, and call for inquiries that again would be a waste of resources. For those reasons I encourage councils to consider the Electoral Commission conducting their elections, which is a good process. The Electoral Commissioner knows that if they do not remain price competitive local government will again look at conducting elections.

I was the mayor at a time when, unfortunately a councillor passed away during my last term on the council and we had to go through the process of a by-election. I think it is important to ensure that councils can opt out of a contract with the Electoral Commissioner if they choose to do so and run a by-election if they believe they can do that in a more cost-effective way. That is what this bill does. This bill gives councils the flexibility that they need to make a choice. Councils are making decisions for their communities on the most cost-effective way of conducting elections.

I congratulate the Minister and his office on formulating this legislation. It has reached agreement in relation to what the local government sector through Local Government NSW is asking for and what the

Electoral Commissioner quite rightly needs to plan and conduct transparent and well-run local government elections. I say well done to all those who reached an agreement relating to the giving of 18 months' notice and the signing of a contract within 15 months of an election. This is good for the local government sector. It shows that the Government is listening to local government, working with it and assisting it to become professional. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [3.53 p.m.]: I speak briefly in debate on the Local Government Amendment (Conduct of Elections) Bill 2013. At the most recent local council elections the Cessnock local government area, which occupies the larger part of my electorate, decided to use an external body rather than the Electoral Commissioner. I do not think anybody in the Cessnock community is questioning the outcome but many questions were asked along the way about the processes that were used. The lesson to be learned is that apples cannot be compared with apples when lemons are being used. We must be careful as we are going through this process. Some of the concerns that have been brought to my attention involve things such as not knowing about pre-polling, not knowing where the pre-polling booths are going to be or what booths will be operational on the day, which are fair questions.

However, the alternative provider did not have answers. On nomination day the alternative provider suggested to one of the candidates who turned up with the wrong forms, "Maybe we can give everyone 24 hours and come back and do this tomorrow", which I thought was most inappropriate and unprofessional. That is not the way to conduct elections. It makes for a competitive industry when different providers are given an opportunity and local councils are able to seek out different providers. I think that is a good thing. When an alternative provider is used—I am not sure whether this is the case in relation to the Electoral Commissioner—the general manager of the local council has significant discourse about the announcement, notification and communication processes with the alternative provider. Given the dysfunction of the local council at the time, that proved to be a problem rather than an asset. However, Labor supports the bill and thanks the Minister for introducing it.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [3.55 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Local Government Amendment (Conduct of Elections) Bill 2013 which will give councils more flexibility in making decisions about the management of their own elections and address timing issues that became apparent following the 2011 amendments to the Local Government Act 1993. Those amendments were aimed at giving greater independence to councils and fulfilled an election commitment—something that this Government is good at doing. The 2011 amendments allowed councils to conduct their own elections, constitutional referendums and polls whilst being able to engage and make use of the Electoral Commissioner, should they choose to do so. Councils felt constrained due to the need for them to make decisions about the conduct of their elections without being given adequate time to make informed decisions. Nonetheless the 2012 local government elections were a success. The Government continues to support local government and wants councils to be able to run their own elections should they choose to do so. This bill will ensure that the time limits for councils and the Electoral Commissioner are changed.

Election costs can be very high but they ensure that our communities are given an opportunity to exercise their democratic right. Some costs are unavoidable but that does not mean that ratepayers, or taxpayers for that matter, should not get value for money. So cost efficiencies should always be sought. Keeping election costs to ratepayers to a minimum was one of the main reasons for the 2011 amendments. Camden council's Electoral Commission costs were \$211,000 in 2008 and \$235,000 in 2012. Taking costs into consideration it would have been good if council had been given the choice to run the election itself or to have the Electoral Commission run it.

To ensure that councils have flexibility in making decisions about the conduct of local elections and keeping costs to a minimum, this bill will allow a local council to decide up to 18 months prior to an ordinary election to enter into a contract with the Electoral Commissioner to conduct all its elections, referendums and polls, and it may enter into any one of those contracts up to 15 months before the election. The contract will have an expiration date of 18 months prior to the next ordinary election. Councils will be able to opt out of any contract they make with the Electoral Commissioner after the ordinary election if they want to, allowing the freedom to conduct by-elections, polls or referenda that may arise in the next term of the council.

I think I made history in the Camden local government area. I was first elected in a by-election in 2000, after the death of Philip White, a former Liberal member of Parliament. After retiring from council in 2004 I was again elected in 2005 after the death of Liz Kernohan, another former Liberal member. After having been elected in two by-elections brought about by the passing of two former Liberal members I do not think I will be

going back to local government after I leave this place. This is a very common-sense bill. I could go on and on about it. The Minister was very clear and thorough in his second reading speech. Whenever local government matters arise I always confer with the former mayors Bart Bassett and the member for Port Stephens—old landslide who is sitting behind me. Both are very comfortable that this is an exceptional bill. It is what their councils want and it is what my council wants. Rather than reiterate what a wonderful bill this is and what a wonderful job the Minister and his staff have done—

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: Say it again.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: No, there is no need to say it again. We all know a good job when we see one. On that note I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [4.00 p.m.]: I note that whenever the member for Camden speaks he makes 10 minutes seem like 20. He is consistent in that. I will make a brief contribution to the Local Government Amendment (Conduct of Elections) Bill 2013. Like the member for Camden I often draw on the collective experience of other members who have served proudly in local government, and I still have a high regard for local government. I note the new member for Northern Tablelands is present who has also served very proudly in local government. Of course, there are problems in local government from time to time and people tend to find the outlying faults. I and others are also drawn to do the same thing from time to time.

Changes were made under the former Government that took away the ability of local government to conduct its own elections as it had done traditionally. The costs were arbitrarily imposed on councils in my view. For example, the cost for Lake Macquarie City Council of running a full election effectively doubled from around \$500,000 to just under \$1 million. That is all well and good. The Electoral Commissioner at the time wanted to argue that this reflected the true cost of running an election, but he failed to provide the evidence for that. It is a not inconsequential amount of money. While I was mayor, Lake Macquarie council was one of the councils that took the opportunity under the changes made by this Government to the legislation in 2011 to seek another party to run its election, and it did so with the Australian Election Company.

I had a much lesser role in that election but I must say I was not overly enamoured with all aspects of the operation. I note the member for Cessnock obviously had a more negative view of the conduct of the election in 2012 than I did. It is clear that it was always going to be difficult for another organisation, regardless of how much experience the individuals claimed they had, to come in and run elections across New South Wales. Many of the Hunter councils looked at taking up the option and did so. It is important that we maintain the ability of councils to seek other parties to run elections for them. It also is incumbent upon the Electoral Commissioner and Elections NSW to be more transparent in the way they go about providing the costs and being cost competitive. I believe Colin Barry is probably quite aware of that.

I note the Minister is in the Chamber. He has made some very sensible changes. The member for Camden waxed lyrical about this bill being one of the best pieces of legislation that has ever been seen in the Chamber. I think it is a tradesmanlike piece of legislation. It is good honest legislation and it is sensible. I congratulate the Minister not just on this piece of legislation but for the work he has been doing to strengthen local government over the past two years.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [4.04 p.m.]: I thank the members representing the electorates of Auburn, Londonderry, Cessnock, Camden and Lake Macquarie for their contributions and their support for the legislation. As members all know, 14 councils decided to run their own elections at the last election. I attended a debrief of those 14 councils after the election and the feedback I received was that they were all happy with the way things went and they all felt they saved money in the process. It will be interesting to see how many councils decide to run their own elections next time based on the experience of the last general local government election. In essence, this bill provides that instead of having to give three years notice of a decision to run their own election or have the Electoral Commission do it, councils will have to give only 18 months' notice and then decide 15 months out which way they are going to go and enter into a contract.

The Electoral Commissioner was pretty clear about needing 18 months' notice and a contract at 15 months because he made the point that in effect the local government election starts on 1 July and not in September. Most people think it happens on a day in September but the commissioner said that because of the preliminaries it effectively started in July. The other interesting point he made was that at the last local government election his charges were based on cost recovery. He charged councils what it cost him. He said that

at the next election in 2016 there will be an opportunity for the councils to negotiate with the Electoral Commission and he needs those three months between the 18-month and 15-month time points to put those negotiations into effect. He will not be accepting contracts on a cost-recovery basis so there will be more opportunity for councils in future to negotiate an outcome. That is a positive step and will be welcomed by councils. This is common-sense legislation that has been requested by the sector and I appreciate the support of all members who have spoken.

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 Donald Page 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.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Government business having concluded the House will now proceed with private members' statements.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAHLEE HOUSE AND ESTATE

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.08 p.m.]: I speak about a unique site in my electorate which is truly a hidden gem—Tahlee. Tahlee is an historical heritage site 60 kilometres north of Newcastle. The property is on the northern shores of Port Stephens and surrounded by bushland. As members know, I am no stranger to spruiking the natural splendour and wonders of my beautiful electorate. But this place is something else. It is nestled about seven kilometres off the Pacific Highway near Karuah. One does not just happen upon this marvellous place by chance, but I encourage all members to visit it. There is an abundance of wildlife and birds, with kangaroos grazing around the houses and dolphins frolicking in the clear, clean waters of Port Stephens. The earliest inhabitants of this area were the Worimi tribe. Tahlee comes from the local Aboriginal word "Tarlee", meaning "sheltered from the wind and above water".

The European history of Tahlee began in February 1826 when Robert Dawson, the first Commissioner of the Australian Agricultural Company, arrived with settlers from England, emancipists, convicts, horses, cattle and sheep. In 1824 the Australian Agricultural Company had been incorporated in London with a capital of £1 million and a grant of one million acres. The aim of the company was to generate profits from the production of fine merino wool using convict labour. This was the first European settlement in Port Stephens. In 1826, many years before the construction of our own Government House, Tahlee House was built and became the home of the chief agent of the company. Carrington, which was just down the road, became the first planned company town in Australia. In 1854 the Australian Agricultural Company sold the Tahlee estate to move inland to better sheep country. In 1860 part of Tahlee House burned down.

In 1880 the colourful Robert Hoddle Driberg White bought the property and invested a huge amount of money in it. He renovated and added to the original residence. The home, which is now covered by a heritage order, featured a beautiful garden, a ballroom, tennis courts, a billiard room—which is believed to be the first outside Sydney—huge mirrors from England and marble fireplaces from Italy. According to local history, the home was the centre of extravagant hospitality, entertainment and general carousing. As R. H. D. White's biography states, there were plenty of stories to tell. The politician and bank manager once thwarted a bushranger, faced financial troubles and a family feud, and was challenged to a duel. R. H. D. White had two steam yachts, 12 full-time gardeners and was a great collector. The terraces and plants and trees from different parts of the world are still flourishing at Tahlee and the cannon on display was found under rubbish near the waterfront. It is not certain whether it was brought to Tahlee by the Australian Agricultural Company or by R. H. D. White.

R. H. D. White was born in Stroud in 1838. From 1887 he represented Gloucester in the Legislative Assembly in the New South Wales Parliament, supporting Sir Alexander Stuart's Government. He was appointed to the Legislative Council on 30 December 1887, was a member of the Aborigines Protection Board from 16 February 1893, and sat on the royal commission on fisheries in 1894-95. In 1949 the Gospel Fishermen Mission leased the Tahlee property to be used for a camping and convention ministry as well as for its headquarters. In 1959 the property was purchased and Tahlee Bible College started the same year. Tahlee Ministries is an evangelical interdenominational faith organisation founded in 1941 as the Gospel Fishermen Mission. The aim of the mission was to use gospel vans to take the gospel and *Bible* teachings to rural areas of Australia.

Heritage tours enable people to spend an unforgettable day at Tahlee observing its heritage-listed buildings, elaborate gardens and pristine waterfront. Visitors are given a guided tour of historic Tahlee House as well as a tour of the chapel, ballroom and convict-built boat harbour. To add to the spectacle, lunch is served by volunteers dressed in period costume. Waterfront cottages that were built in the nineteenth century and updated to twenty-first century comfort as well as newer bungalows are available for hire, with the beautiful shores of Port Stephens literally a small step from your luxurious queen bed. Tahlee Ministries staff are involved in regular outreach activities at Karuah, including ministry to the Aboriginal community, and children and youth ministries. They also conduct religious education classes at Karuah Public School. The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has kindly accepted my invitation to tour the facility later this year. I look forward to showing her the hidden treasure in this corner of my electorate. I encourage all members to get off the beaten track and discover this marvellous property that is just two hours from Macquarie Street.

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [4.13 p.m.]: I inform the House of the frustrating, and at times completely exasperating, situation that has been experienced by some of my constituents in the Wollongong City Council local government area. On a number of occasions over the past couple of years I have been approached by residents of Semaphore Road, Berkeley, in my electorate of Wollongong regarding their concerns about speeding cars and trucks on their road. I have made numerous representations to council and, as yet, no action has been taken. I have received correspondence telling me that these concerns are not justified and nothing will be done. I also had a meeting with representatives from the council and Roads and Maritime Services and police and asked for traffic-slowness mechanisms to be installed on Semaphore Road, which is a small, narrow road.

Concerns were raised about trucks driving over the top of the low roundabout and the response was that low roundabouts were designed so that trucks can drive over them. Buses take shortcuts down Semaphore Road and Roads and Maritime Services has learner drivers use it. The situation has become intolerable for residents. I have received correspondence stating that not only are those concerns not justified but also nothing will be done. I encourage Wollongong City Council to tell that to the family who have had to install cement bollards in their front yard after numerous cars have lost control going around the bend and have ended up in their front yard. This family has young children. A lady who lives two doors up the road was minding her grandchildren when a car crashed into her front bedroom after leaving the road. Both accidents occurred as a result of excessive speed. Rest assured that I will not stop until the matter has been addressed and residents' fears are eased. Their concerns are real and justified.

Wollongong City Council needs to get real. The council's fiscal management is proving to be just as poor. The general manager of the council tells the community that the council has no money. The lord mayor has announced that he is taking a trip with council officers—courtesy of taxpayers, of course—to encourage tourism in the region. Destination Wollongong has this role. Also, a story was splashed all over the *Illawarra Mercury* that the General Manager of Wollongong City Council is calling for the mayor to receive a pay rise equal to that of a State member of Parliament, which would effectively double his salary. I suggest those people start doing some work by using council funds better and improving constituents' safety.

The cost of the Wollongong Mall revamp skyrocketed from \$14.9 million to a whopping \$19.4 million. When retailers complained about the impact on their businesses, the mayor suggested that landlords reduce their rent. That action would not remove the obstructions at the front of the mall and enable retailers to continue to make a living. The Bathers Pavilion was completed six months late, and came in \$1.1 million over budget. The original estimate was \$12.8 million but ended up costing the ratepayers \$13.9 million. In March last year Wollongong Council announced that it would borrow up to \$20 million to address the condition of the city's

ailing footpaths and cycleways in an attempt to wipe out the \$2.7 million backlog of footpath upgrades. This news came at a time when it was revealed that Wollongong council's yearly spend of \$1.1 million on upgrades and maintenance to footpaths was less than half that required.

In May this year headlines in the *Illawarra Mercury* screamed that the city could face an asset fire sale and quoted the general manager as saying that nothing was off the agenda. I suggest that the council needs to put a number of things on the agenda instead of celebrating the work of the member for Kiama, whose electorate is not within the Wollongong local government area, and talking about swinging seats. I remind the council that there are three Labor members of Parliament on the South Coast and four Liberal members of Parliament on the South Coast. I do not know how many swinging seats it wants. The council should get on with the job of local government and leave State Government issues to the elected State representatives.

REGIONAL AEROMEDICAL SERVICE

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [4.18 p.m.]: An air medical transport service is provided to the people of regional New South Wales. This service is offered not only to the people of western New South Wales but also to the people of the North Coast and Coffs Harbour. I received a letter from Paula Murray, which states:

This is a statement from Daphne Murray given to her daughter Paula Murray regarding her transfer from Moree District Hospital to St. Vincents Hospital on Saturday 10-11-12 by Skymed, a contracted patient transport company.

Daphne was admitted to the Moree District Hospital on Thursday 8-11-12 via the Emergency Department with an acute case of cholecystitis. Her common bile duct was obstructed by a gallstone. 16mm in size. (Abdominal USS proven) She was admitted under the care of Dr Scott Finlay.

It was decided the next day that she should be transferred to St Vincents Private Hospital In Sydney under the care of Professor Reg Lord as it was a potentially life threatening situation. Transport was arranged and Skymed were contacted by the Moree Hospital to transport Daphne to St. Vincents.

She was taken to the airport by myself ...

As my mother was trying to get into the aeroplane up two deep narrow steps, with no handrails, just two pieces of plastic to hold onto, and no physical help from the two nurses or pilot, she tells me her right foot slipped off the top step and she sustained a

deep, three cornered laceration to her right shin, approximately 12cm x 6cm. The nurses applied First Aid, on the tarmac, whilst she was sitting on the bottom step. Then the three of them helped her into the aeroplane, where she was propped up in a seat with a box and a pillow under her leg.

Over the next 9 hours Daphne tells me they made two other scheduled stops and collected three other patients from Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. My mother states the aeroplane was freezing. She was given a blanket when they got to Coffs Harbour. At no stage was she offered fluids (she was Nil by Mouth) or analgesia.

During the afternoon when we became concerned regarding her non arrival at St Vincents (1400 hours was the original ETA) we were unable to ascertain where she was.

Mrs Murray eventually arrived at the hospital nine hours after boarding the aircraft. Representations were made to the Minister for Health on 11 December about this issue and she responded promptly on 21 December. My problem is I believe Skymed has glossed over this issue. It claims that the treatment provided to Mrs Murray on the aircraft was sufficient, that the flight was not as long as stated, and that a full debriefing was provided to doctors at St Vincent's Private Hospital. I do not believe any of that. In my opinion the Health Care Complaints Commission has also glossed over this issue and I understand that the Ombudsman has decided not to investigate it. The people of regional New South Wales deserve the best possible health care available, particularly when they are being transported for medical reasons. I visited Mrs Murray at St Vincent's Private Hospital when she was recovering from her ordeal. She required plastic surgery on her leg—I have photos of her injuries if members wish to see them. I do not recommend it because they are gory.

It irks me that Skymed, apart from apologising over the phone, has not acted in the interests of Mrs Murray or other patients. It should upgrade its service to ensure that appropriately trained nurses accompany patients and that patients are assisted when they are boarding aircraft. Mrs Murray was being transferred from Moree to St Vincent's Private Hospital for potentially life-saving surgery. I am pleased to inform the House that she turned 85 last week and that she is back to her normal self. I am sure that the member for Liverpool will appreciate that she is the wife of former Deputy Premier, the Hon. Wal Murray. She is a great lady with a great sense of humour. If anyone other than Daphne had endured this ordeal I am sure that the story would have been on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* or the *Daily Telegraph*. I request that the

Minister and NSW Health thoroughly investigate the service provided by Skymed to ensure that people can have confidence in it. No-one should suffer as Daphne Murray did and end up with a totally unnecessary serious injury.

WORKERS COMPENSATION CLAIMANT GORAN JOSIPOVIC

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.23 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the circumstances of a resident in my area Mr Goran Josipovic. Representations have been made on his behalf by his lawyer, Mr Vic Petrovich, who is also a constituent and who has a practice in Liverpool. Mr Josipovic sustained an injury in the course of his employment on 26 October 2010. He is a 51-year-old man and is married with three children, one of whom is dependent on him. Prior to the situation I am about to recount he had suffered no compensable injuries. At the time of the accident Mr Josipovic was employed dismantling scaffolding at Westfield Centrepoint in the Sydney central business district. After removing braces, the scaffold collapsed and he fell some two metres backwards, landing on his neck and back. The scaffold fell on top of him, injuring his right leg and ankle. He fell directly onto his right shoulder and contused his right hip. In one sense he was extraordinarily lucky because if he had fallen the other way he would have dropped into a void some five storeys high. He has described the injuries that Mr Josipovic sustained and I have read a medical report provided by Dr Dixon, an orthopaedic specialist.

Mr Josipovic suffered a direct injury to his right shoulder with subacromial bursitis and impingement, lower back strain injury with radicular complaint of right sciatica, contusion to the right knee with haemarthrosis with mild post-traumatic stiffness, right ankle strain injury with post-traumatic stiffness of the ankle and subtalar joint with subsequent osteoporosis with insufficiency fracture of the distal right fibular, and a fracture of the media cuneiform bone. Mr Petrovich relies on ongoing medication, and particularly neuropathic painkillers such as Panadine Forte. Mr Josipovic has been assessed as having 25 per cent whole-of-person impairment, which is a relatively high assessment, given the criteria now applied. He uses a Canadian crutch and walks with a significant limp. The only work he has done is as a bricklayer or a gyprocker and he is incapable of doing any other work. I have been approached about this issue because Mr Josipovic is experiencing problems with the workers compensation insurer involved in the case. The insurer has denied liability for further payments on the basis of section 38 (3) (b) of the Workers Compensation Act. The lawyer addresses that section, which states:

- (1) A workers entitlement to compensation in the form of weekly payments under this part ceases on expiry of the second entitlement period (after week 130 or 18 months) unless the worker is entitled to compensation after the second entitlement period under this section.
- (2) A worker who is assessed by the Insurer as having a current work capacity is entitled to compensation after the second entitled period only if the worker has returned to work (whether in self-employment or other employment) for a period of not less than 15 hours per week and is in receipt of current weekly earnings or at least \$155.00 per week.

As the lawyer states, that presents a couple of problems. He continues:

1. In cases where workers have been seriously injured and cannot find work, their payments will be terminated. I know of no employer that would be prepared to employ an injured worker such as Mr Josipovic. In fact, employing him would present a risk to any employer.
2. Apart from the above it would be difficult to find an employer that would be prepared to employ him for not less than 15 hours per week.

The lawyer also states:

The insurer is entitled to make a work capacity determination on its own without qualifying a functional and vocational assessor. Further, the insurer is entitled to make a determination without due regard to employment or labour market. Such determinations are based upon theory and not reality. In reality a worker such as Mr Josipovic has no hope of finding employment.

It is now 18 months since his injury and he is no longer entitled to payments.

Mr Josipovic must live and employment seems an unlikely prospect. He has approached Mr Petrovich to express his grave concerns about this situation. Mr Petrovich also states:

As time goes on I am obtaining more and more of such determinations from insurance companies. Many of these determinations rely upon on old evidence and have been poorly drafted and no attempt has been made to obtain information from the worker or his treating doctors with respect to employment possibilities.

Without workers compensation payments Mr Josipovic stands to ruin his life. That is the real effect of this Government's legislation. Mr Petrovich asked me to draw the attention of the House to this situation because it is a practical example of the impact of the atrocious legislation that this Parliament has passed. It has ruined people's lives, and it will continue to do so.

SMOKE ALARMS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [4.28 p.m.]: With winter in full swing I draw the attention of the House to a question that impacts directly on the safety of every Australian this winter: Are ionisation smoke alarms defective? Two types of smoke alarms are installed in most Australian homes—ionisation and photoelectric—and both may be battery or mains powered. Most Australian homes are fitted with ionisation alarms because they have been widely promoted for decades. In 2004 the smoke alarm standard affecting commercial buildings was amended to mandate the installation of photoelectric smoke detectors. That begs an important question: Are ionisation smoke alarms defective?

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council is the peak representative body of all Australian and New Zealand fire brigades. In 2006 the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council released an official position statement. Clause 3 states, "That all residential accommodation be fitted with photoelectric smoke alarms; ionisation smoke alarms may not operate in time to alert occupants early enough to escape from smouldering fires." In August 2008 the International Association of Fire Fighters said that photoelectric smoke alarms "will drastically reduce the loss of life among citizens and firefighters". The Northern Territory enacted Australia's first residential photoelectric legislation. Since November 2011 photoelectric smoke alarms must be installed in all new Northern Territory homes. Almost everyone agrees that we need to install photoelectric smoke alarms.

Last week I spoke with Mr Dean Dennis from Cincinnati, Ohio. Dean lost his daughter Andrea, along with three other students, in a house fire 10 years ago. The house was fitted with ionisation smoke alarms. Dean is regarded as a world expert on smoke alarm technology. He travels across the United States of America educating firefighters and senior fire department and government officials. He has been instrumental in numerous cities and States mandating the use of photoelectric smoke alarms. Cincinnati recently enacted legislation mandating photoelectric smoke alarms. Mr Dennis contacted me regarding the necessity of bringing this issue before Parliament. Recently I consulted with Mr David Isaac, a committee member overseeing Australia's smoke alarm standard. Sunday's *Sun-Herald* featured a story titled "Flawed detectors pass the test" and quoted Mr Isaac's statement, "Ionisation alarms are dangerous and the public have been misled into believing they are safe."

In April 2012 I wrote to Mr Mark Brisson, the Australasian President of United Technologies Corporation. United Technologies Corporation is the world's largest manufacturer of fire safety equipment, and the manufacturer of the ionisation smoke alarm in my home. United Technologies Corporation is the United States parent company for the Quell, Chubb and Kidde brands of ionisation alarms. I asked United Technologies Corporation at what level of smoke the Quell brand ionisation smoke alarm in my own home activated under Australian Standards testing. Despite four written requests it has failed to answer my single question. I sent an open letter to the President of United Technologies Corporation, Mr Louis Chenevert, requesting an answer.

The CSIRO is paid by manufacturers to conduct scientific testing of smoke alarms in accordance with Australian Standards. I have also written an open letter to Dr Megan Clark, the Chief Executive Officer of the CSIRO, requesting an answer to my question. I have requested the media be allowed to film the testing of ionisation alarms. The winter 2013 edition of the magazine of the Volunteer Fire Fighters Association contains an article entitled, "Can Australian and US Smoke Alarm Standards be Trusted?" Copies of this article and of all correspondence between me, United Technologies Corporation and the CSIRO are being sent to every member of Parliament. Lives are at stake—we have a moral imperative to get this right.

Adrian Butler, Chairman of the World Fire Safety Foundation, is one of my constituents. He believes the test data held by the CSIRO and manufacturers is the key to saving thousands of lives around the world every year. David Isaac informed me that photoelectric alarms typically activate at between 8 per cent to 12 per cent smoke in CSIRO tests. At what level of smoke did the Quell-branded United Technologies Corporation ionisation smoke alarm in my home activate under CSIRO testing? Will the CSIRO allow the media to film its smoke alarm testing? My interest in this matter is motivated by the desire to save lives this winter. On that basis, I ask both United Technologies Corporation and the CSIRO to answer my questions.

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

NSW SELF INSURANCE CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

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

NORTHERN RIVERS MINING

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I welcome guests to the public gallery, who I know are passionate about coal seam gas exploration. I ask them, as guests in this place, to show respect to other visitors, staff and members of Parliament. Commentary, applause or jeering from the public gallery will not be tolerated during the debate. I ask visitors to follow the rules.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.35 p.m.]: I support the petition of northern rivers residents opposing coal seam gas, gas from tight sands and unconventional gas. I acknowledge the campaign and supporters in the gallery, including those from Lock the Gate Alliance, which is the organiser of this petition, Carlos Beres Silva, Ian Gaard, Michelle Cullin, Isabel McIntosh, Jacinta Green and the many others who cannot be here but who helped to gather support for this very important petition. The almost 12,000 petitioners have united in their request that the northern rivers region of New South Wales, encompassing all river catchments from the Clarence River to the Tweed, be declared a coal seam gas, tight sands and unconventional gas mining free zone. They also request that the current licences and/or leases that allow any such activity be revoked, and that no such new licences or leases be granted. I welcome the Minister for Resources and Energy in the Chamber.

Coal seam gas has no social licence with local farmers, business people and residents across the political spectrum who are uniting to highlight the dangers of this industry to water, biodiversity and their lifestyle. This matter is way beyond party labels, with people from all political parties and independent people supporting this inspiring petition. It is fantastic to see such a strong consensus emerge in steadfast opposition to this damaging industry, which will leave a lasting legacy of pollution in our river catchments and in our air, above and below the ground. First, it is important to address the misconceptions. In their attempts to force coal seam gas mining on communities in New South Wales, both the industry and government are pushing the idea that New South Wales is facing a gas shortage. That is simply not true. For example, BHP Billiton President Mike Yeager has acknowledged that the company has plenty of gas for sale to supply these closed markets. He is quoted as saying:

"...the Bass Strait field still has a large amount of gas that's undeveloped," Mr Yeager said. "We have a lot of gas in eastern Australia that's available. It's more important to let the citizens of Victoria and New South Wales, and to some degree, you know, even Queensland ... there's plenty of gas to supply those provinces for—you know, indefinitely."

There is no need for us to continue expanding this damaging industry—communities do not want it and the State does not need it. The coal seam gas industry's propaganda clearly is not working, with growing community opposition, including a poll yesterday that showed that 83 per cent of respondents are happy to pay more for gas to keep coal seam gas out of the northern rivers region. Recently, 86 per cent of the people polled said that landowners should have the right to refuse access to their land for coal seam gas exploration. The truth is the gas is for export, which is why Metgasco also wants to build a pipeline north through the Lions Way and a section of World Heritage listed Border Ranges.

Another misconception is that this industry creates local jobs. It may bring a few jobs but the claim is untrue, especially when one considers the risk from this industry to other sectors in the community, particularly farming and tourism. The people of northern rivers have said "no". They also know that there are just a few shareholders of Metgasco, Dart or Red Sky Energy in the northern rivers. The vast majority of shareholders do not live in the local community—in fact, many do not even live in Australia. The people of the northern rivers are to be subjected to an industrialised gas field from which almost all the profits will be sent elsewhere. Evidence suggests that devastating and long-term damage created by this industry continues to grow, and residents are right to unite against it. The Government has already openly acknowledged the dangers of coal seam gas and has imposed a two-kilometre exclusion zone around residential areas. The Government has also protected horse studs and viticulture, but that protection is not available to farmers or to the people of the northern rivers. Yet it is available to many others in our community.

We know that coal seam gas threatens biodiversity, water resources, and agricultural and sustainable industries. We must safeguard our environment for the future instead of allowing powerful mining companies to exploit our resources and leave a negative legacy. I will mention the 10,000 plus voices behind this petition. They include organisations such as the Northern Rivers Guardians, Githerbai Tribal Group Original People, Ngarokowol Original People—Uncle Henry Boyd, Kyogle Group Against Gas, Girls Against Gas, Knitting Nannas Against Gas, Keerrong Gas Squad, Stop CSG Fracking Lismore, Casino and Drake, Coast and Yaragir

Alliance, Clarence Against Gas, Tweed Lock the Gate, Region Wide Gasfield Free Communities, Iluka Gasfield Free Communities, Northern Rivers Regional Alliance, Nimbin Environment Centre, Casino Environment Centre, Byron Gasfield Free Communities, Dunoon Gasfield Free Communities and Whian Whian Gasfield Free Communities.

This petition contains the signatures of more than 10,000 persons. This is the second petition presented on coal seam gas because communities are united against it. I hope the Government addresses the substance of this petition. What this Government does when it knows it is on the ropes—for example, the petroleum bill, which it cannot get through the upper House, and the wheat bill, which does not provide protections—is focus on the politics, not the issues. I welcome debate around the science and the impacts on local communities. Whether one is a member of The Nationals, The Greens or the Labor Party, communities do not want coal seam gas in their area. This petition highlights that fact. The petition should focus the Government on the issues, not the politics, so it protects the environment and our communities.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [4.40 p.m.]: Coal seam gas is a big issue in the northern rivers region and in my electorate. I am neither for nor against coal seam gas. My position, and that of The Nationals, is that we have to regulate the industry to ensure it does not impact on our land or water. In New South Wales, 1.1 million people rely on gas as a source of energy. We have a responsibility to ensure that those people can access gas at a fair price without compromising our environment. That is the approach the Government has taken. I am somewhat confused about the approach of The Greens and the former Labor Government on this matter. One minute they are for it and the next minute they are against it; one part of the party is for it and the other part of the party is against it. They have more positions on this issue than there are in the Kama Sutra. When Dr John Kaye came to the northern rivers area, leading the charge to stop TransGrid, he was reported in the local newspaper as saying:

The Metgasco find shows that TransGrid has failed to conduct a rigorous analysis of the need for the Lismore-Bonshaw high voltage powerline. The potential for local gas generation should be factored into any planning for the Far North Coast's energy strategy.

The report goes on to say:

TransGrid's planning dismissed any role for gas, renewable energy or demand management as a solution to the region's future electricity needs.

Mr Jamie Parker: Who said that?

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Dr John Kaye said that. Later, when he was speaking in the House about electricity generation, he said:

Coal must be replaced by renewable and low-emission options, such as wind and solar energy as well as high-efficiency gas generation, and the distribution networks need to be redesigned to facilitate more efficient embedded generation options and incorporate smart load control systems.

He went on to say:

International best practice is in favour of high-efficiency gas-fired tri-generation systems that exploit the waste heat from the generation process to both heat and cool water.

That is just one extract from *Hansard*. Another *Hansard* extract shows that Dr John Kaye asked a question of the then Minister for Energy, the Hon. John Robertson. He said:

My question is directed to the Minister for Energy. Has the Minister received a letter from the Premier requesting that he "develop a comprehensive energy policy with a strong emphasis on clean energy"? Can the Minister confirm that either or both of the new baseload power generator proposals at Mount Piper and Bayswater B are now to be restricted to be gas-fired only and not coal?

Guess what the Hon. John Robertson said? I will cut to the chase, given the time constraints. He said:

What I will say is that gas is obviously a more competitive source of fuel for a prospective power station due to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme—which is another reason why the Government supports it.

What is the position of those opposite?

[*Interruption*]

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! I direct the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove from the public gallery the gentleman who was interjecting. I remind visitors in the gallery of my earlier warning.

[The person interjecting was removed by the Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Let us look at mining under the former State Labor Government. To get a clearer understanding of Labor's position on coal seam gas, one has only to look at the New South Wales Trade and Investment Resources and Energy website. More than 50 petroleum exploration licences were issued by the former State Labor Government. Sixteen of those licences were issued when the Federal member for Page, Janelle Saffin, was a member of the New South Wales upper House. Three of the licences are within her electorate of Page, and she promotes this petition. She helped to create the problem and now she has jumped on the anti-coal seam gas bandwagon as part of her Federal election campaign. That is what this is all about.

At the same time as she is opposing coal seam gas in New South Wales, her Federal environment Minister, Tony Burke, approved a coal seam gas mine at Gloucester. This is at a time that Janelle Saffin is jumping up and down protesting. While she was opposing coal seam gas, the then Federal Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, released the Federal Government's energy white paper saying, "All jurisdictions must work to remove impediments to the timely development of domestic gas supply." While the Federal member for Page was opposing coal seam gas mining, her State Labor colleagues—colleagues she sat with in this Parliament, former mining Ministers Obeid and MacDonald—were starring daily in Underbelly 4 at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. There is a good chance there will be a sequel, Underbelly 5. That is how Labor and The Greens work. *[Time expired.]*

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.45 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I congratulate the residents of the northern rivers region on bringing this very important matter to the attention of the House. I know it is a matter of considerable effort to collect a petition of this size. It is the voice of the people that forces governments and oppositions to make proper, realistic assessments of decisions that have been made. The community's voice was heard by the O'Farrell Government when it made its decision recently in relation to coal seam gas and it was the voice of the people in March 2011 that caused the Labor Party to change its position. The Leader of the Opposition made it very clear when he said:

... we got coal seam gas wrong and it is time to set things right.

The Leader of the Opposition went on to say:

As leader, I am drawing a line in the sand and I do so again today. That is why I have personally directed Labor to change its position on coal seam gas exploration. Labor's new policy can be expressed very simply—it's farmers and local communities first, coal seam gas second. It's food and water first, coal seam gas second. Labor is listening and Labor is changing ...

That is the position the Labor Party has put on the record through its leader, and I support it. As a common lawyer I say in relation to mining and mining licences that there is something fundamentally wrong with a system that allows a licence to private organisations to walk onto private property. Police are not allowed to do so. Officers of the State cannot do so without warrant and, only about 20 years ago the High Court, in *Plenty v Dillon*, reasserted that age-old policy that a man's house is his castle. I know the argument that the minerals are owned by the people of New South Wales. However, we need to resolve that conflict.

One of the reasons the public has lost faith in relation not only to coal seam gas mining but also to so many issues in New South Wales is that it has lost faith in the planning system and the integrity of the planning system. The white paper is no solution, part 3A is no solution, and the Labor Party failed what was once a very good Act in 1979. Consequently, I say to members of the House that things are changing because of the work of the residents of the northern rivers region.

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore—The Deputy-Speaker) [4.48 p.m.]: This is a very emotional subject. I recognise some of the people in the gallery who are from my electorate. I thank them for travelling all the way to Sydney. Since coming to government we have had the job of trying to bring this industry under control. For 16 years those on the other side of the House took the money for the licences and ran. They have now changed their story. The O'Farrell Government has been left with the job of cleaning up. For the information of those in the gallery who may not know, I am the member for Lismore. A lot of these contentious issues affect my electorate and that of the member for Clarence. I have never had one farmer or landowner who has exploratory wells on their property come through my door and say, "Get them off my property." I stand to be corrected, and perhaps the Minister can confirm this, but I doubt whether one person in New South Wales who has exploratory wells on their property wants them removed.

I have always maintained that we need to protect agricultural land, the environment and the community. It is all very well for the member for Bankstown to criticise but she has never come to the North Coast to take a look. The member for Balmain tabled this petition but he omitted one group that has consistently called my office: the Knitting Nannas Against Gas. The Government is fully aware of the coal seam gas issues we have in this State and its proposed policies have not been finalised. We are continuing to work on the issues. We have listened to the communities that have raised their concerns with the individual members around the State. These policies are being introduced to try to control the industry so that it can work in conjunction with the community and landowners. Indeed, the Government will continue to work on this issue, unlike those on the other side.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER (Terrigal—Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast) [4.51 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a contribution to debate.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The Minister is seeking leave. Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: If one member objects leave is not granted. Let the record show that the member for Sydney objected.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The people seated in the public gallery have travelled a long way to hear this debate today. I will ask the question once more: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER (Terrigal—Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast) [4.52 p.m.], by leave: I have been the Minister for Resources and Energy for 2½ years. In that time I have received only one question on coal seam gas from the member for Balmain. I have received zero questions from the member for Heffron, who glories in the title of shadow Minister for Energy. When in government, the New South Wales Labor Party granted 44 exploration licences, covering 30 per cent of New South Wales. The Coalition Government has not granted a single exploration licence. In the nine months that John Robertson was Minister for Energy eight licences were granted or renewed. The Labor Party granted licences over metropolitan Sydney, urbanised areas, without a single environmental, water or land requirement. Which party gave its preferences to the New South Wales Labor Party to get elected in 2003? Which party gave its preferences to the New South Wales Labor Party to get elected in 1999? The Greens were responsible for putting Labor into power. How many questions about coal seam gas were asked by The Greens in the period from 2003 to 2011? The answer is none.

Mr Jamie Parker: We did not have a member in the lower House, so how could we ask a question?

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The Greens had members in the upper House. The hypocrisy of those who sit opposite on this matter is extraordinary. For those opposite to now pretend to be looking after the farmers or other interested parties in New South Wales is a total joke. The O'Farrell Government imposed a moratorium that lasted 18 months and it has also undertaken a major review. In September 2012 we had a list of 27 requirements. Those requirements were regarded then as the most stringent in Australia. On 19 February 2013 the Government expanded and augmented those requirements with even more stringent ones. The O'Farrell Government has not granted a single licence. It has also imposed the strictest regime and as a result Planet Gas, Metgasco and Dart Energy have withdrawn from New South Wales. In this State 1.1 million customers and 31,000 businesses are dependent upon gas. New South Wales produces only 5 per cent of its gas, so it is facing big challenges. The Government will respond to those challenges but it will also protect our farmland, water and environment.

Discussion concluded.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

SUTHERLAND SHIRE RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [4.56 p.m.]: I congratulate all organisers of and participants in the Sutherland Shire Relay for Life on 4 May 2013. The event had over 6,000 attendees and so far has raised around \$550,000. A record 2,127 people in 217 teams took part in the 24-hour relay, and the money raised will

assist cancer education and support projects. I commend the relay organising committee and everyone involved in supporting such an important cause. All money raised through Relay for Life makes a difference in helping to fund the Cancer Council's critical research, prevention, education and support services. In particular, I commend committee chairman Mr Rod Coy, a cancer survivor, who has been a longstanding member of the Relay for Life task force. Rod attended the United States Relay Summit in 2005 and was the representative for the central and southern Sydney region. I congratulate Rod on being awarded an Order of Australia medal in the Queen's birthday honours list for his services to the community through charitable organisations.

LEICHHARDT YOUTH COUNCIL

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.57 p.m.]: I ask the House to note that the Leichhardt Youth Council is an official advisory committee of Leichhardt Council and meets fortnightly, giving young people a forum for discussion and action about issues that affect them. I congratulate the council and its members on their work projects in the community, such as youth events and school holiday activities. I acknowledge in particular the dedication of the following members who volunteer their time and contribute experience and local knowledge to guide and inform Leichhardt Council: Ashley Douglas, Victoria Cheng, Jemma Hamilton, Julia Mascaro, Killian Hurley, Molly Nestor, Jimmy Sik, Christopher Smajlov, Fabian Webb, Katie Jones, Matthew Meharg, Olivia Waters, Tess Dunlop, and Tobi Inhelder.

JUNIOR GOLFER CALLUM BUTLER

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [4.58 p.m.]: I inform the House about a rising star of junior golf in country New South Wales and the Northern Tablelands, Armidale's Callum Butler. The 15-year-old was recently awarded the Jack Newton New England District Junior Golf Order of Merit after a very successful four rounds of competition in the past four months. Due to his commitment and hard work Callum's golf has improved markedly in the past year, under the guidance of Armidale professional Andrew Walkley. The young golfer is now busily preparing for the State junior championships in Sawtell next month. I congratulate Callum on his achievements to date and Andrew Walkley on his coaching. I wish Callum every success at the New South Wales championships and trust that he will be bringing the silverware back to Armidale.

BISHOP ANTOINE TARABAY ORDINATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.58 p.m.]: I am pleased to inform the House of the recent ordination of His Excellency Bishop Antoine Tarabay as the Maronite Bishop of Australia and His Excellency's farewell mass at St Charbel's. I was honoured to attend the installation ceremony of His Excellency Bishop Antoine Tarabay at St Maroun's Cathedral, which was also attended by members of this House and the other place. I was also pleased recently to attend His Excellency's farewell mass at St Charbel's Church. His Excellency will be greatly missed from St Charbel's parish; however, I understand that the parish agrees that this honour is well deserved and a reflection of the great St Charbel's parish. Since His Excellency's first appointment in Bankstown in 2002 he has become known as a well-respected leader within and out of the broad Maronite community. I sincerely congratulate His Excellency Bishop Antoine Tarabay on this appointment and thank retiring Bishop Ad Abikaram for his 12 years of tireless service as leader of Australia's Maronite Catholic community.

BINA JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATION

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.59 p.m.]: Recently, I visited Bina, the Jewish educational organisation in North Bondi, led by Rabbi Michoel Gourarie. Bina means "understanding", the uniquely human ability to absorb and internalise information. Bina provides a resource centre, a Jewish family library, an audio library, weekly classes and programs for all people, including those from across the Jewish community. I commend Rabbi Gourarie and his wife, Dina, for their enduring commitment to providing Jewish inspiration for people of all ages and backgrounds. I thank them sincerely for making me feel welcome during my visit.

AUTISM ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE CHARITY BALL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.00 p.m.]: On 25 May 2013 the Autism Advisory and Support Service hosted its fifth annual Foundation of Hope Charity Ball. The service seeks to empower children with autism and their families through knowledge and support. The Autism Advisory and Support Service is a

not-for-profit organisation established in 2007 by a group of local parents who have children with autism. Autism affects more than one in 100 Australians, whole families and, in turn, the community. Many parents of children with autism are on medication for depression. The Autism Advisory and Support Service committee members are Grace Fava, Fiona Zammit, Bassem Ghaznavi, Craig Kelly and June Young. The Foundation of Hope Charity Ball would not have been possible without the generous help from major sponsors and local businesses. I congratulate the committee on organising a wonderful event, in particular, Mrs Grace Fava on her drive and determination to help children with autism and their families.

BARRENJOEY HIGH SCHOOL BAND

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.01 p.m.]: Today I draw the attention of members to the importance of Barrenjoey High School's upcoming band tour to Indigenous schools and communities throughout the Northern Territory. This fantastic initiative, being organised by the school's band coordinator, Ray Trevisan, together with Fiona Davy, Andrew Laurich, Kate Cramer, John Stone and Jeff McMullen, will provide local students with an enlightening and eye-opening opportunity to experience the vibrancy of Australia's Indigenous communities firsthand. This tour is much more than just an opportunity for these students to share and perform their music with others in unique environments; it also will be a chance to gain a greater understanding of the importance of music to Indigenous communities and to develop a deeper appreciation of Australia's rich cultural history and diversity. I commend Barrenjoey High School for facilitating this truly wonderful opportunity. I strongly believe it is a positive and powerful concept for other schools to emulate. It is another example of the great work being undertaken and strong communities being forged in Pittwater's local schools. I wish students, parents and staff a happy, inspiring and safe trip.

LAMBTON-NEW LAMBTON LIONESS CLUB

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [5.02 p.m.]: We acknowledge Lambton-New Lambton Lioness Club's fantastic work. We are looking forward to the Hunter hosting the Special Olympic Asia Pacific Regional Games in December. Each person selected for the Games must raise \$3,000 and the Lioness Club has generously donated \$500 to Melissa Jarvis, a Hunter resident, so that she can compete. Such generosity is not unusual of the Lionesses of Newcastle. This is but one example of it.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENT

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.02 p.m.]: I inform members that Lyn Macinnis of Taree has been awarded an Order of Australia medal [OAM] in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. The citation for Lucy's Order of Australia medal reads "For services to the community of Taree." Lyn is best described as a naturally modest person who prefers to stay out of the limelight, so the recognition for receiving her Order of Australia medal is quite overwhelming. Lyn's community service includes 36 years with the Red Cross, more than 40 years with Meals on Wheels, Bushland Retirement Home, the Presbyterian Church and 45 years with the Taree Saleyard Canteen. Lyn's passion for volunteering began when she helped with her children's school canteen; she was still helping long after her children had left. Lyn has also been a Telecross volunteer, where she and her husband, Don, make regular calls to the elderly and housebound clients of the Red Cross. Lyn plans to continue volunteering for as long as she can.

MYALL CREEK MASSACRE COMMEMORATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.03 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of members the annual commemoration held on Sunday 9 June of the Myall Creek massacre of Aboriginal people in 1838. The annual gathering was held at the memorial site close to the place of the massacre near Bingara. The guest speaker this year was Grant Sarra, a well-known and experienced Aboriginal worker and activist. Others prominent in particular in organising the event included elder Uncle Lyall Munro, Roger Knox, Ivan Roberts, John Brown and Graeme Cordiner. The events of 1838 involving the massacre of Aboriginal people were typical of many similar events during the white colonisation of this land.

However, they were atypical in that they resulted in the prosecution and execution of a number of white perpetrators, although not those Europeans who got the actual benefit of ownership of land. Myall Creek has become the best known of the massacres on the frontier, perversely because whitefellas were killed subsequently. There was some discussion at the event of the concept of Myall Creek being developed nationally in the form of an apology for all the massacres. One would have thought that that would be a necessary preliminary to constitutional recognition of Aboriginal people. Those who claim that this represents a black armband view of history themselves are the victims in Henry Reynolds' great phrase of wearing a white blindfold.

ARLENE BLENCOWE WORLD BOXING TITLE HOLDER**PORT MACQUARIE LIQUOR ACCORD AWARDS**

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [5.04 p.m.]: I congratulate Arlene Blencowe on recently becoming the World Boxing Federation and Women's International Boxing Association World Titleholder. Arlene trains out of Port Macquarie's Allegiance Combat and Fitness centre. My congratulations also go to the team that helped to train and support Arlene, notably her trainer Jason Harris. Arlene won the two titles with a unanimous decision; she has an exciting future ahead in the sport. Arlene's victory is even more impressive given she had to take the fight at short notice, having five days to prepare for the light welterweight title fight. Arlene is looking to defend the titles within 90 days, and on behalf of the Port Macquarie community I wish her the best of luck with her first title defence.

I acknowledge also recipients of the local Liquor Accord awards, at the recently held second quarterly meeting. I congratulate Chairman Brian Codner, Secretary Corbi Wentzell, Vice Chair Brad Jones and Treasurer Max Gunsberger on being honoured at the event. The awards were presented by Sergeant John Lawrie, the Mid North Coast Licensing Coordinator, in recognition of their tireless commitment to helping prevent alcohol-related crime. The four liquor industry veterans have volunteered more than 10 years to the Hastings Liquor Consultative Committee, now known as the Liquor Accord. Given that this week is Drug Action Week, it is important to acknowledge community groups that promote the message of responsible consumption of alcohol. The Hastings Liquor Accord has been responsible for numerous initiatives to advance this cause.

SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN CHOIR

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [5.05 p.m.]: I recognise the fantastic work of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir, this year celebrating 22 years of entertaining local and international audiences. The choir welcomes all people, regardless of sexual identity or musical experience. It provides social support in a safe and inclusive environment, and the singing conveys powerful messages of equality and acceptance. The choir has more than 80 active singing members and has performed at a range of community events, toured New Zealand, Europe and North America, and made recordings. I had the pleasure of attending the choir's latest production at Sydney Town Hall, *Broadway Betty*. The choir was joined on stage by Simon Bourke and the Royal Australian Navy Band. Performances also included the Tip Top Tapping Lovelies, and singing older men and women newly trained by the Choir for Seniors Week. I am proud to be a member of the Cultural Fund Committee, which distributes funds raised to help the Gay and Lesbian Choir put on these productions. I congratulate the choir on its contributions to our community.

WORLD BLOOD BANK DAY**LES MCGAW ORANGE RSL SUB-BRANCH LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [5.06 p.m.]: I am pleased to inform members that Margaret Munk from Orange celebrated World Blood Bank Day on Friday 14 June by making her 101st blood donation. Margaret began donating blood after she required a transfusion in 1977. I join Margaret in urging the people of Orange to roll up their sleeves and help save a life. Nationally only about 3 per cent of people donate blood, but in Orange 3,500 blood donors make 8,200 donations each year, which is well above the national average. I congratulate Margaret on achieving a century of blood donations.

I recognise also Les McGaw, who recently was bestowed the honour of life membership by the Orange RSL sub-branch. Every week Mr McGaw is on duty at the RSL memorial hall opening up the museum to visitors and school groups. He also refers inquiries from veterans and their families about services that are available. Mr McGaw served in the Thirteenth Battalion for five years after entering the Australia's armed forces as a national serviceman in 1953. Mr McGaw makes an excellent contribution to Anzac Day every year and helps ensure that the memory of our veterans who served Australia is honoured.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENT

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.07 p.m.]: I congratulate Mr Les Milne, Fairfield SES Controller, on his ongoing hard work and support to our communities whilst serving the State Emergency Service for the past 27 years and on being commander of the Fairfield State Emergency Service Unit for the past 10 years. I congratulate Mr Milne also on receiving an Emergency Services Medal for NSW in the Queen's Birthday

Honours List. The State Emergency Service provides an invaluable service to our local communities all across the country. I commend the men and women volunteers of the State Emergency Service who dedicate their time putting back into our communities and responding when trouble strikes and we need them the most.

ALBURY ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENT

ALBURY ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.08 p.m.]: I congratulate Dr Peter Vine, head of campus at the University of New South Wales Rural Clinical School in Albury, who received an Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his service to medicine and education. Having worked with Dr Vine over the past 13 years, I know of his absolute dedication to his students and to medicine in regional areas. He is a most worthy recipient of this honour. Congratulations to Henty Public School also on receiving a Highly Commendable award for education in the 2013 Murrumbidgee Regional Landcare Awards. Best wishes go to Julia Jarick of Glenellen, who retired after 18 years service as Girls' Boarding House mother at St Paul's College, Walla Walla. We wish you all the best in your retirement, Julia. Peter Welsh has been carrying the RSL flag at Brocklesby and Howlong each Anzac Day since 1988. Now aged 89, Peter has decided to retire and we wish him all the best. I congratulate Albury student, Kia Belsher, who was awarded Trainee of the Year at the 2013 Riverina New South Wales Training Awards run by the Department of Education and Communities.

MOUNT DRUITT ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [5.09 p.m.]: I ask the House to acknowledge that in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List an Order of Australia medal was awarded to a couple who had served the Mount Druitt electorate over many years. They are Gabrielle and Alan Moran. I have known this couple nearly all of the 30 years that I have been the local member. Briefly, among many other roles played over so many years, Alan was President of the Mount Druitt Lions Club and twice served as secretary and in other positions over that period. Mrs Moran has been acknowledged for her role as the Chairman of the St Marys Area Community Development Project and a supporter of creative writing and adult literacy, especially as a volunteer and member of the St Marys Creative Writing Group. On behalf of the whole community, we say thank you and well done to Alan and Gabrielle Moran, OAM.

NORTH FACE 100 WINNER BETH CARDELLI

PCYC YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR NICHOLAS BEPPER

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [5.10 p.m.]: I congratulate Beth Cardelli on winning for the third time the North Face 100 ultra-distance running race in the Blue Mountains. Not only did Beth take out the race, but she bettered her own race record by more than 18 minutes from the previous year, in a time of 11 hours, 1 minute and 8 seconds. Despite this amazing effort, she was disappointed that she had not become the first woman to break the 11-hour barrier. In 2007 Beth joined the Berowra Bush Runners, simply because she wanted to meet new people, initially struggling to complete the 10-kilometre race. It was that group that fostered her love of running. Beth's training involves 50-kilometre training sessions in the Blue Mountains every second weekend leading up to the race. Beth will be in Italy in June to compete in the 118-kilometre Lavaredo Ultra Trial in the Dolomites. I wish her every success in her endeavours. I also congratulate Nicholas Bepper on being awarded the Police Citizens Youth Clubs [PCYC] State Young Person of the Year 2013. Nicholas, a year 12 student at Asquith Boys High School, has been involved in the Police Citizens Youth Clubs for more than four years and is an enthusiastic volunteer and makes an enormous contribution to our community.

Community recognition statements concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

STATE BUDGET AND WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.11 p.m.]: I am proud to speak today on this year's budget and the benefits it will bring to the Wollondilly community. The past two years have required tough decisions from the Liberal-Nationals Government. When elected in 2011 we were aware of challenges that needed to be faced. However we also knew that we were elected by the people of New South Wales in the hope that we would do

just that—face the challenges that the former Labor Government chose to ignore. Now, after two years, the tough decisions have been made; and, as the Treasurer has pointed out, the benefits of these tough decisions are clearly seen. The last two budgets allowed the Government to get the State's finance back on track so that we could start delivering the most important resources and facilities for the people of this great State.

The Treasurer has stated that the themes of this budget are jobs, housing and infrastructure. After two years of representing the people of Wollondilly in this place, I am keenly aware that those are the three key areas of government responsibility that are particularly important to the people of Wollondilly. Wollondilly is made up of a diverse array of townships and villages, each having numerous small businesses at their core. These small businesses of Wollondilly are an integral source of job opportunities for residents across the area. This budget supports local business by increasing the payroll tax threshold to \$750,000. I have received many comments from local business men and women who are very excited that the Treasurer and the Government are introducing that reform.

Our region has experienced an expanding population, as many families are drawn to our townships for the quality of life that is on offer there. I have seen the impact on families across Wollondilly as housing supply has not met the demands of those seeking to establish themselves there, thus resulting in high rents and soaring home prices. This budget aims to increase housing supply, and that will help reduce the mortgage and rental burdens that currently sit on the shoulders of so many. I am proud to be part of this Government, which has identified the stress that a housing shortage places on so much of our population and that is stepping up to address this issue through this budget. I was particularly pleased to see on the front page of this morning's *Daily Telegraph* that the Government is looking at the Wilton Junction proposal, which if approved will result in 12,000 new homes and 11,000 new jobs. That is just an indication of what this reformist Government is doing.

I also commend the Liberal-Nationals Government for being able to restore the finances of this great State to a condition that will enable the Government to significantly address the infrastructure backlog that plagued New South Wales during the 16 years of Labor neglect. As part of this budget, the residents of Wollondilly, alongside our regional neighbours, will soon be able to benefit from increased public transport services as a result of the allocation of \$353 million to the South West Rail Link development. It was great to be there a few months ago with the Premier, the Minister for Transport and my fellow colleagues in the Macarthur region the member for Campbelltown and the member for Camden, to see how much work has gone into that development and how much track has been laid. The work is almost completed.

An amount of \$49.8 million has been dedicated also to the redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital. This will ensure it can cater for the growing needs of its surrounding population. This is part of more than \$100 million of budgetary funding for Wollondilly featured in this year's budget. Some of the significant funding achievements include \$1.2 million towards building a new fire station at Picton, the total cost of which will be \$2.35 million—a fire station that the community has been crying out for year after year because Labor failed to deliver. This Government has found the money and will get on with building that fire station.

Another significant achievement is \$2.1 million for the Priority Sewerage Program at Appin—a project introduced under Labor; but it was underfunded and could not be delivered. We have got on with the job, and we have now delivered on that with a 95 per cent take-up rate by residents of Appin. Further significant achievements are \$35.9 million for the sewerage program at Bargo; \$29.2 million for the sewerage program at Buxton; \$14.4 million for the sewerage program at Douglas Park; and \$12.3 million for the sewerage program at Wilton—again, for 16 years Labor promised sewerage connections for those towns, which had been suffering high pump-out fees. Labor failed to deliver; we have got on with the job and we have delivered.

Another important announcement for Wollondilly is \$21.3 million for the Maldon to Dombarton freight line, which will involve detailed engineering, operational and environmental investigations and stakeholder consultations. This was a fantastic announcement for Wollondilly. Approximately \$7 million is allocated for further widening of Narellan Road between Camden Valley Way and Blaxland Road; \$255,000 for further work on the Dharawal National Park entrance near Appin; \$2 million for upgrades to our local dams and water planning in Wollondilly; \$200,000 in funding for progress planning for an upgrade of the Hume Motorway and Picton Road interchange—for which the community has been crying out for such a long time. Again, this Government is getting on with the job.

An allocation of \$4.7 million is made to fund an upgrade of State roads in Wollondilly; \$1.2 million is allocated for pavement rebuilding of the Hume Highway; \$1 million for repair work to the bridge over the Nepean River on the Hume Highway at Pheasants Nest; \$400,000 for surface repairs on Appin Road;

\$3.2 million of grants to councils to repair and upgrade regional roads in Wollondilly—how thankful those councils are for this fantastic news; \$393,000 to install a new one-lane roundabout in Bargo; \$295,000 to install non-skid pavement in Belimba Park on Burragorang Road; \$63,000 in joint funding with councils for road safety officers; and \$60,000 to fund school crossing supervisors.

Other State and regional funding that will benefit the Wollondilly region includes \$353 million toward the development of the South West Rail Link; \$4.5 million to upgrade the Northern Road; \$13.5 million toward Western Sydney Tourism and Arts, including the Harness Racing Inter Dominion Championship at Menangle Park; \$19 million in funding the continued development of the PlantBank project at the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens; \$117 million in funding toward the Fixing the Trains program; and \$1.3 million to boost the Community Transport Program. This funding proves the O'Farrell Government is serious about Wollondilly and is focused on responsible government. We have made the tough decisions, reduced our debt burden and have injected funds into front-line services and infrastructure—just as we said we would. I commend the budget to the House.

HMAS WAGGA HOME PORT REUNION

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [5.17 p.m.]: On Wednesday 24 April I had the great honour to join former members at the Home Port Reunion of HMAS *Wagga*. Members will recall that I have raised this issue of HMAS *Wagga* in this House before. Our community and indeed former members of HMAS *Wagga* have campaigned, and continue to campaign, for a new ship to be named in honour of what was a tremendous little ship and the service it gave to our country. The Home Port Reunion began on 24 April with a mayoral reception, with a dinner at the Wagga Wagga RSL Club. I joined many members who had travelled from across the country to be at the reunion. It was called "The Last Hurrah" because many of the members are much older now, and getting them together is becoming more difficult.

In the past two years since the last reunion we have sadly lost a number of members who were warmly regarded by our community. A great legacy of the late Neville "Lofty" Rackemann is a book called *A Wandering Wake*. It was researched by Lofty and published by the HMAS Wagga Association in 2007 to commemorate her seven commissions. The work is a great tribute to a gallant little ship and the many crew members who served in her during times of war and peace. HMAS *Wagga* was one of 60 Bathurst class ships built in eight shipyards around Australia, 56 of which were commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy during World War II. They were officially designated as Australian minesweepers, but they became known as the Royal Australian Navy "maids of all work" and in later commissions "work horses of the fleet", for they were deployed in a multitude of tasks including convey escort, anti-submarine patrol, search and rescue, evacuation and shore bombardment.

Each ship was named after an inland township or coastal sea port. To carry out their missions each ship had adequate staying power to allow them to patrol Australia's long coastline and around the islands of New Guinea. At the conclusion of the war, HMAS *Wagga* sailed for Hong Kong to carry out anti-piracy patrols and mine sweeping duty. She returned home to Australia on 7 November 1945. This was great timing by the naval board as it was the day after Rainbird won the Melbourne Cup from Silver Link and Leonard in the time of three minutes 24.2 seconds. HMAS *Wagga* was decommissioned into reserve on 28 November 1945 and recommissioned on 12 December 1951 as a result of the United Nations campaign against North Korean aggression. She was used as a training ship for reservists and national service trainees. Over the next 11 years she underwent several refits and modernisations and during her service she was commissioned on a total number of seven occasions.

She was decommissioned for the last time on Friday 28 October 1960. One of 56 Australian minesweepers commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy she was the last serving Australian Corvette and sailed the longest. Her war-time service was recognised with battle honours: Pacific 1943-45 and New Guinea 1943-44. That little ship has a very proud history. I wrote to the new president of the association, Mr Grassy McGrath, first, to thank him for his hospitality and, second, to extend an invitation to join the former members at the home reunion. I assured him that we will continue to campaign for a new ship at every opportunity. To that end I have sent the naval historian memorabilia and media articles to be added to the ever-growing submission.

Members should be aware that the association continues to enjoy the support and affection of the city of Wagga Wagga and its elected representatives. I wondered whether the association would allow individuals to become associated with HMAS *Wagga* by membership. This would assist with funds and membership numbers,

and will ensure that the association lives on supported not only by family members but also by the wider community, including people like me, who would be more than willing to pay a membership fee to help cover costs and ensure the campaign continues to have the Federal Government—whether this Government or the next—name a ship HMAS *Wagga* in honour of the longest serving Corvette in Australia's history: A proud little ship that deserves the honour.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.22 p.m.]: I inform the House of an amazing program named iCareer, which has been operating within my local area. iCareer is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations through the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool and has been doing an amazing job to help curb the rising tide of youth unemployment. iCareer focuses on delivering a comprehensive career plan for our disadvantaged youth whilst moulding them into focused, engaged and skilled individuals who are trained and able to tackle the grand challenges in life such as their working life and a career.

I have had the opportunity to meet with Ms Paula Majstrovic and her class of motivated young individuals. I must say it was great to see so many inspired and engaged prospective young career men and women working so diligently to reach their goal and to improve themselves. The transformations some students go through are enormous. They must be commended, for it is also the new mindset they are developing, alongside the skills they are acquiring through the iCareer program that will help to shape them into the persons they will become tomorrow. iCareer is partnered with both Student Employment Options and the Lighthouse Project Australia which run several programs throughout the Fairfield and Mount Druitt-Blacktown local government areas. There are 144 young adults registered with the program.

Of the 144 young individuals 91 of them have commenced or are in the process of being placed into employment, 42 have commenced or are in the process of being placed into further education or training, six participants have been referred to Job Services Australia or Disability Employment Services, and only five decided to drop out. The figures speak for themselves; this program is a great success. The only thing that speaks louder than the figures is having the privilege to see this program for oneself and to witness how far the students have come. It is with a heavy heart that I see so many young individuals in such disadvantageous situations that they are trying to pull themselves out of, that I hear of their hardships and the adversity they have had to overcome.

It makes me wonder where these fine young adults may have ended up if not for the support and assistance of such a great program and coordinators to help guide, motivate, teach and instil confidence into them every step of the way. I was fortunate to attend the graduation ceremony in my local area. It was truly amazing to have a chat with a few of the students and to hear their stories, the reason they are there, what they have gained from this program and their renewed outlook on life. One of the highlights of the graduation ceremony was when the students would come up to receive their award and stand next to the projector which displayed a photograph of them taken on the day they started.

The "before" photograph more often than not painted a very vivid picture of the mindset held by these young adults prior to entering the iCareer program. A number of them had low self-esteem, confidence issues and a great deal of trouble presenting themselves professionally. But after successfully completing the iCareer program these young men and women looked amazing, inspired, full of confidence, extremely well presented and willing to get in and give it a go. They truly had gone from one extreme to the other and they were proud of it. I would just like to give a special thanks to the students on the day for inviting me. I especially thank Paula and Queenie for their ongoing support for the students in this program. They have made remarkable and lasting changes to so many young people's lives.

UNLAWFUL ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISM

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [5.27 p.m.]: Recently hidden cameras were uncovered at a piggery in Young shire in the Burrinjuck electorate that is owned and operated by Michael and Edwina Beveridge. Shortly after the incident I received correspondence from Edwina Beveridge in which she expressed her concern and distress at being targeted by so-called animal rights activists. Their property suffered at least three separate trespass incidents in April and May. In her correspondence, Mrs Beveridge said:

About a month ago we discovered hidden cameras in our piggery, these have been placed there by animal activists.

The Young police have the names and details of the offenders, but they have told me they do not have enough evidence to prosecute them.

These people are not about animal welfare; they have broken our quarantine rules, put our whole herd at risk of disease and unsettled our pigs in their midnight visits. It has upset my family and our staff.

These people need to be stopped, there needs to be reasonable punishment for them breaking into our sheds, illegally filming our pigs and staff.

I am also aware of recent similar incidents in two, possibly three other piggeries within the Young and Blakney Creek areas. We live in a democracy and because of this we enjoy freedoms that many people across the world can only dream of. One of the fundamental tenets of our democratic society is a respect for and adherence to laws that have developed throughout generations within our community. One of these laws is respect for other people's property. Our democratic system of government allows us immense freedom to express our views. In my capacity as the member for Burrinjuck I have received correspondence from one of my constituents who strongly advocates the complete dismantling of the livestock industry in Australia and the legislated imposition of a vegan lifestyle on every person. I do not share his views, but I respect his right to hold and advocate these opinions. There is one line which everyone should and must respect: adherence to the laws of the land. Without respect for, and adherence to, that law we would have anarchy.

Animal Liberation NSW has confirmed that its members were responsible for this incident. Its Facebook page makes interesting reading. After this incident hit the media, Edwina Beveridge was vilified on the Animal Liberation NSW Facebook page because she was brave enough to publicly complain about being the victim of a criminal act. It is interesting to speculate how the people who heaped abuse on Mrs Beveridge would feel if they were the target of criminal trespass because of the radical vegan views that they hold and espouse. Do they advocate respect for the law only when it does not interfere with their own beliefs? That is fanaticism and it is the start of a very slippery slope towards criminality and terrorism.

In 2005 the Department of Homeland Security in the United States included the Animal Liberation Front in a planning document that listed a number of domestic terrorist threats. I have been told that a vehicle left behind by the criminals who trespassed on the Beveridge's property contained a membership card for Animals Australia. That is an organisation that calls itself a charity and benefits from Australian Tax Office status as a charitable organisation, but I am very concerned that I can find no reference to Animals Australia expressing any concern about this criminal activity by at least one of its members.

I must make the point that the use of the term "activist" is nothing more than an attempt to seek legitimacy for people who have no respect for other people's rights or property, the law, or the safety and welfare of the animals on whose behalf they claim to be acting. Staff at the Beveridge piggery have confirmed that the intrusion by the animal rights criminals resulted in the death of quite a number of young animals—I think the number was around 30 piglets—and the potential compromise of the farm's biosecurity measures is unforgivable. The commentary on video footage of another piggery near Young placed on the Animal Liberation NSW Facebook page on 13 June states:

Although the footage is not "graphic", the sound of pigs screaming may be disturbing.

Industry experts say that the animals would not be "screaming" unless they had been provoked in some fashion. This again raises grave concerns about the ends-justifies-the-means attitude of these animal rights criminals. They are willing to break the law, trespass on other people's properties, run the risk of spreading animal disease by breaking biosecurity protocols, cause needless death to young animals as collateral damage, and stage manage their own videos by provoking fear in animals to get good footage. That is what the vision is out there of so many of our farmers in respect of this case. People are very worried about future incidences occurring on their properties.

I will soon be writing to the Attorney General in relation to this matter in my capacity as the member for Burrinjuck, but it is very clearly past time that we send a clear message to all those who would place themselves above the law that their actions will not be tolerated. Farmers cannot continue to operate their businesses in this way. We have some of the strictest biosecurity laws in the land and I know that farmers such as the Beveridges place such enormous stock in those biosecurity measures. If it turns out to be true that this organisation has trespassed—it is still under investigation by the police and I totally respect that—it could have been on a different farm the day before and it could possibly have spread disease to a piggery. It is a very important matter.

AIRDS HIGH SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [5.32 p.m.]: "Strive to achieve" is the motto of Airds High School, deep in the opal of the Macarthur. Yesterday I was proud to host at Parliament House a delegation of

30 students—wonderfully presented in their school blazers—and their principal Max Foord, together with Anita Bentley and Peta Demery from Aussie Home Loans. Aussie Home Loans has an amazing mentoring program with Airds High School. The purpose of this mentoring program is to provide inspiration, motivation and support so that all students realise their potential. It enables students to broaden their horizons and consider vocations that they may not otherwise have considered.

The program was initiated by the previous Aussie Home Loans chief executive officer, Stephen Porges, and has a continuing strong advocate in the current chief executive officer, Mr Ian Corfield. Aussie Home Loans' involvement with Airds High School is about providing students at the school with every opportunity to achieve their dreams. Aussie Home Loans believes that every accomplishment in life, no matter how large or small, starts with a dream and the active decision to step up and follow that dream. During their visit to Parliament House the students spent some time talking to me, as their local member. But if that was not enough, we also spent some time with the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, the Minister for Family and Community Services, Ms Pru Goward, the Minister for Transport, Ms Gladys Berejiklian, and the Attorney General, Mr Greg Smith, SC.

They each raised various issues with the students relating to the importance of vision and education. In fact, our Premier told the students that if he had known when he was young what he was going to be doing in life, he would have studied harder at school. The Minister for Transport spoke about the importance of values and also discussed her migrant history, which is something we all share because everyone in this Chamber has a family history of migrants coming to Australia for a better life for themselves and their children and grandchildren. Minister Goward spoke to the students about the importance of self-belief and the Attorney General spoke of the importance of service and determination. A group photo was taken of the students with the Premier and the Ministers. We then introduced them to question time—the students were able to see Parliament in action.

The success of this mentoring program can be readily demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the number of students planning diverse and exciting futures way past the end of their year 12 studies. What was but a distant hope for some of those students has now become a reality—all achieved by a wonderful program working with the school that focuses on concern, advice, mentoring and broadening horizons. Perhaps one of the best examples was a presentation by Israel Folau, who visited Airds High School and spoke with the assembled students. He told them of his dream as a young fellow. At the age of 15 he wrote down on paper his goal of wanting to play first grade rugby league by the time he was 17. Israel told the students that his brothers laughed at him. They did not think he could do it. He told the students about the importance of goals and self-belief, the importance of sticking to it and working hard to achieve those goals.

There is probably no greater thing that we can do than build hope, values and determination in our youth, so that they can go on to achieve their goals. I told the students that they were all unique—there is no-one like them in the world, no-one that had their particular mix of skills and talents, no-one called to their vocation in life—and how important it is not only for them but also for their families and the community that they follow their dreams. I commend the program to the House.

TRIBUTE TO JACOB SUTHERN

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro) [5.37 p.m.]: Valour often requires a little more than the common sense of an eight-year-old child. When one thinks of bravery and heroes, who does one think of—a firefighter or a police officer, a man or woman with extra powers, a cape and a mask? Well, the fact is that heroes come in all shapes and sizes. They can be men or women, rich or poor, old or young. In fact some of the most gallant acts in the world have been accomplished by kids. In honour of such gutsy kids everywhere, from those who risk their lives with immense acts to those who quietly perform selfless, compassionate deeds every day of their lives, this evening I place on the record enshrined in the *Hansard* libraries of Parliament the story of a young individual illustrative of courage, determination and generosity: local Cooma boy, Jacob Suthern.

Jacob's story starts last year, when he decided to swim 100 metres for \$100 in Cooma's YMCA swimathon raising money for his best friend's sister, Alyssa, who has autism. His efforts touched the hearts of the community, with Jacob raising more than \$1,400, pushing his little body to the limits to reach his swimming goal. In fact, this little champion, determined to raise as much money as he could—especially with a financial incentive from his father, Scott—used a kickboard to clock up more laps, making a grand total of 24 laps. A totally exhausted Jacob could not believe his achievement.

The money he raised helped his friend's sister, Alyssa, receive swimming lessons and this year Alyssa swam in a team with her sister called Team Dolphin, which also raised over \$672, all inspired by Jacob. As a result of Jacob's efforts he became the YMCA Swimathon's second highest fundraiser in New South Wales and the seventh highest fundraiser in Australia in 2012, which led to Jacob being appointed YMCA Swimathon Ambassador for 2013. The story does not stop there. When he heard that the YMCA Swimathon would be held again this year, Jacob put his hand up high, ready for the challenge. Fellow students at Cooma Public School got behind him, including the school principal.

There are many fun things that a young boy could be doing during the Christmas holiday, but this eight-year-old, who thought only of the needs of others, spent the holidays visiting local businesses in town to raise money for the event. He wanted to do this on his own, so his mother, Tanya Beech, would sit in the car watching him go in and out of businesses, handing them a letter and his little poster to pop in the shop window. Jacob sold his toys for donations and attended the Cooma markets selling lollies. He also went to the farm and bagged sheep manure from under the shearing shed for more donations.

His champion effort paid dividends; Jacob was a stand-out performer on the day, swimming a huge 2.5 kilometres or 100 laps and now has raised a massive \$5,163.55. Jacob is comfortably sitting in first place as the national highest fundraiser for 2013—not bad for a young boy who never liked swimming in the beginning. Actually his mum told me that when he was younger, he used to cry every time he was in the pool. I am so glad he persevered to become the little champ that he is today. The community could not be more proud of Jacob. All the money from his mighty swim will help expand the YMCA's Learn to Swim program for people with a disability. Jacob's school has a special needs unit, which makes this cause especially important for him. Nationwide more than \$123,000 was raised through the YMCA Swimathon; close to 1,000 participants in 25 pools across New South Wales took part, all of which were inspired by Jacob and his community. There is an old saying:

Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man.

I think it is pretty clear already what sort of man Jacob Suthern will turn out to be. In the stories I have heard about Jacob, his generosity is just in his DNA. Jacob is a very kind-hearted young man and at school, if he sees someone without a friend to play, little Jacob will play with them for the day. In fact, earlier this year Jacob told his mum, Tanya, that he had a new friend, a boy in year 6. He told her that he had carried his lunchbox for him because he looked sad. With that, the young boy acknowledged what Jacob had done and turned to Jacob and said:

Thank you, Jacob, for being a nice friend. You have made my school life so much better. I haven't had a friend like you in the five years that I have been here. Everyone is always mean to me.

Jacob's act of kindness helped a young boy who was doing it tough. Jacob's family connections stem back to some of the early pioneers of the Snowy Mountains, with the family name of Pendergast deeply ingrained in our region. I am sure those pioneers would be proud that many generations of their pioneering spirit continues through Jacob. Jacob is the complete all-rounder. He is great at sport, earning the Young Sportsperson of the Year award at our local Australia Day celebrations. He is great at his school work, achieving repetitive academic achievement awards and is just a kind and caring young man. What a champ, what a hero, what a fantastic ambassador for country kids. His actions will embed themselves into the hearts of the men and women, boys and girls of my community and his story of courage, inspiration and generosity will encourage others. Mark Twain once said:

Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Thank you, Jacob.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.42 p.m.]: I am sure I speak on behalf of all members of the New South Wales Parliament when I commend the member for Monaro for bringing Jacob Suthern to the attention of the House, a young man who has performed an enormous feat and shown great dedication and commitment to others less fortunate. It is an extremely commendable attitude in such a young man. Jacob is a wonderful role model for the youth of this country and I thank the member for Monaro for bringing him to the attention of the House. We all commend this young man.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Well done, Jacob.

SOCCEROOS FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFICATION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.43 p.m.]: On 16 November 2005 in front of a sell-out crowd at Stadium Australia John Aloisi's penalty kick from the spot put the Socceroos into the 2006 FIFA World Cup. The longest hoodoo in Australian sports history had been broken. The crowd went into absolute hysteria after Aloisi's kick. Australians from all backgrounds were celebrating a special moment in our proud sporting history. As the celebrations took place that night a banner blowing in the wind summed it up: "I told you so." These are the emblematic words from the late great Johnny Warren. Johnny's presence was certainly felt at Stadium Australia that night and has continued to be felt. As John Aloisi ran the length of the field to celebrate, an emotional Craig Foster, amidst all the hype, made reference to Johnny Warren on the television broadcast.

At this year's A-League Grand Final between the Western Sydney Wanderers and the Central Coast Mariners a banner blowing in the breeze in the red and black bloc [RBB] section displayed those now prophetic words—"I told you so." Football has come back to its roots in western Sydney. Johnny always had a special place in his heart for the western suburbs of Sydney. As a kid, I recall watching Johnny Warren on SBS television as Captain Socceroo. Johnny was the face of many FIFA World Cup broadcasts alongside one of his closest friends, Mr Les Murray.

Johnny never saw the kick-off the A-League. He sadly battled cancer for two years before his passing. The prosperity of football in this country is largely due to Johnny's never-ending fight to overcome discrimination against the sport. Johnny was the ambassador for football both during and long after his retirement from the game. Johnny was everyone's mate. Whether it was Lambert Park, Melita Stadium and of course his beloved St George Stadium, Johnny crossed the ethnic divide to treat all as equals. All nationalities claimed Johnny as one of their own. There was a common bond that existed between all the ethnic groups who knew Johnny in the fight against discrimination towards the code.

The story of football in this country goes way back to early settlement and continues to this present day. Football in the early years gave migrant communities the chance to keep fit by playing football and socialise after a week's worth of hard work. Football clubs provided a safe place and haven from the discrimination that existed against ethnic groups. Football encouraged women to participate long before the term "women's lib" was fashionable. Johnny experienced the discrimination that existed towards ethnic groups himself. It was the adversity that Johnny faced that fuelled his determination to put football on the map in this country. Hence Johnny's autobiography titled, *Sheilas, Wogs and Poofers*.

I recall talking to Johnny when he visited Marconi Stadium during my 10-year stretch as the weekend ground announcer. His story was fascinating to listen to, especially when he discussed how, as an Anglo-Saxon child, he was ridiculed and bullied because he played "wog ball" as he put it. Johnny worked so hard to eliminate the "sheilas, wogs and poofers" mentality. If one thinks about what happened this year in western Sydney with the success of the Wanderers one would think that the "sheilas, wogs and poofers" mentality is dead and buried. All fans of the Western Sydney Wanderers and the football community as a whole regard as totally offensive the recent remarks by Kevin Sheedy, who said:

We don't have the recruiting officer called the immigration department recruiting fans for the Western Sydney Wanderers. We don't have that on our side.

One would expect that a four-time premiership winning coach would not stoop so low as to make such offensive comments regarding fans of a rival code. As a proud foundation member of the Western Sydney Wanderers I will continue to support the club and encourage more people to share the magic that exists. Also as the Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Friendship Group of the Wanderers, I will work with my colleagues from all political parties to empower people to respect and value cultural diversity that makes football the world game.

MAWANG GAWAY ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [5.48 p.m.]: Mawang Gaway is an Aboriginal community consultative group established in Wagga Wagga to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are being represented across the community. The group is hosted by local Wiradjuri elder Aunty Isabel Reid. Just recently I had the great honour of attending the official handing over of the new code of conduct and I was delighted to be asked to receive the first copy from Aunty Isabel. While we have a welcome to country, a traditional welcome to country is a significant Aboriginal protocol and is customary law. In traditional Aboriginal societies different clans would seek permission to enter and travel through other clans' lands and

sometimes trade and participate in significant sacred ceremonies with neighbouring language groups. In Wagga Wagga the traditional custodians are the Wiradjuri people. Every Aboriginal community has the right to determine for itself what protocols it wishes to follow.

What does a welcome to country have in it? Custodial elders acknowledge elders past and present and pay respect to the traditional owners and the land on which they are meeting. They may also introduce cultural activities such as didgeridoo players or a smoking ceremony. What about a welcome to country in language? A welcome to country in language carried out by a younger member of the Aboriginal community is disrespectful to custodial elders and brings shame on the whole community. It is not acceptable for young people and non-Aboriginal persons to perform a welcome to country in language. Other guidelines in this publication relate to custodial elders being invited to participate in certain activities that may cause the local Aboriginal community discomfort and distress.

An example of this may be Australia Day. Their ancient culture dates back more than 60,000 years. Smoking ceremonies are usually carried out only at major and significant Aboriginal events. Following a death in the local Aboriginal community it is culturally appropriate to reschedule meetings, appointments and any other planned activities out of respect for grieving family members. It is referred to as "sorry business". In relation to spelling and terminology, when an Aboriginal person calls someone uncle or aunty it is a sign of respect to that individual and age is not a factor. A capital "A" must always be used when referring to Aboriginal people. Many Aboriginal people refer to themselves by local terms such as "Koori", "Murray" or "Nyoongah".

I have referred to this document because I want to acknowledge the work of the community group, which has consulted regularly with the wider community to bring about its publication. I can also say that Auntie Isabel consulted me about the need for such a document so that everyone understands what protocol is and what is not. I, too, have learnt a lot from reading this document. The document is a concise but a valuable tool for everyone that sets out what we can do and should not do in relation to welcome to country. The publication was made possible by a number of organisations that supported Auntie Isabel and her committee, who are well-recognised, well-respected and much-loved leaders in our community. Traditionally they turn up at all events and are often the drivers of the many National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] events that occur and other significant days that the Wagga Wagga community enjoys and supports.

I point out that the totem being used has been given to Mawang Gaway by local artists. It depicts dancing brolgas. They are used in the painting to show that it is a celebration of developing a new culture in Wagga Wagga that is built around unity. The brolgas are pink and this colour is used to represent the special people that have come together to form this group. I congratulate everyone involved in Mawang Gaway on the publication and the work that has gone into it. I encourage people to get a copy and to observe the traditions that have now been printed for all to read and understand.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE QUEENS BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [5.53 p.m.]: I am very pleased to publicly recognise the wonderful contribution of two outstanding women who received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours recently. The two women are Sister Marjorie McLachlan and Margaret Anne Rogers. Sister Marjorie, as she is affectionately known, has been a tireless worker for our community for many years and is well and truly deserving of this award. She has been the driving force behind so many activities to improve the lives of those who are not so well off, people with mental health issues and those people in our community with a disability.

For more than a decade Sister Marjorie has run the Ecumenical Care Service soup kitchen in Port Macquarie, which serves hundreds of meals each week to homeless men and women in our community. This amazing woman extends the hand of compassion, friendship and companionship to those in need. It is sad that in a prosperous community such as Port Macquarie there is a need for a soup kitchen, but each week Sister Marjorie and her team of helpers fill the stomachs of those in need and provide them with a nutritious meal and a warm smile. On behalf of our community I say thank you and congratulations to Sister Marjorie McLachlan.

The other remarkable local woman recognised this year by the Queen is Margaret Anne Roberts. For more than 45 years Margaret has dedicated her life to working with women in New South Wales through the Country Women's Association. Margaret first joined the CWA in 1968 and since then has spent more than four decades fulfilling the aims and objectives of this national organisation. Those aims are to bring all women and

families together and form a network of support, to provide a forum for the voice of all women in New South Wales, to improve conditions and welfare of all women and families especially in country areas, and to provide a voice to government at all levels.

Her career with the Country Women's Association led Margaret to become that great organisation's New South Wales State President. In that role, and since then, Margaret has been a wonderful ambassador for women across the regions. As I said, one of the aims of the Country Women's Association is to provide a voice to all levels of government and Margaret has done just that exceptionally well. Whether it has been discussing the needs of women and children with politicians of all persuasions or officiating at events in Australia and around the world, Margaret has been a strong and effective advocate for the Country Women's Association.

For most of her life Margaret and her husband, Arthur, have lived in rural New South Wales, so how lucky are we in the community of Port Macquarie that they now call the mid North Coast home? These two women are excellent examples of determination and dedication, helping others in our community and giving their time so selflessly. I again congratulate both Sister Marjorie and Margaret on receiving this recognition by Queen Elizabeth II. It is well deserved and an acknowledgement of outstanding efforts through community service.

BOER WAR MEMORIAL

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [5.56 p.m.]: On Sunday 26 May I joined Her Excellency the Governor, Marie Bashir, and Peter Cosgrove, AC, MC, at the remembrance and wreath-laying ceremony at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. It is 111 years since the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed to end the Boer War. I draw the attention of the House to a group led by one of my constituents, Dennis Weatherall, who visited the sites of the Boer War in the now South Africa. I furnished a New South Wales flag to Dennis Weatherall to unfurl over the sacred land where New South Welshmen lost their lives fighting the battle of Elands River. This little-spoken-about war was one of Australia's first engagements in any theatre of war. It took place from 1899 to 1902, and 23,000 Australian men and women served in South Africa as part of the British forces. This was the first Australian and New Zealand combined force—the first Anzacs, if you like.

From 10 October 1899 to the end of May 1902 a bitter conflict raged across the South African veldt between Britain and her Empire and the two largely self-governing Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State. The six Australian States, or colonies as they then were, were quick to make troops available to Britain when a Boer ultimatum to the British expired. Boer commandos streamed across the borders into the British colonies of Cape of Good Hope and Natal. The first formed unit of troops from Australia, a squadron of the New South Wales Lancers, landed at Cape Town on 2 November 1899, less than one month after hostilities began.

Our soldiers, who were truly the first Australian expeditionary force to fight overseas, did Australia proud in the Boer War as they have done in all conflicts since. Informed military commentators saw the magnificent defence at Elands River by Australian and Rhodesian troops as the finest episode of the war. The majority of the defenders were Australian bushmen, mainly men from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria with a lesser number from Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. They manfully defended the post against impossible odds for 12 days.

The Boer War was the first conflict in which our fledgling nation was involved. In 1899 troops left our shores to fight in a faraway land that would have been little known about in the Australia of that day. I presented a New South Wales flag to Dennis Weatherall to unfurl over the sacred land where New South Wales soldiers lost their lives fighting the battle for Eland River. Australians in irregular units took part in both the epic defence and the relief of the Siege of Mafeking and a number of Australians died during the defence of the town. A nine-man patrol of the Imperial Light Horse, led by Major Walter Karri Davies—arguably the most famous Australian in South Africa at the time—entered Mafeking a day ahead of the relief column.

In addition to six Victoria Crosses, Australians won many awards for gallantry in the Boer War and were frequently mentioned in dispatches of the Commander in Chief. My electorate of Heathcote has a connection with the Boer War: a Mr Arthur Hilton Farnell—and the name Farnell is probably familiar to you, Madam Acting-Speaker, because of Farnell Avenue in the Royal National Park—a resident of Sutherland, was a member of Squadron A of the New South Wales Citizens' Bushmen Contingent. He left Australia in 1900 and returned in 1901. I can only imagine why he had such a short tour of duty. Another Heathcote resident, Thomas Henry Alexander Martin, late of Woronora, was a Boer War veteran. He passed away in 1954 aged 71 and he is buried in Woronora Cemetery.

A campaign has begun to build a permanent memorial to honour the lives lost in this forgotten war. We owe it to the brave men and women who left the safe shores of Australia to fight with the Imperial Forces. The sacrifices made by Australia and Australians during the Boer War were very significant. However, Anzac Parade in Canberra does not yet have a memorial. A site has at last been reserved for one and the National Boer War Memorial Association has been formed to design, fund and construct a suitable monument. The National Boer War Memorial Association will ensure that those who fought in South Africa are commemorated in a way that will preserve our heritage and military history for the education and benefit of future generations of Australians. I encourage all members to support the Boer War memorial.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY AND HERITAGE PROJECTS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.01 p.m.]: Today I inform the House of some wonderful organisations and a particular heritage issue in the Hawkesbury area. I recently supported a new project in my electorate known as "Out of the Woods", with \$36,000 of funding through the Community Building Partnership for new facilities to support the youth of western Sydney and especially young men who have struggled in the early years of their life and need some guidance. Each Friday for 10 weeks a group of disengaged boys aged 16 to 18 from western Sydney have been attending the Dural Men's Shed with their community helpers from Open Family and Whitelion. The aim has been to give troubled boys a project—to build something with the help and guidance of the old fellas at the Men's Shed.

The program recently celebrated the completion of a 10-week project, with the boys receiving certificates of achievement and proudly displaying beautifully finished timber chess and draughts boards. The boys showed great application to the task: they adapted to the new environment and showed dedication and application to get the job done whilst learning some woodworking skills, general life experience and team work from the older guys. The project has a wider aim of building self-esteem in these young guys as well as a desire to achieve something, to show that they are valued by others and can turn their efforts towards some practical training, which may lead to long-term employment.

I acknowledge the assistance and support from Dural Rotary and Baptist Community Services, and especially the guys at Dural Men's Shed who are providing this wonderful voluntary support program that is passing on the valued skills they have earned throughout their lives and is helping young blokes achieve a real future. I believe we as a society have a great opportunity to combine the skills of senior men as mentors and role models for young men and we need to embrace this important initiative. Riding for the Disabled Association [RDA] provides people with disabilities the opportunity for rehabilitation through an association with horses.

Riding for the Disabled Association has a centre in my electorate at Box Hill. During the years this facility has been operating riders have attended from various schools, hospitals, institutions and adult day care centres from nearly every suburb across Sydney for rehabilitation using horses. The philosophy of using horses for the disabled is not new. For many people with physical disabilities the benefits of exercise and improved posture from riding are obvious. However, activities carried out on horseback provide a strong motivational factor, and exercise that is usually tedious is performed with renewed vigour and interest. The coach can also work closely with the rider's teacher or carer to reinforce the disabled person's literacy, numeracy or social skills.

I recently had the opportunity to provide \$27, 000 in funding from the New South Wales Government to Riding for the Disabled at Box Hill for a new life skills centre that will improve and expand on the current services offered at this wonderful centre. The centre also has a large group of committed volunteers—many are neighbours of this centre—who spend countless hours of their time helping to maintain and replenish this facility. To everyone involved I offer a very special thank you, particularly Jim Moreland—an old mate who helped to construct and manage this project.

Following two centuries of my family living in the Hawkesbury area it is with great pride that I note that some of the oldest and most significant heritage items in this area have been preserved and maintained on behalf of current and future generations. Ebenezer Church, the oldest church in Australia, and St Matthew's Church in Windsor are testament to both the vision and architecture of early European settlers, and through continued thoughtful care and maintenance from members of the local community they have remained largely in their original state. Unfortunately, one of the oldest community precincts, namely Thompson Square, was completely divided in half by a new road in 1939.

The square, which was proclaimed by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1814, was named after Andrew Thompson, who bravely saved several local residents following one of the many Hawkesbury floods. The

original corridor to the river wharf along Bridge Street, which had provided vital access for horses and carts for river transportation of produce for farmers in the local area, was replaced 64 years ago by a direct road bulldozed by the Department of Roads via the shortest possible route—straight through the middle of Thompson Square. A recent proposal to have Thompson Square listed on the national heritage register was rejected, given that it was not considered heritage significant—and no wonder in view of its having been cut completely in half by the current arterial road and divided into two Thompson Squares.

I am indebted to Federal Senator Doug Cameron for recently raising this matter during Federal estimates hearings in Canberra, when he asked about the implications for the 200-year-old Thompson Square and why it was recently rejected by the Australian Heritage Council and not recommended for further assessment work. The answer he was given was that the Australian Heritage Council did not think it met the criteria for national heritage listing. Even following a request under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act to consider emergency heritage listing of the site it did not meet the criteria for national heritage listing and the Federal Minister decided not to use the emergency powers vested in him. The bisection of Thompson Square in 1939 is the reason it was not considered worthy of registration by the Australian Heritage Council.

Fortunately, regardless of this historical destruction, when the new Windsor Bridge is completed using the original Bridge Street corridor, as proposed by the New South Wales Government, the old road will be completely restored and the original Thompson Square will be reinstated to the wonderful community precinct it was intended to be. Perhaps then it will be worthy of national heritage listing. My ancestor Charles Whalan, who stood beside Governor Lachlan Macquarie as Thompson Square it was proclaimed more than two centuries ago, would indeed be proud that this Government is restoring this important piece of heritage for the Hawkesbury area.

STATE BUDGET AND SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [6.06 p.m.]: The Shellharbour electorate certainly has nothing much to celebrate from the budget handed down by the Treasurer on Tuesday. A chunk of the so-called announcements of new funding in this budget for my electorate has had more reheats than a plate of pasta. In other areas the Illawarra has been served the raw prawn. This week the region is feeling battered, disheartened and, quite frankly, very angry—angry at the lack of funding for the region for things that matter, such as the Albion Park Rail bypass; angry at the insulting funding snub to Shellharbour Hospital; and, most of all, angry at how the Illawarra has been fleeced and ripped off by the New South Wales Government in relation to the proceeds of the Port Kembla sale.

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

Mr Gareth Ward: Not for much longer she won't.

Ms ANNA WATSON: You should just sit down and listen because you might learn something. The Illawarra has been given what amounts to chicken feed in this budget. The Illawarra *Mercury* said it all this week. The headline was "Budget a kick in guts for region". The *Mercury* editorial went on to say:

The State Treasurer, Mike Baird, on Tuesday delivered a slap to the face of this community. Then, not content with that, he stuck the boot in for good measure.

It is a disgrace that the Government could not get its act together to deliver for the Illawarra—after all, four of its members represent the Illawarra region, including the member for Kiama and you, Mr Acting-Speaker.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Kiama will be removed from the Chamber if he does not cease interjecting.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Thank you, Mr Acting-Speaker, it is nice to make a private member's statement uninterrupted. Even amongst all the squawking and clucking of the member for Kiama—the Illawarra's own free-range chicken—

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: That type of language is inappropriate. If the member for Shellharbour wants to attack members she should do so by way of substantive motion rather than carrying on like a chicken with its head off.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I get the gist of the member's point of order. The member for Kiama will resume his seat. The member for Shellharbour has the call.

Ms ANNA WATSON: The people of Shellharbour and the Illawarra have missed out in yet another budget since this Government took office in March 2011. It is a shame to see such neglect and disdain for the Illawarra enshrined in the budget. It is a shame when there is so much potential in the region, particularly in my electorate, but the much-needed projects will go unfunded, unsupported and unrealised for another 12 months. While billions are spent on public transport across Sydney, the Princes Highway at Albion Park Rail—the second most hated road in the whole of New South Wales—gets a miserable \$1 million. It is chicken-feed money for the Government. It is not for action but for another study. Nevertheless, the Government has finally seen common sense in starting the planning process. It is a win for people power in my electorate and we will take it, but rest assured the community expects action to follow in next year's budget.

We have had enough of words, enough of talk, and enough of shuffling of paperwork. It appears that people power will also have to pressure this Government to action on the much-needed major upgrade of the Shellharbour public hospital. Again there was nothing in the budget, despite the hospital being earmarked to become a major metropolitan hospital for the growing and ageing population in the southern Illawarra. There is a very strong community feeling about the need for this hospital upgrade. It should be above politics. I have had more than 500 personal letters sent to me in support. They were handed to the Minister's office. The Government's failure to invest in Shellharbour public hospital demonstrates its abject failure. I will redouble my efforts to put pressure on the Government in relation to this project being included in next year's budget. The injustice of this budget for the Illawarra goes from bad to worse.

The deal involving the proceeds from the Port Kembla lease was a dud deal from the word go and it now shows that the Illawarra was sold short. The entire Illawarra received \$100 million from the \$760 million sale of our port compared with the \$340 million received by Newcastle. I am disgusted. We always knew that \$100 million for the Illawarra was simply not good enough. We now see with clear contrast that the Illawarra was duded. The Illawarra has been swindled. Every Illawarra Liberal member of Parliament should be hanging his or her head in shame and humiliation. The people of the Illawarra and particularly the people of Shellharbour will not forget, and they will not easily forgive such disregard for the region.

BARDEN RIDGE SPORTS COMPLEX

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [6.11 p.m.]: Today I share a great milestone in my electorate. On 27 May 2013 I was honoured to join the Hon. Barry O'Farrell, the New South Wales Premier, and Kent Johns, the Mayor of Sutherland, to officially open the final stage of The Ridge Golf Course and the jewel in the crown of The Ridge Sporting Complex at Barden Ridge. Mr Acting-Speaker, I acknowledge that you were present on the day. It was lovely to have you with us. The Ridge is a premier sports facility with an international standard athletics track, a multicourt synthetic netball facility, playing fields for soccer, cricket, rugby union and oztag, and an award-winning 52-bay multideck golf driving range, with the final addition of the 18-hole championship golf course. It is an incredibly impressive facility that was built on the site of a former tip. The Ridge sports complex was made possible through an innovative agreement between Waste Services New South Wales, now owned by SITA, and Sutherland Shire Council. As a child I could not imagine this site would be used for anything—it was a barren, smelly wasteland. Today I cannot imagine a better use for the otherwise unusable land that has been returned to the community.

Getting the project off the ground was one of my proudest achievements as a Sutherland shire councillor. Over the following years I have seen each stage come to life, turning the wasteland into an impressive local sporting facility that is now visited from far and wide and utilised for weekend sport and by school groups for carnivals and sports days. Over many years I was involved in the planning committee meetings along with New South Wales Government representatives, council staff, councillors—particularly Councillor Steve Simpson—to help bring the more than \$100 million project to life. However, the community members who put in long hours and hard work should be thanked for bringing this project to reality. Their names have been engraved on a nice bronze plaque at the facility and should be recorded in *Hansard*. They are: Craig Bricknell, Brian Cloney, Christine Newman and Greg O'Rourke.

After many years of hard work it was special to stand alongside those who have been involved in this project from the beginning. After the official proceedings attendees were invited to play a round of golf on the newly completed 18-hole golf course that was built in two stages over 6½ years. The final nine holes were completed earlier this year. Whilst I am by no means a golfer, the impressive weather created a great day for

those who came along to have a hit, including cricket legends Glenn McGrath and Steve Waugh. Council figures show that since the course was completed in February The Ridge has had more than 15,000 players come from the Northern Beaches, the western suburbs and the Illawarra to try out the course.

It is becoming a major drawcard and council is aiming to achieve more than 100,000 visitors to both the golf course and the driving range by the end of the year, which is not a bad feat with a former rubbish dump. As the site is a former waste disposal facility, it went through the time-consuming process of being treated, filled, contoured and compacted before the sporting facilities could be built. In addition, the site has taken advantage of water-saving technology and is self-watering with the help of a 40 megalitre dam constructed back in 2008. Council has taken special measures to include a 120-hectare bushland conservation area and the landscaping was focused around native plants and seedlings, in keeping with the surrounding bushland.

Despite the multitude of sporting activities catered for on The Ridge Sporting Complex site, the final piece of the puzzle is currently in the planning stage. A healthy BMX and off-road bike community exists in the shire so it was fitting to include them in the overall vision for The Ridge. With very few legal sites available to BMX riders, The Ridge's final component will be a new off-road bike park, offering the only dirt jump park in the Sydney metropolitan area and a BMX competition venue. This venue is the perfect location for such a sport and will fill a currently unmet need in the community among BMX enthusiasts.

The Premier made special mention of the visionary and collaborative work between council, the community, Waste Services NSW—now SITA—and the New South Wales State Government to complete the project. I hope that The Ridge will set a standard for this type of partnership and for future community facilities in and around Sydney. I thank the mayor for unveiling a plaque that is engraved with the names of everyone involved. I congratulate all those involved on preparing the facility for its opening day and the Sutherland Shire Council on the successful opening of this landmark facility for the community. I know there will be many years of enjoyment to be had there.

BERRY WALKWAY PROJECT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [6.16 p.m.]: Tonight I commend the hardworking and dedicated members of the Berry Rotary Club on their diligence and commitment to deliver a project that our community has wanted for a long time. As members would be aware, Rotary was founded in 1903. One of the first projects that Rotary commenced was an amenities block to meet the needs of the people of Chicago. Paul Harris, a founding member of Rotary, whose name adorns one of the highest honours that can be awarded, is remembered from that time.

On 3 August 2012 I presented a cheque for \$19,769 to the Rotary Club of Berry Inc. for stage one of a new pathway from David Berry Hospital. These funds came from the wonderful Community Building Partnership program. I sincerely thank the Premier for his support of this initiative. I note that many members of the House have numerous Community Building Partnership projects in their electorates. The member for Wyong is agreeing with me and I thank him for his support for the program. On Saturday 8 June 2013 I returned to the site and was extremely pleased to present a cheque for a further \$3,850 to the Rotary Club of Berry Inc. for the completion of the walkway from Pulman Street to David Berry Hospital.

These funds came from Premier Barry O'Farrell and I thank him for ensuring that this organisation could complete the work it set out to do. I strongly supported this terrific local community project during my last term as a Shoalhaven City councillor as well as my term as a State member of Parliament. It has the support of the Berry community. It has been a real community effort by Rotary volunteers, who have spent countless hours doing the heavy lifting and other work that has been required to complete the job. I acknowledge those great members from the Rotary Club of Berry Inc. who helped make this project a reality, including the Club President Narelle King, Vice-President Graham Smith, Secretary Peter Stinson, Treasurer and Public Officer Deb Mainsbridge, and the Director of Membership and Vocation Guy Mainsbridge.

Mr Ken Hutt, the Director of Community Services of the Rotary Club of Berry Inc., with the assistance of Guy Mainsbridge, was in charge of the project while the path was being constructed. The project was initially proposed almost 20 years ago. A number of members had had the vision but did not have the resources. In 2010 Ken Hutt, who has been involved in civil construction for many years, knew what was required to take the vision to council and to make the project a reality. Ken has a wonderful can-do attitude and this project would not have been delivered without his enthusiasm.

The concrete path commences at the intersection of Pullman and Tannery roads. It proceeds under the rail bridge on Tannery Road, crosses Broughton Creek and goes up the hill to the main entrance of David Berry Hospital. Shoalhaven City Council assisted the project with donations in kind and also appropriate signage on the pathway and at the side of the road. It provided barriers and handrails in addition to the signage. However, it was not only government funds that assisted in bringing this project to fruition. A number of bricks were bought by local businesses and community organisations and I also had the pleasure of purchasing a number of bricks.

I acknowledge a former Mayor of Shoalhaven City Council, the Hon. Paul Green, who is a member of the other place. We shared a vision from the start of our last council term in 2008. We wanted the residents of Berry to be able to enjoy their surrounding environment and give something to the families of people spending time in David Berry Hospital, which is a palliative care facility. The year 2013 represents the fifty-fourth year of the Berry-Gerrington Rotary Club doing great things to benefit and support the local community. I salute its members for the terrific work they continue to do. Many projects in our community have occurred only because of the hard work and dedication of this tireless group.

I was delighted to attend the official opening with Deputy Mayor of Shoalhaven City Council John Wells, Councillor Patricia White, Councillor Allan Baptist from ward 3 and other interested community members. Their community spirit and enthusiasm led them to get on with delivering this project for themselves. They did not wait for government to do it. They did not wait for someone to give them a handout; they took a step up and made this project a reality. Rotary has done many great things, from the amenities block in Chicago right through to this project. I am so pleased that this project will stand the test of time and serve a practical purpose for our community. I have no doubt that the Rotary Club will expand its plans for Rotary Circuit in Berry and that it will continue to lobby me for funds to extend the project further. I hope that happens, because while projects such as this are pushed by community members it means that the community spirit in my electorate is thriving.

CRONULLA ELECTORATE YOUNG DRIVER ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [6.21 p.m.]: I commend Rotary Clubs in the Sutherland shire, coordinated by Martin Tabone of Caringbah Rotary, for their successful U Turn the Wheel program. The program aims to address the alarming number of deaths and injuries resulting from vehicle accidents involving young drivers. Last week at Cronulla High School I had the pleasure of seeing the program in action. The U Turn the Wheel program is targeted at year 11 students. While it runs in some other areas of New South Wales, in the Sutherland shire it is delivered to not just some but all secondary schools.

The program runs at no cost to students. The course is presented in conjunction with a number of organisations and agencies. The NSW Police Force Highway Patrol, YouthSafe, Trent Driving School, the NRMA, the NSW Ambulance Service and Sutherland Shire Council provide resources and advice in support of the program. The program runs for a full day and typically involves six lessons from different presenters to a class size of 20 to 30 students. Typically, the six sessions are: crash avoidance thinking skills; distractions inside and outside the vehicle; the effects of alcohol and drugs; traffic rules, regulations and penalties; the causes of accidents and driver attitude; and, finally, purchasing a car and vehicle maintenance. That involves a demonstration by the NRMA of how to check oil and coolant levels as well as lights and tyres.

Students are addressed by, among others, a police highway patrol officer, a paramedic and a specialist speaker on drugs and alcohol. It is a terrific course that takes a hands-on approach and is producing tangible outcomes for young drivers. In New South Wales young drivers represent 13 per cent of licensed drivers but, tragically, they are involved in 26 per cent of fatal crashes. The results of U Turn the Wheel speak for themselves. Statistics issued by Roads and Maritime Services show that the rate of 17-year-old to 20-year-old controllers in casualty crashes in the Sydney region rose 1 per cent in the period 2009-11. Yet in the Sutherland shire local government area—where U Turn the Wheel was introduced in 2005 and almost every year 11 student since then has undertaken the program—they fell by 30 per cent. That is substantial evidence that U Turn the Wheel works.

The New South Wales Government has introduced a number of initiatives to address these statistics. Earlier this year the Minister for Roads and Ports, Duncan Gay, announced that from next month learner drivers can trade 40 hours of supervised driving hours in exchange for 10 hours of professional lessons and a safe driver course involving theoretical and practical coaching. Those who do not wish to take the course will still be required to complete 120 supervised hours before qualifying for a provisional licence. Given the apparent success of U Turn the Wheel, as demonstrated by the casualty figures which I cited, I have two requests. My

first request is that Roads and Maritime Services seriously investigate expanding the program to ensure that the great results we are seeing in the Sutherland shire can be extended to the rest of the State. My second request is that our hardworking NSW Police Force does all it reasonably can to make police available for such an expanded program.

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyong) [6.25 p.m.]: On Saturday 8 June I had the privilege of officially opening the Men on Fire event in the grounds of the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre in my electorate of Wyong. At first glance one might have concerns with that title, but the event is a celebration of men's lives and marked the start of Men's Health Week 2013, which was officially recognised from 10 June until 16 June this year. Men's Health Week is about highlighting men's health. The best way to improve men's health is for local services, groups and individuals to tackle the most important health issues relevant to local blokes and for men to start taking a more active role in looking after their health.

Men's health is significant, because boys and men generally suffer more illness and accidents and die earlier than their female counterparts. Sadly, men take their lives at four times the rate of women. On average, five men commit suicide each day. That is a truly shocking statistic. Accidents, cancer and heart disease account for the majority of male deaths. Men also are less likely to participate and engage in health and social activities. As we all know, men are not very good at looking after their health. We are usually the last ones to go to the doctor. We need to get the message out that there are many support organisations specifically created to assist and advise on men's health issues. For example, many people do not know that prostate cancer affects more men than breast cancer affects women.

Each year in Australia close to 3,300 men die of prostate cancer which, as I mentioned, exceeds the number of women who die from breast cancer annually. Around 20,000 new cases are diagnosed in Australia every year. Each day about 32 men learn that they have prostate cancer. Tragically, one man every three hours will lose his battle against this insidious disease. One out of nine men in Australia will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Australian men and is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in men. The important message is that prostate cancer and many other diseases can be treated successfully if diagnosed early. This is just another example of why men need to take the time to care for their health.

The Men on Fire event recognises Men's Health Week and highlights the issues that men experience, both with health and in the community. It is about getting together, having a health check, finding out about some of the services men can access, and about raising more funds for the completion of the Wyong Men's Shed. I was pleased to secure \$10,975 from the State Government to establish the new Wyong Men's Shed. I believe so strongly in this organisation that I made a \$1,000 personal donation to assist in the completion of the building. The Wyong Men's Shed will be a place for blokes to hang out with other blokes, use existing skills or learn some new ones, socialise and access a range of health information. The shed is scheduled for completion shortly and will be a valuable addition to the network of Men's Sheds already established around the Central Coast.

I congratulate the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre manager, Ms Jodi Morgan, and her hardworking team on bringing together so many people and local organisations to ensure their Men on Fire event was a great success. These included Medicare local, Australian Hearing, Carevan, Men's Sheds, Historic Marine Corps, Mingaletta Dance Group and even the Central Coast Ukulele Club. A feature of the event was a men's pit stop, which simulated a vehicle repair process in sections but checked men's health instead. Each check was evaluated and a coloured sticker was placed on a checklist.

I am happy to say that I received green stickers for all but one pit stop—I earned a yellow sticker for my waistline measurement. In my defence, I was on the cusp of receiving a green sticker and had just enjoyed a sausage sandwich. It was a most enjoyable day and a barbeque was provided. I believe most people came away better informed about men's health issues and the services that are available. I take this opportunity to congratulate my close friend and valued colleague the member for The Entrance and his beautiful wife, Vienna, who today welcomed their first child, Taylor Nichole Spence, at 12.16 p.m. Mother and baby are doing well.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I add my congratulations to the member for The Entrance on the birth of his first child.

MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITAL CARDIAC UNIT

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [6.30 p.m.]: When the news broke in March that Mount Druitt Hospital was to lose its cardiac unit the community reaction was immediate. A meeting was called by the hospital volunteers led by Margaret Thurlow and the chairman of the Cardiac Support Group, Barry Robson. I, along with the Federal member for Chifley, Ed Husic, attended the meeting, which was held at the Mount Druitt Tradies Club on Wednesday 3 April. To say that the mood of the meeting was a combination of shock, fear and anger is an understatement. The meeting resolved, among other things, to ask for representations to be made and for a petition to be circulated in the community.

No organising committee was formed to promote the petition and no army of volunteers was recruited to walk the petition around the area—it just happened. In my near 30 years as a member of this place, I have never seen such a reaction to an issue. Almost immediately after the news broke and the meeting was held residents started walking into my office asking either to take a page or two of the petition with them or to sign a copy, which was on the front counter. I cannot in the five minutes allotted to me name everyone who took up the challenge of getting the petition signed. At the outset, I thank the reporters and staff of two local papers—*The Standard* and the *Star*—who ran stories about the closure almost every week. As a result of the publication of those stories another wave of people made contact, asking how they could help or simply to sign the petition.

I acknowledge every person who came to my office or to a number of other locations in the area who wanted to put their name to the petition. Special efforts were made by a number of groups and individuals. I will not provide a complete list, but the following are examples of those who made the effort to get signatures on the petition. They included Doreen O'Grady, a hospital volunteer and member of the board Mount Druitt Tradies Club; Margaret Thurlow, whom I have already mentioned and who is the president of the hospital volunteers; Barry Robson, whom I have also already mentioned; and Mr and Mrs Barrett, an elderly couple who are conscientious constituents who come into my office every few days to get a few more petitions. When I asked Mr and Mrs Barrett why they were interested in the issue, Mr Barrett said that his life was saved in the cardiac unit.

I also acknowledge the Holy Catholic Church, Emerton, in the Diocese of Parramatta; Mr Ken and Mrs Lydia Simpson; Jean Davies, who helps to run the Tuesday Club; Ms Dulcy Harrison, from the Mount Druitt Hospital Ladies Committee; and the St Vincent de Paul Society, Emerton. Many other groups, medical centres and businesses in the community have given their support. Those people took it upon themselves to get signatures on the petition. The result is that yesterday I tabled in Parliament a petition with more than 10,100 signatures, which has been set down for debate in the next session. Many, perhaps thousands, more signatures were placed on lists, personally drafted petitions and emails directed to the office of the Federal member for Chifley. However, because of their format they could not be included on the petition that I tabled.

I again ask the Minister and the Premier, in his role as Minister for Western Sydney, to intervene with regard to this decision, which was apparently made by officials of the area health board, and to stop the closure. I know that this decision will hurt all levels of Liberal government, but it is more important than politics. I again ask the Government not to close the cardiac ward of Mount Druitt Hospital. It should respond positively to the Mount Druitt community, which is pleading for this facility to be retained for the benefit of local residents. I congratulate all concerned on their efforts in presenting one of the largest petitions ever organised in the district. I reiterate that it was organised without the benefit of a committee or a coordinated campaign. I again ask the Minister for Health and the Premier to intervene, despite the fact that the Minister claims it is an operational matter that is dealt with by the area health board.

INNER-CITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [6.35 p.m.]: The lack of inner-city affordable housing in Sydney has a negative impact on the city's social diversity and economic viability. The situation is set to worsen, with property values increasing. Housing stress occurs when households spend more than 30 per cent of their income on rent or mortgage repayments, and that has detrimental social and economic impacts. Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute data from 2007 showed that 862,000 Australian households—that is, 15 per cent—are in housing stress, including more than 400,000 that spend more than 50 per cent of their income on housing. Even where low-cost housing is available in the inner city, if it is not dire someone on a higher income usually snaps it up leaving even fewer options for those on lower incomes.

All areas need to house people on different income levels. A narrow housing mix impacts on the social fabric of a community. Without diversity of income levels neighbourhoods become dull and monotonous and

have less sense of community. The inner city needs a mix of social, boarding, student, aged care, key worker, small and large housing. There are long waiting lists for social housing in the inner city because it is close to jobs, transport, and health and welfare services. However, in Millers Point the Government has sold 32 homes, approved the sale of a further four and is considering the sale of 208 properties as part of its review. This process only reduces available inner-city stock and high land values exclude the provision of new inner-city public housing in the future. Boarding houses are essential to the housing mix, providing a stopgap between homelessness and other low-cost accommodation.

However, the number of inner-city boarding houses is declining, with large old terraces being sold and converted into single residences. I welcome the boarding house reforms introduced by the Minister for Disability Services to give residents of registrable boarding houses rights, protections and access to affordable dispute resolution. I hope the boarding houses register will help the Government to ensure the industry's future sustainability, particularly in the inner city. The inner city has two major universities: the University of Sydney and the University of Technology, as well as a major TAFE campus at Ultimo. Our universities rely increasingly on the revenue brought in by international students, who have limited access to quality affordable housing. While Commonwealth funding has helped universities to increase their housing options, demand still outstrips supply.

Many international students are forced to move into share houses without a written agreement and are beholden to a head tenant. They are not captured by occupancy principles for boarding houses and are not covered by other tenancy laws. Their disputes must be heard by the Supreme Court and I am told by tenant advocates that common disputes include failure to refund a bond and termination without notice. The Government must urgently provide a system of rights for these marginal renters. It could also support initiatives such as HomeShare, which involves international students living with someone who needs up to 10 hours a week of care and companionship. Similar programs are run in Victoria and New Zealand. If essential workers such as cleaners, nurses, teachers, hotel workers and police officers cannot afford to live close to the city they will move to areas where they can afford to live to avoid long, expensive commutes. This makes it difficult for inner-city businesses to attract a high-quality workforce and to function properly, putting Sydney's global competitiveness and ability to attract workers and visitors at risk.

The City of Sydney 2030 affordable housing target is 7.5 per cent of all housing in the local government area and it imposes an affordable housing levy at Green Square. Ultimo and Pyrmont should also have a levy, but that requires ministerial approval. Alarming, the planning white paper removes councils' powers to set affordable housing targets and to impose affordable housing levies. Under the National Rental Affordability Scheme, the Federal Government funded 1,035 affordable rental dwellings in the inner city, including 828 dwellings at Frasers and 30 properties on Darlinghurst Road. It is also funding a study on affordable housing by inner-city councils to identify new sites.

We need more projects like the Housing NSW Camperdown development, which provides on-site services, medical facilities, training rooms and a vegetable garden. It is an example of what can be achieved when different levels of government and the private and community sectors work together. All levels of government need to work together, and we need to establish enforceable targets with incentives for developers and landlords to provide affordable housing. We need a strategic approach to identifying and securing land. I welcome the Government's Affordable Housing Taskforce, which shows its commitment to this important issue. The task force will develop planning policies through an affordable housing strategy. The challenge for the growing inner city is greater than other areas. I call on the Government to make it a key priority in the new strategy.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [6.40 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the private members' statements that have been made this evening and to thank members for raising issues that impact upon their electorate. I was disappointed by the comments of some members in response to the budget, which obviously has been well received by people across the State. I acknowledge the members of this House who take the opportunity to make a private member's statement to convey to the Parliament information on issues that impact upon their communities.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.41 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House community building partnership grants allocated to local projects in my electorate of Vaucluse. My electorate encompasses a diverse group of communities that work together and support each other. Last year

grants were made to support projects such as the renovation of an emergency relief office operated by Anglicare in Bondi. I was pleased to support the application to refurbish that office. The important work of Anglicare supports those who rely on social welfare and require the assistance of enormous largesse as well as social counselling and support. Anglicare's Bondi relief office is a place where people of my community can drop in to receive support that will help them through tough times that may challenge them and their families.

I was also pleased to support the application for a grant from the City East Community College in Bondi Junction, which offers courses to local residents and more broadly to residents who wish to upgrade their skills. The college runs an information technology course for senior citizens under part of the wonderful initiative announced by the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services during Seniors Week. The grant was for upgrading computer room facilities. The college is located on Bondi Road, Bondi Junction. I was pleased to support its important work in educating and upgrading skills of the community. The Eastern Suburbs Dragon Boat Club in Rose Bay does good work by making broadly accessible to people of very different ages the experience of dragon boating, which has increased in popularity as a team sport. The grant will enable the club to purchase two new boats and equipment, and that will extend the reach of the club to local schools and community groups that will benefit not only from physical activity but also from experiencing new boats and equipment.

The Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe, which is known as FREE, is based in Bondi and is a local Chabad community that provides social and community support to Russian Jews who settled in Bondi a number of years ago. I supported the organisation's application for a grant to repair and upgrade its communal building. The grant will enable the group to more comfortably conduct community work—such as counselling, education and spiritual learning—for the local Russian Jewish community. Miroma at Vacluse provides disability services for people within the Vacluse electorate and more broadly. The centre needed funding to renovate its amenities and childcare facilities that are based in Vacluse. I was pleased to support that application. Holdsworth Community Centre at Woollahra is well established in its activities, but in recognition of the increasing number of seniors in the Vacluse electorate the centre will open a café and seniors centre on Edgecliff Road, Woollahra. I was pleased to support the centre's application for upgrading of its community café, which also is made available for a broader group of members of my community.

Importantly, the Scout Hall at Rose Bay will be upgraded. The Judean Third Group Scouts, which meets who meet in Rose Bay, needed some assistance to repair and upgrade the hall's kitchen. I regularly meet the Judean Scouts, but we last met at the Anzac Day ceremonies at the Emmanuel Synagogue at Woollahra where we supported the ceremonies held just after Anzac Day. I was pleased to support the application from St Peter's Anglican Church in Watsons Bay to upgrade the church hall to a multipurpose facility. I was also pleased to support the application from the Sir Philip Baxter Child Care Centre in Woollahra to renovate the toddlers bathroom facilities. We all know how challenging toileting toddlers can be. That grant will assist the centre to upgrade its bathroom facilities specifically for toddlers. I commend my statement to the House. I reiterate my support for those important community groups in the Vacluse electorate.

Private members' statements concluded.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Gareth Ward) left the chair pursuant to resolution at 6.45 p.m. on Thursday 20 June 2013.]

Thursday 27 June 2013

[Continuation of sitting of Thursday 20 June 2013.]

[The bells having been rung, the House resumed at 10.35 a.m. with the Deputy-Speaker in the chair.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I welcome to the public gallery the Hon. Andrew Miriki, Speaker of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville House of Representatives, Mr Robert Tapi, Clerk of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville House of Representatives, and Ms Taeasi Sanga, Clerk of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2013**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2013****STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BUDGET MEASURES) BILL 2013****SUCCESSION TO THE CROWN (REQUEST) BILL 2013****WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (MINES) BILL 2013****PORTS ASSETS (AUTHORISED TRANSACTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2013**

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

LOCAL LAND SERVICES BILL 2013

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

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

POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION**Reports**

The Deputy-Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 103 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996, of the following reports:

Operation Binda, dated June 2013
Operation Calyx, dated June 2013

Ordered to be printed.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**Government Response to Report**

The Clerk announced receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/55 entitled, "Utilisation of rail corridors", received 20 June 2013 and authorised to be printed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Report**

The Clerk announced receipt of report No. 1/55 entitled, "Electioneering, Campaigning and Doorknocking, and the Role of Electorate Officers", dated June 2013, received 26 June and authorised to be printed.

LOCAL LAND SERVICES BILL 2013**Consideration in Detail**

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 25 June 2013

No. 1 Page 2, clause 3. Insert after line 18:

- (b) to establish a governance framework to provide for the proper and efficient management and delivery of local land services,

No. 2 Page 2, clause 3 (b), line 21. Insert "to meet community, client and customer needs" after "services".

No. 3 Page 2, clause 3. Insert after line 21:

- (c) to require decisions taken at a regional level to take account of State priorities for local land services,
- (d) to ensure the proper management of natural resources in the social, economic and environmental interests of the State,
- (e) to apply sound scientific knowledge to achieve a fully functioning and productive landscape,

No. 4 Page 2, clause 3 (c), line 22. Omit "to involve communities and to make". Insert instead "to encourage collaboration and shared responsibility by involving communities, industries and non-government organisations in making the".

No. 5 Page 2, clause 3 (e), line 27. Insert ", including, but not limited to, incentives that promote land and biodiversity conservation" after "landholders".

No. 6 Page 7, clause 14 (1) (h), line 18. Insert "to encourage participation" after "community,".

No. 7 Page 11, clause 24 (1), line 6. Insert "State priorities for local land services," after "accordance with".

No. 8 Page 17, clause 37 (3). Insert after line 26:

- (d) sound evidence-based practices to support primary industries, resilient communities and healthy landscapes, and

No. 9 Page 21, clause 47 (3). Insert after line 4:

- (e) sound evidence-based practices to support primary industries, resilient communities and healthy landscapes,

No. 10 Page 21, clause 49 (2). Insert after line 25:

- (e) sound evidence-based practices to support primary industries, resilient communities and healthy landscapes,

No. 11 Page 23, clause 54. Insert after line 20:

- (3) The Minister may, at any time the Minister considers it appropriate to do so, arrange for an audit of a local strategic plan.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [10.37 a.m.], on behalf of Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [10.38 a.m.]: The Opposition supports the amendments, which were moved by the Government and The Greens and passed by the Legislative Council. Labor's attempt, for example, to increase the representation on boards for farmers was surprisingly defeated by the Government despite the urging of the NSW Farmers Association. Although Labor supports the amendments, it does not change our opposition to the bill as set out in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Steve Whan, the shadow Minister for Primary Industries, and by me when I spoke to the bill in this Chamber.

In general, the thrust of the amendments is to increase the focus on catchment management and the ability of a Minister to audit plans and so on. As I say, whilst we oppose the bill, we are happy to support the amendments but do so with a general sense of disappointment that our amendments, including our attempt to increase farmer and Indigenous representation on boards, were not accepted by the Legislative Council.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Order of Business

Mr Greg Smith sought leave to permit:

- (1) the taking of community recognition statements forthwith; and
- (2) at the conclusion of community recognition statements, the taking of private members' statements until 11.30 a.m.

Leave granted.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

WOMEN IN CRICKET

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [10.39 a.m.]: I am pleased to acknowledge Hannah Linsley, Tara Campbell, Sarah Evans and Emily Gaal, young women actively involved in cricket. Sport is obviously an important part of Australian life, teaching valuable life skills and helping to keep players active and healthy. It is great to see young women especially getting involved. Hannah has already enjoyed an illustrious career, starring in the Cricket NSW Academy and representative sides, and I am sure she will go on to achieve great things in the sport.

MONA VALE HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.40 a.m.]: Today I applaud and thank the members of the Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary for their invaluable efforts on behalf of the Pittwater community. This passionate group of supporters is an extraordinary example of the importance and capabilities of our local volunteers and the enormous contribution they make. The success of the Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary has also attracted statewide recognition following its achievement last year in winning the Honour Bell for raising more money than any other hospital auxiliary in the Sydney metropolitan area. This achievement has established the Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary, and its more than 80 members, as the standout example for others to aspire to.

I particularly recognise the tireless efforts of the auxiliary's indomitable president, Eileen Gordon, plus many others including Roberta Brose, Waveney Perman, Eileen Long, Janne McDonald, Yvonne Parsons, Robyn Cole, Roger Alsop, John Eggleston, Ann Hoy, Pat Green, Cath Guzman, Jan Hollis, Elsie Lomas, Beverley Pretti and Valerie Wallis. No other group has done more to support improvements at Mona Vale Hospital, and our community is enormously grateful for its ongoing efforts.

CLUB MARCONI ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY FESTIVAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [10.41 a.m.]: On Sunday 26 May 2013 Club Marconi held its annual Italian Republic Day festival. The day commenced with a commemorative mass. Italian culture was celebrated with food, wine and cultural stalls. Cooking demonstrations were held by professional Italian chefs. Italian Australian artists provided entertainment on the main stage and there were also roaming entertainers. The local Italian Car Club hosted the classic Italian car show. There were carnival rides on the oval alongside the coaching clinic run by the Western Sydney Wanderers. Italian Republic Day commemorates when Italians voted to abolish the monarchy and establish the nation as a republic in 1946. Congratulations to Club Marconi President, Mr Vince Foti, the board of directors and staff for hosting another successful festival.

CHRISTIAN BAJIKA ELITE DRIVER DEVELOPMENT

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [10.42 a.m.]: I offer my congratulations to Christian Bajika a 14-year-old student from Springwood High School. Christian is one of only seven young drivers accepted from the general public pool of Australian young drivers to join the Australian Motor Sport Foundation Elite Driver Development Camp at the Australian Institute of Sport. The camp is run by the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport and gives young drivers the opportunity to learn to prepare for motor racing at a high level. Here Christian will be tested for the CAMS Rising Star National Formula Ford Championship Team and the chance to go to Europe in 2014 to race. Christian developed a passion for motor racing at a young age and has been successfully racing go-karts since the age of 12. The selectors were extremely impressed with Christian's mature application, which he wrote himself. This opportunity puts Christian one step closer to achieving his dream of professional motor racing.

LEICHHARDT SENIORS COUNCIL

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.43 a.m.]: I ask that the House notes that the Leichhardt Seniors Council is an official advisory committee of Leichhardt council, established to encourage and provide opportunities for older people to fully engage in and contribute to the development of the local community. I acknowledge in particular the dedication of the following members who volunteer their time freely and contribute their wisdom, valuable experiences and local knowledge to guide and inform Leichhardt council and the wider community: Robin James, Angelica Da Ros, Sara Graham, Maureen Burdyski, Dawn Linklater, Erica Aronsten, Rita Cammaroto, Tina Kessler, Robert Webb, John Williams, Joe Mannix and Salvatore Cannavo. I acknowledge their contribution to the community and wish them the best of luck in their future work.

NORTH RICHMOND AND WINDSOR FLOODS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.44 a.m.]: I advise the House that the Bureau of Meteorology has issued two flood warnings today for minor to moderate flooding at North Richmond and Windsor. Low-lying areas such as Pitt Town Bottoms, Richmond Lowlands and Gronos Point will be flooded, affecting 170 homes and almost 450 residents, who have been advised that evacuation may be necessary. It is expected that moderate flooding in North Richmond will reach 9.5 metres around noon tomorrow and moderate flooding at Windsor will reach 7.5 metres around 6 00 p.m. on Thursday. The Bureau of Meteorology states that if these flood levels are realised as expected, Richmond Bridge will be closed to vehicular traffic as the deck of the bridge will be overtopped. If the predicted flood of 7.5 metres is realised at Windsor, Windsor Bridge will also be closed to vehicular traffic. The Bureau of Meteorology further advises that:

Given the ongoing concerns about the Windsor Bridge, as this bridge is scheduled for replacement, RMS will need to conduct an assessment before the bridge can be re-opened.

This advice from the Bureau of Meteorology further underlines the importance of commencing construction of the new Windsor Bridge, as we promised prior to the last election. When it is completed in just over 18 months traffic will never again be blocked at this point of the Hawkesbury River during a flood such as this.

KINGS CROSS MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING CENTRE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [10.45 a.m.]: I wish to recognise the vital work of the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, which has been successfully operating since 2001. The centre is the only registered medically supervised clinic in Australia and provides a safe environment for drug injecting that would otherwise occur in Kings Cross streets and parks. Experienced and skilled workers help street-based injecting drug users to prevent blood borne viruses and infection, help to sort out health and welfare problems, and link clients to treatment. During the 1999 New South Wales Drug Summit, Kings Cross had the highest concentration of people dying from injecting drug overdoses in the country. The increasingly strong local resident and business support reflects the lives saved and the injecting and associated paraphernalia removed from the streets. The centre has registered more than 12,600 clients, successfully managed more than 4,400 drug overdoses, made more than 9,500 referrals to drug programs and massively reduced the number of discarded syringes in Kings Cross. I commend everyone involved in this much-needed service.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [10.46 a.m.]: I congratulate Thapanee Kijasathiarn on being awarded the Information Technology Student of the Year by TAFE Western Sydney Institute. Thapanee was nominated by teachers and chosen by the judges for academic achievement, leadership, communication skills and the determination to succeed. After taking a break from the workforce to raise a family, Thapanee decided to brush up on her practical skills by enrolling in the information technology course. The skills she gained in the course complemented her degree in business information systems. I wish Thapanee every success in her future career. I note the contribution that TAFE makes to developing vocational skills and preparing people for the workforce.

BANKSTOWN LEGACY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [10.46 a.m.]: I am pleased to inform the House of the recent Bankstown Legacy changeover luncheon held at the Bankstown Sports Club. Legacy was founded in 1923 when returned servicemen decided to take responsibility for the welfare of the widows and children of comrades who died during war. Across Australia, Legacy currently cares for 100,000 widows and 1,900 dependants. Legacy advocates for the rights of families and individuals, as well as assisting them during times of bereavement, and supports families in obtaining much-needed entitlements. Bankstown Legacy is an important voluntary organisation in our community and cares for widows and their dependants. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Alan Rawlinson on his service over the past year as president and on his continued interest in staying on in the role. His tireless efforts are commendable. Since he has taken on the position he has recruited more legatees to join the organisation. I thank past and present Bankstown legatees, as well as Legacy groups across New South Wales that have assisted our veterans, spouses and dependants for decades. [*Time expired.*]

TRIBUTE TO DR KAREN CRAWLEY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [10.47 a.m.]: I was delighted to join the recognition of Dr Karen Crawley as a Paul Harris Fellow at the recent changeover dinner of the Rotary Club of Cronulla. This recognised Dr Crawley's tireless volunteer work with the Australian Mitochondrial Disease Foundation. Mitochondrial disease is a life-threatening genetic disorder that robs the body's source of energy, causing multiple organ dysfunction or failure. Dr Crawley's daughter, Kara, is a sufferer and the disease may also affect her son, Braden, and Dr Crawley herself. Dr Crawley launched the Australian Mitochondrial Disease Foundation helpline in 2009 and has run it ever since. She educates doctors about the disease through an Australian Mitochondrial Disease Foundation stand at general practitioner continuing education conferences and she recently wrote and published an information booklet, which is available for download from the Australian Mitochondrial Disease Foundation website.

SDN BERANGA CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [10.48 a.m.]: I am happy to report to the House that last Saturday, 22 June, I attended the official opening of the SDN Beranga centre in Hartington Street, Rooty Hill. The opening was conducted by the Premier and the Minister for Disability Services. The centre is designed to provide support and early intervention of children with autism. I place on record my appreciation and congratulations to all at SDN Beranga Children's Education and Care Centre. I urge all residents with children who suffer with autism to make contact with this centre, where I am confident they will receive a warm welcome and worthwhile assistance.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [10.49 a.m.]: I recognise the hard work of the NSW Rural Fire Service firefighters and volunteers. These people generously give up their time and risk their lives on the front line preventing and fighting fires that repeatedly threaten to destroy property and lives around New South Wales, especially during the hot summer months. The last bushfire season saw 62 homes destroyed across New South Wales and about 1.4 million hectares burnt between July and March. I make special mention of the Horsley Park Rural Fire Service Brigade, which I visited in January this year, and thank its members for their round-the-clock service to the Fairfield local government area.

GOSFORD HOSPITAL RONALD MCDONALD FAMILY ROOM

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [10.49 a.m.]: I recognise the recently opened Ronald McDonald Family Room at Gosford Hospital that provides a haven for families who are visiting their sick children. Visiting a child in hospital can be an emotionally draining and difficult experience without having to spend long hours in an unwelcome, and perhaps uncomfortable, waiting room. The Ronald McDonald Family Room is available to all family members and aims to provide a home-away-from-home experience inside the hospital yet away from the clinical environment of wards. I congratulate Ron Mussalli from the local Ronald McDonald House committee and everyone involved on a welcome and worthwhile project.

TRIBUTE TO TONY VECELLIO, OAM

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [10.50 a.m.]: Tony Vecellio, OAM, is an indomitable leader who displays perseverance, commitment and passion in what he does. Not only is Tony the President of Randwick Botany Little Athletics Centre; he is also described as its guiding light. Tony has served Randwick Botany Little Athletics for more than 40 years as its president, bringing much positivity and drive. Over the years competitors in Little A's have shown much promise and the club has a championship status that cannot be challenged. The Little Athletics Zone Shield is a competition between six Little Athletics groups from Sydney's inner zone. This year Randwick Botany Little Athletics took out the title for the forty-first consecutive year. Winning a sports competition for 41 years on the trot is almost unheard of. I formally recognise Tony Vecellio and all those volunteers who have contributed so much through their dedication and remarkable spirit.

CEDARS OF LEBANON FOLKLORIC GROUP

Mr TONY ISSA (Granville) [10.51 a.m.]: Today I acknowledge Elie Akouri, who has worked voluntarily for the past 40 years to represent the Lebanese culture to the Australian community. I recognise the Cedars of Lebanon Folkloric Group, which was established in 1977 by Elie Akouri—teacher and choreographer of the Lebanese Dabke dance in Australia. I further acknowledge his dedication and the time and effort he has put in during the extensive period that he has represented Lebanon.

COASTAL BOOTSCOOTERS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [10.52 a.m.]: I congratulate the Coastal Bootscooters on its recognition this year in the NSW Seniors Week awards. The group received a nomination in the Health and Wellbeing category of the statewide awards, an acknowledgement of its great work in providing a fun and healthy social outlet for those in the community who like to kick up their heels on the dance floor. Group leader Bev Sandiford hosts regular classes for about 100 locals at Wyee, Dora Creek and Wangi Wangi, with participants ranging in age from 11 years to 85-year-old Betty Crotty. The Coastal Bootscooters also have a team of 30 demonstration dancers who volunteer their time and talents to perform at community events and nursing homes. I congratulate them on adding to the quality of life in our community.

MACCABIAH GAMES 2013

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.53 a.m.]: I wish the Australian team and its participants every success at the 2013 Maccabiah Games in Israel, the world's largest sporting event of 2013. I look forward to joining the group this evening, along with Minister Dominello, Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister Annesley, Minister for Sport and Recreation, at the New South Wales Government reception. I am proud that so many participants reside in my electorate of Vaucluse and that they are representing the Australian Jewish community in Israel at the Maccabiah Games later this year.

SOUTH COAST FLOODS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [10.53 a.m.]: I acknowledge the contribution of emergency services personnel in my electorate over the weekend and this week. Members may be aware that our region has been racked with high winds and extreme rain, resulting in property damage, flooded farms, blocked roads and damage to other vital infrastructure. Over the weekend and in the past few days the State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Service and other emergency services have been active to ensure that our community returns to normal as quickly as possible. Of course, a great deal of property damage has been caused by these recent weather events. I extend my sincere thanks to members from both sides of the House who called to inquire about the welfare of members of the Kiama community. I also thank the Premier and senior Ministers for their interest in the welfare of the community. I reiterate my sincere thanks and appreciation to the State Emergency Service, in particular, for its extraordinary volunteer efforts in the work undertaken in the community.

NEWCASTLE NETBALL TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [10.54 a.m.]: I am proud to recognise the hard work of coach Cherie Aoake-Puru in helping to establish a Newcastle netball team in the New South Wales State League's top division. I also recognise the players, who have trained very hard and seem sure to do Newcastle proud. This is the first team to carry the name of our great city since the 1990s. It is good to see the level of commitment and teamwork that these fine young athletes display.

Community recognition statements concluded.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Time for community recognition notices having concluded, private members' statements will now be proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

YMCA 160TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [10.55 a.m.]: Today I speak about the 160th birthday celebrations of the Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA] in Australia. The YMCA had its humble beginnings in England during the 1840s when the country was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. It was founded by George Williams, a 22-year-old drapery merchant. George Williams made up his mind that something had to be done about the continued oppression of the people in England during those historical times of massive change. He gathered together a few friends to form a society that met regularly to support its members and give them renewed strength of body, mind and spirit. The group called itself the Young Men's Christian Association. Through to the early 1900s its focus was on the welfare of young men and related social concerns.

The structure was loose and informal, based on small associations of people. All work was carried out by committed volunteers. A strong sense of fellowship and a common bond existed between associations and, eventually, this led to the development of the World Alliance of YMCAs in 1855. The Adelaide branch of the London YMCA opened on 15 March 1851, followed by Melbourne and Sydney YMCAs in 1853. The growth continued throughout Australia when in 1908 Western Australia finally embraced the establishment of the YMCA. Moving forward to 2013, the YMCA—now known affectionately as "the Y"—provides a suite of services such as health and wellbeing programs, sport and recreation, aquatics, youth services, children's services, camping and outdoor education, and accommodation.

I am sure that George Williams would not recognise the YMCA of today but would be proud of what his initiative has achieved. Recently, I attended the local celebrations of the YMCA at the Mount Annan Leisure Centre. The centre, which is run by the YMCA in partnership with Camden Council, offers the very best in aquatic and fitness facilities and programs while building opportunities for individuals, families and community groups to connect. The centre has grown in leaps and bounds since the YMCA took over its management, and is the hub of fitness and activity in the Camden area. Many people tell me how welcome they always feel when they attend the centre. The YMCA always promotes its philosophy and as part of the birthday celebrations at the Mount Annan Leisure Centre a fundraiser was held to raise funds for a teen gym to encourage young people to get fit.

Of course the Mount Annan Leisure Centre would not be such a success without its wonderful management and staff. The centre's manager, Mark Zilm, is supported by a wonderful group of staff who contribute to the daily running of the centre and to encouraging people, who attend for whatever reason, to become fitter or just connect with others in our community. Staff members Sarah Ryan, Victoria Head, Janette Felton, Daniel McClelland, Colleen Mayne, Margaret Scrimshaw and Katie Corrigan were present at the 160th birthday celebrations. The Camden *Chronicle* published a photo of Mayor Lara Symkowiak; me; Dean Margaritis, aged three; Jenna Sheriton, aged two; and the staff previously mentioned attending the birthday celebrations. The accompanying article by Sean Thompson, a wonderful journalist, stated:

Staff at the Mt Annan Leisure Centre celebrated the YMCA's 160th birthday on June 6, all in the name of promoting happier and healthier lives.

The event also launched YMCA's Y Week initiative, which raises funds for charitable programs across NSW.

Centre manager Mark Zilm said Y Week was a chance to reflect on their community work.

"The Y's impact on communities today is more significant than ever as we continue to focus on societal issues that affect the communities we serve," he said.

Last month the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs visited Mount Annan Leisure Centre. The *Camden Advertiser* reported:

MOUNT Annan Leisure Centre will play a part in the continued education of the area's indigenous young people.

The YMCA, which manages the centre, is taking part in a new program that will give indigenous youths the opportunity to take part in three-year traineeships.

Every member of Parliament knows what a wonderful job the YMCA does for the community. The YMCA has 160 young leaders in its youth leadership program to be held over the next few weeks. I pay credit to the local "Y".

PORTS PRIVATISATION

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [11.00 a.m.]: Today I refer to a matter that has been raised with me by Ken Roberts, a former wharfie and constituent of mine in the Blacktown electorate—the approach of the Government in relation to ports privatisation. Mr Roberts, who has worked on the waterfront for some time, raised concern about the approach of this Government to selling off port assets and highlighted the fact that ports are critical pieces of economic infrastructure that belong in public hands. The New South Wales Opposition agrees with the statement that ports should remain in public hands. Ports provide employment opportunities in regional areas such as the Illawarra and Newcastle and generate revenue for the whole State, which subsequently will be lost as a result of this Government's decision to sell port assets. The sale of the Port of Newcastle is another asset that will be lost.

Privatising ports to pay for infrastructure ultimately is a short-term fix. The question that has to be asked is: What will this great State do when everything has been sold and further infrastructure such as hospitals

and roads must be built? What will the State Government sell to fund the building of additional infrastructure? Mr Roberts showed disdain for this proposal and highlighted the disparity between the treatment of the Illawarra following the sale of Port Kembla and the proposed funding for Newcastle following the sale of the Port of Newcastle. Mr Roberts said that the fact that only \$100 million had been offered as compensation for the sale of Port Kembla and 50 per cent of the proceeds from the sale of the Port of Newcastle would be going to the Newcastle area was an insult to the people of the Illawarra as the area affected by the sale of Port Kembla in the Illawarra is larger than the area that will be affected by the sale of the Port of Newcastle.

To date, no-one in the Illawarra has seen one cent of the miserable \$100 million that has been promised by the Government. In contrast, 50 per cent of the proceeds of sale of the Port of Newcastle will be provided to the Newcastle region. Having worked on the waterfront Mr Roberts knows that employment and other opportunities will disappear with the sale of the port. The sale of those assets, in particular, the sale of Port Kembla and the way in which the people of the Illawarra have been treated in relation to this matter shows a disregard by this Government for the people of the Illawarra and is a short-sighted approach to the funding of new infrastructure. I find offensive this Government's \$100 million compensation offer for the sale of Port Kembla.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.04 a.m.]: I remind the member for Blacktown, who was a Minister in the former Labor Government, that if the O'Farrell Government had not inherited a \$5.2 billion deficit and an infrastructure backlog of \$30 billion in March 2011 it would not have had to make these necessary and tough decisions. As a result of the privatisation and leasing of Port Botany and Port Kembla, \$100 million will be dedicated to the Illawarra area for important infrastructure. The \$700 million proposal to lease the Port of Newcastle will result in \$350 million being injected into Newcastle for much-needed infrastructure. I commend the Premier and the Government on their approach to this matter.

SYDNEY UNITED 58 FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [11.05 a.m.]: I am sure many would agree with me when I say that football is a growing part of the Australian identity. Just like our tennis and swimming, we pride ourselves on our football achievements. It is a common belief that football was a sport for migrants and that it only became popular after European migration to Australia in the nineteenth century. However, these days the sport is not just restricted to migrant communities; football is now the most popular game, with more than 419,000 participants across Australia. The Croatian community, in particular, has helped to establish the thriving Australian football culture. It is a growing community, with about 118,000 people of Croatian ancestry across Australia. Croatians value highly their sporting culture, which is why they do so well at both a national and an international level.

They use sport as a means of promoting their traditions. The Croatian community in Australia has established more than 50 football clubs across the country and these clubs have produced a grand total of 69 Socceroos. In celebration of this, the King Tomislav Croatian Club in Edensor Park hosted the Golden Football Reunion on 9 June 2013. It was a night of celebration, with some of the best football players from the past 50 years honoured. Tony Popovic, Graham Arnold, Ron Corry, Robbie Slater and Mark Bosnich have all played football for Sydney United at one stage and were honoured on the evening.

On Sunday 2 May 2013 I was honoured to attend the official opening of the Sydney United 58 Football Club synthetic pitch. The new pitch will enable players to use the ground all year and hopefully this field will be the training ground on which future international football superstars will flourish. Sydney United 58 is a leading Australian football club that has produced elite players for the club with some going on to achieve amazing feats. For example, Tony Popovic started out as a player for Sydney United and rose to play for the Socceroos in the 2006 Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup. He now coaches the Western Sydney Wanderers, a team that has gained unprecedented victories in its inaugural year under his guidance.

Sydney United 58 Football Club is currently playing in the 2013 football New South Wales premier league 1, the highest State-level competition. I wish the club luck in its future games. I know it will make us proud. These Croatian clubs are wonderful at promoting teamwork and, most importantly, healthy exercise. I thank them for creating a warm and welcoming community for football players and fans alike. I acknowledge King Tomislav Club President Tomislav Lerotic and Sydney United Football Club President Mark Ivancic and their respective boards of directors for their fantastic achievements for the game of football at club level and nationally, and wish them the best.

I acknowledge Marko Franovic, a former president of Sydney United Football Club and a passionate supporter of the club. I thank the Australian Croatian community of western Sydney, and specifically my electorate of Smithfield, for their contribution to the game of football. Finally, I take this opportunity to wish the Australian Croatian community a wonderful celebration for their republic day celebration this weekend, which I will attend and have the honour of representing the New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell and the Minister for Communities and Citizenship, Victor Dominello.

CYCLISTS ROAD SAFETY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [11.10 a.m.]: On behalf of The Greens I speak about the urgent need for the New South Wales Government to legislate to protect cyclists. As New South Wales is the most dangerous State for cyclists, we need to act urgently and comprehensively to ensure that we are doing everything we can to protect them. Every year in Australia an average of 35 bicycle riders are killed and more than 9,500 are seriously injured. This year there have been 25 cyclist deaths in Australia. In New South Wales alone there have already been nine deaths—more than a third of the national total. The average number annually in New South Wales over the past 10 years is 11 deaths, so the fact that there have already been nine fatalities is particularly worrying.

In fact, in the past eight weeks eight cyclists have been killed on roads around Australia and more than half of those deaths resulted from a motorist hitting a cyclist from behind. One death was caused by a truck turning left into the path of a cyclist. These statistics are alarming and unacceptable and we must act urgently to ensure that this frightening trend does not continue. Yesterday I welcomed the announcement that Transport for NSW will join the Amy Gillett Foundation in launching a cyclist safety education campaign, which is a win for cycling safety and which resulted from the dedicated and long-time campaigning of the Amy Gillett Foundation and others. I acknowledge the great work of everyone involved with the foundation, especially chief executive officer Tracey Gaudry, patron Simon Gillett and the many cyclists and supporters who signed petitions and wrote to their local members of Parliament about this issue.

The Government's commitment to education is testimony to the effectiveness of this campaigning by the foundation and other groups. Last month I gave notice of a bill to require at least one metre overtaking distance when passing cyclists in response to the alarming rate of cyclist deaths in New South Wales. Many Australian Road Rules, including Road Rule 126, prescribe minimum distances, for example, when motorists are behind other vehicles on the road. I believe that, whilst education is important, the one-metre principle needs the force of the law in order to be effective.

New South Wales Roads and Maritime Services guidelines already recommend a one-metre minimum passing distance and yesterday's announcement by Transport for NSW further reinforces the principle by prioritising this vital education campaign. However, the existing recommendation is failing because it does not have the force of the law. We must have a legally enforceable minimum passing distance to protect cyclists and prevent further loss of life. The Government already recognises that this is a priority by funding the education campaign and now it should legislate accordingly. My office has been working closely with the Amy Gillett Foundation and we will continue to campaign both in the community and in the Parliament to legislate the one-metre minimum passing distance.

I note also the importance of the role of local government. Local councils have been working throughout New South Wales and Sydney through the intercity mayors forum, where councils work together to provide safe bike paths. On that note, I lament the decision of Leichhardt Municipal Council. I was a former mayor of Leichhardt. When I was elected mayor in 2008 council increased the budget for safe bike paths in our parks and along the bay run in our community from \$40,000 to \$400,000. The new Labor mayor, supported by the Liberals, decided to cut that budget to zero for this financial year, which is a regressive step.

I have been working with State Greens members of Parliament and members of Parliament from all parties around the country who seek to introduce similar legislation enshrining the one-metre minimum distance in law so that we can launch this campaign State by State, and build momentum for nationwide action on cyclist safety. I note that this week Senator Lee Rhiannon, who represents The Greens in the Senate, moved a motion calling on the Government to release the overdue report reviewing Australian Road Rules and Australian Vehicle Standards Rules that was due in March last year. I hope that the new Prime Minister acts to get the Government working in a number of areas, including the review of important rules that impact on cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. The positive steps that have been taken at the local government level must continue. I note that Amy Gillett was an amazing Australian. Her memory is encapsulated in the work of the Amy Gillett Foundation, which has as its focus improving the safety of cyclists and reducing the death toll.

The target is to have no deaths of cyclists on our roads by 2020. We need an integrated approach to legislation and to educating the community and cyclists in an attempt to minimise these deaths. Whenever I talk to people they are shocked when I inform them that eight cyclists have been killed in the past eight weeks. The Government must take steps to reduce these statistics. I am delighted with the role of Transport for NSW in funding the education campaign. Members would have seen full-page advertisements in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* highlighting the need to ensure that drivers and cyclists do the right thing. This not only has an impact on the families of those who have been killed in cycling accidents; it also has an effect on the drivers who must live with the deaths of these cyclists. We must act to improve cyclist safety. I commend cyclist safety to the Government for consideration.

DOGS NSW

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.15 a.m.]: On behalf of the New South Wales Government I welcome everyone in the public gallery. Today I acknowledge a wonderful organisation, the Royal New South Wales Canine Council, known as Dogs NSW, under the stewardship of the its capable president, Tom Couchman, and chairman, Elizabeth Gunter, who together represent the many thousands of responsible breeders of purebred dogs throughout New South Wales. This organisation, under its guidelines and strict code of ethics, provides responsible outcomes to ensure that these dog breeds remain pure. It is also the role of the organisation to ensure that responsible breeders do not step outside the guidelines but maintain the strict standards set by Dogs NSW.

Recently I was invited to attend the All Breeds Championship Show and Public Open Day at the Bill Spilstead Complex on Luddenham Road, Erskine Park, which was almost like a step back in time. The premises now occupied by Dogs NSW were originally the home of Leeholme Stud, which was owned by two important Australians, namely, Stan and Millie Fox. I do not need to remind members of my background in the thoroughbred racing industry and the fact that my father and I visited Leeholme Stud on various occasions transporting horses in and out of this complex. Every year the Stan Fox Stakes is run at Rosehill in honour of the family. However, the property is now home to Dogs NSW, which has made it a wonderful facility, not just for dog breeders to hold shows but also for the facility to be shared with the community, which is what occurred on 15 June.

Following the opening of the show I was asked to help cut the cake to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the granting of approval by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for the prefix "Royal" to be used by the New South Wales Canine Council. Queen Elizabeth granted that approval because Australian purebred breeders had given her two corgis. So the council became the Royal New South Wales Canine Council. I was pleased to help cut the cake on the important celebration of that twentieth anniversary. This event, which is open to the public, includes agility events and working dog exhibitions—an excellent day of entertainment for community members who can attend with their own dogs.

I acknowledge the attendance on the day of several of my colleagues—the member for Londonderry, Bart Bassett; the member for Smithfield, Andy Rohan; and, in particular, the member for Charlestown, Andrew Cornwall, who is also chairman of the Companion Animals Taskforce. That group is inquiring into changes to companion animals legislation to try to reduce the 30,000 dogs and cats that are cast aside every year in New South Wales, not by the very good breeders who follow the guidelines of Dogs NSW but by irresponsible people. These animals subsequently end up in our pounds and are then euthanased. The Government is seeking positively and proactively to change the arrangement to achieve better outcomes on behalf of companion animals. I acknowledge the member for Charlestown, chairman of the Companion Animals Taskforce, the member for Wollongong, who has just joined us, and the Hon. Robert Borsak and the Hon. Marie Ficarra from the upper House. It was a wonderful day. I congratulate Dogs NSW on a well-organised and popular event.

CANCER RESEARCH FUNDRAISING

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [11.19 a.m.]: I, too, acknowledge the group in the gallery today and welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. Today I speak about an issue that I am sure is close to the hearts of many throughout the country—the insidious disease of cancer. This year alone more than 100,000 Australians will be diagnosed with cancer. One in three females and one in two males will be diagnosed with cancer by the time they reach the age of 85. Cancer has a huge impact right across our community: on the services that we deliver as a government, on families and on everyone. If people have not been touched by cancer themselves the chances are that they will know someone who has. That is why I want to talk about the important work that is happening to raise much-needed funds to fight the battle against cancer so we can end it once and for all.

Cancer does not discriminate: it affects young or old, male or female, black or white, Catholic or Protestant. I am speaking about this issue because last year my father was touched by the disease when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I encourage all the men in the gallery and any men reading this private member's statement to have a check-up, because that is what saved my father. He had a check-up, the cancer was detected early and now he is cancer free. My father's story is not unique, but 20 years ago that diagnosis could have been a death sentence and I might have been telling a different story today. As a community we have come together to fight this disease and we have raised much-needed funding to tackle it head-on.

I acknowledge Annie Crawford, one person who played a particularly important role in raising funds to tackle cancer. Annie was the founder of Can Too, an organisation that provides fitness and health support and raises funds for Cure Cancer Australia. Since 2007, through Can Too, Annie raised more than \$11.5 million and she changed many lives—not only those who have been saved by Can Too funded research but also the many people who participated in the Can Too programs and achieved fitness and lifestyle goals way past their expectations.

Can Too provides professional training in running, swimming and triathlon. In return, participants raise money for cancer research through Cure Cancer Australia. One hundred researchers have been funded through Can Too and many of them are making groundbreaking discoveries. Eight thousand people have participated in Can Too's programs and one of those participants is someone particularly special to me—Margaret-Anne Hayes, a constituent of mine. At 73 years old she is the oldest participant in the Can Too fitness program. Some people may have seen her on the *Today* program on television, which reported on her raising money by jumping out of a plane. Skydiving at 73 years of age—what a remarkable lady.

The work that Margaret-Anne is doing to raise much-needed funds for cancer continues. On 26 July she will host a fundraiser for cancer research at the Hornsby RSL Club in my community. Her aim is to raise \$100,000 this year. Whether she is jumping out of planes, running or organising an old-fashioned country ball, which will be held at the Hornsby RSL Club, she is making a remarkable difference to the lives of so many. Today I pay tribute to all those people who are taking up the challenge in the battle against cancer, but particularly Annie Crawford, who recently was honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Annie reflects all that is good in our community. We all share the results of her generosity and selflessness through the work that she does and the difference that she has made to countless numbers of Australians because of her fundraising, her advocacy and her encouragement of people to go and get check-ups. I also acknowledge the wonderful work of Margaret-Anne Hayes, a tireless and dedicated worker for her cause. I wish her every success in the upcoming fundraiser at the Hornsby RSL Club and for the years ahead as she continues to take up the battle to fight this insidious disease.

TRIBUTE TO DION BOURNE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [11.24 a.m.]: I pay tribute to a longstanding member of the community of Bankstown, Mr Dion Bourne. Mr Bourne sadly passed away on Tuesday 18 June 2013 after a short battle with cancer. Dion will be remembered as a friend to many, a passionate sportsman, a community advocate and a local cricket legend. He held the record in the Bankstown District Cricket Club for scoring the highest runs, with 9,131 runs across all grades, and to this day he still holds the record for the most first-grade runs for the club, with 8,149 runs. Dion captained first-grade cricket for a record seven successive seasons, and was a very active member of the club, as honorary treasurer for a record 19 seasons, as chairman of selectors and as a member of the selection panel for 10 years. Dion also served as a selector for New South Wales for 10 years—a role he filled with great distinction.

In recognition of his great commitment and contribution to cricket and the Bankstown District Cricket Club, of which he was a member of the management committee for 33 years, Dion was awarded the honour of lifetime membership to the club. Marty Klumpp of Bankstown District Soccer Club described Dion as being passionate about cricket—a trait to which many in Bankstown can attest. At the funeral Mick Stephenson, his friend of 50 years, spoke passionately of Dion's commitment to cricket and of his comradeship and mateship; he was a mate to all. In recognition of his commitment to the sport, in 1995 Bankstown City Council named the Bankstown Oval scoreboard the Dion Bourne Scoreboard. In April 2013 Bankstown City Council transferred this honour to the new digital scoreboard—the most sophisticated to be erected at a suburban cricket ground in Australia.

I have a fond memory of his personal interest in the welfare of his friends and colleagues. Dion genuinely wanted to help people and to see them achieve their best, and he will be greatly missed by the broader

Bankstown community. I remember in particular that last year he supported one of his lifelong friends, Mick Stephenson, in his time of need. Dion became a member of Bankstown Sports Club in 1968. Due to his contribution to the Bankstown District Cricket Club and his sporting background, in 2003 he was appointed as a director of the club.

Bankstown Sports Club president, John Murray, noted that Mr Bourne represented the club very well over his years as director—an honour that I know he took seriously. He saw that position as a great honour and a great privilege. Mr Bourne's profession as a certified practising accountant proved to be highly beneficial to the club also, particularly at a time when the club was expanding. His extensive experience in the industry helped the club move forward and become the great institution that it is today. Mr Dion Bourne was, and will continue to be, an iconic figure in the cricketing community as well as in the broader Bankstown community. His contributions were immense and his achievements were great. The loss of Mr Bourne is a tragedy for the cricket and club movement not only in Bankstown but also across New South Wales.

I extend sincere condolences to Mr Bourne's wife, Brenda, his children and their partners Jackie, David, Cassy, John, James and Chanel, grandchildren Harry, Evangeline and Ruby, and extended family. Dion's family and his mates were everything to him. Mr Bourne always saw greatness in people and he will be remembered as such. He was an honourable and kind-hearted man, who will be sorely missed. He leaves behind a legacy of which his family and his mates can be very proud. At Dion's moving funeral service, which was attended by more than 500 people—in fact, I think it was closer to 1,000—his son, James, quoted a line that Mr Bourne lived by: "If you look for evil, you will find evil; if you look for good, you will find good." Mr Dion Bourne always looked for the good in people. Vale Dion Bourne.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [11.29 a.m.]: Last Friday I was invited to open the Branson Centre at Bishop Druitt College, which is an Anglican school in my electorate. With a \$400,000 grant from the Federal Government and its own investment this private school has built a \$3.16 million multi-use stadium that contains classrooms, rubberised basketball courts, netball facilities and the whole box and dice. The Branson Centre was named in honour of Victor Branson, the first principal of the school, who arrived in Coffs Harbour some 20 years ago to open the college for 57 students. The school's population has now grown to more than 1,200 students. It was a pleasure to listen to the 2012 dux of the college, Hugh Chan, address the students.

The event showed that not only public education but also private education can excel. For a number of years people have aspired to copy Bishop Druitt College. It is always ranked in the top 200 schools in the State. I extend my congratulations not only to Victor Branson but also to the current principal, Mr Alan Ball, and all the teachers and students. It was a fantastic day. As I said in opening the Branson Centre, if the management of Bishop Druitt College spoke to the Minister for Education and his department we would get far more bang for our buck than other schools across the State achieved under the stimulus package.

On Saturday my wife and I had the pleasure of attending a performance of *Dr Wondorium's Toy Factorium* by the Bongil Bongil Community of Schools. The musical was written by Cheryl Ward, a music and drama teacher at Toormina High School, and choreographed by Louise Wilson. Even though I missed most of the rugby on the night and only heard the part where Kurtley Beale slipped over on the last kick, it was worth it. The children from Toormina High School, Bonville Public School, Sawtell Public School, William Bayldon Public School, Boambee Public School and Toormina Public School did a fantastic job. I congratulate principals Liz Donnan, Michael Hepi, Michael Cheers, Jim Walsh, Kathy Puddey and Peter Miles on their schools' involvement in staging the production.

The students spent six to eight months practising their performance and they were truly professional. The production lasted for almost three hours. All the children always had a smile on their faces and every parent was bursting with pride to see them perform. The pupil who played the role of Jack in the Box had a non-speaking part but kept everyone enthralled. He really kept the show together because during quiet moments the audience could watch Jack—he was always doing something. As the local member I was extremely proud of the students' dancing and acting, and the choir's singing.

Just as I was proud of the pupils at Bishop Druitt College, I am also proud of those public school students who got together after school hours to rehearse and put on such a fantastic performance. It was truly

professionally performed and conducted. Once again, I congratulate all those involved. Cheryl Ward said on the night that she will not write another production. I made the appeal to her then and I repeat it in this Chamber: Cheryl, please continue what you are doing. The children learn a hell of a lot when they perform in these shows and it gives the community an opportunity to see the extra things that teachers do to provide the students with skills that they would not otherwise learn. I congratulate all those involved and commend them for their performance.

Private members' statements concluded.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr Greg Smith agreed to:

That this House do now adjourn.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 11.35 a.m. until
Tuesday 13 August 2013 at 12 noon.**
