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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 18 March 2014

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

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

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

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

*[During notices of motions.]*

**Mr Barry Collier:** Point of order: I take objection to the member for Oatley addressing me by my surname as I leave the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members should refer to other members by their correct titles.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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### TUMBARUMBA WINES

**Mr GREG APLIN** (Albury) [12.10 p.m.]: Last October a wine from Tumbarumba, in the north-east of the Albury electorate, was named Best Sparkling at the Australian Sparkling Wine Show. More recently the wine claimed the best sparkling wine trophy for the second year in a row at the New South Wales Wine Awards and also won the People's Choice Award. Following the success of this particular wine, the winemaker has been invited to attend the International Wine Fair in Europe, which will be held in the Italian city of Verona later this month. I understand it is the largest wine trade show in the world. Suddenly everyone is talking about Tumbarumba wines, and particularly about its sparkling wines and chardonnay grapes. It is another case of an overnight sensation—or is it?

The winning winery, Courabyra, first planted grapes in Tumbarumba 23 years ago, while the first vines in the region were only planted in 1981. In Australian terms it is perhaps not a very old wine area, but the current success and attention drawn to the wines of Tumbarumba are the result of anything but an overnight sensation. It has been the result of hard work by the wine-growing pioneers. The 2014 vintage, harvested recently, has undergone damaging rain, frost and, most recently, summer hail. Such is the pathway to success. The wine garnering much of the attention at the moment is the Courabyra 805, a blend of pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier from the 2001 vintage. In his review of this trophy-winning wine, Huon Hooke said:

It is truly in the vintage-to-prestige cuvee champagne class. Not quite a freak wine, as some have said; more an indication of what is possible with investment in time and attention to detail.

At a price of \$65.00 it is competing head to head with champagne and the very best Australian sparkling wines. Not only is this wine competing; it is winning and it can be found on the wine lists of some of Sydney's most prestigious restaurants. But this particular wine is not a fluke. While reflecting on recent tastings of Australian sparkling wine, Hooke added:

Tasmania starred, but Tumbarumba keeps adding to its claim to be considered Australia's second-best sparkling wine region.

For lovers of wine, one of the key words has become "terroir" meaning, in this context, the influence of the environment and climate—that is, the land, soil and weather—on the grapes and therefore on the wine produced in a specific location. As consumers we are looking for foods and beverages which display characteristics of their origin—their terroir—and, indeed, which embody the personal style of the producer.

The Tumbarumba region was identified as having a cool climate similar to that of the Burgundy and Champagne regions of France, which is favourable for grape varieties such as chardonnay, sauvignon blanc and pinot noir. Everyone is looking for chardonnay and, increasingly, pinot noir, from Tumbarumba growers. This harvest the growers have had wine producers calling up to buy grapes only to be told they are too late. The message to wine producers has become, "Sorry, it's all sold." Indeed, some growers are doubling their production.

Most of the operators are family-owned businesses—the Wilkinsons, the Barclays, the Grants and the Cottams among them. They sell grapes to winemaking companies to turn into wine bearing labels of brands such as Penfolds, Hungerford Hill, Cassegrain, McWilliams, Sir James, and many more. Until recently one surprising grower was Mannus Correctional Centre, which is a minimum-security institution for 164 males, situated around 10 kilometres outside the town of Tumbarumba. In 1998 Tumbarumba was declared a recognised wine region of Australia by the Geographic Indicators Committee. Currently the region has approximately 300 hectares of vines and 19 vineyards, five of which offer cellar-door sales. One of the secrets of the success at Courabyra has been an ongoing program of personalised vineyard tours. Owner Cathy Gairn puts it this way:

Our consumers love to hear the story ... the background to the wine, how it was made and how the grapes were grown. They want to meet the growers and makers.

In the past 12 months Cathy and Brian Gairn estimate they have led 400 tours over their property. As the region rises to national and international prominence, new investment is heading Tumbarumba's way. In late February Tumbarumba Shire Council gave approval for a new winery at Paddy's River. The winery will include viticulture, winemaking, cellar door sales and a restaurant-function centre. Another winery, after many years in the area, is halfway through constructing its own cellar-door area and restaurant, while Janine Barclay already operates the very successful Wine Shed Cellar Door Cafe at Mannus Wines.

The level of financial commitment to Tumbarumba wines is rising fast. Food and beverage fashions come and go—that is the nature of the industry. But there seems no doubt now that Tumbarumba has what it takes to make outstanding, internationally recognised wines. The climate and landscape combine with the dedication, skill and sheer hard work of the Tumbarumba growers and winemakers and the result is something special, particularly for sparkling wines and the grape varieties chardonnay and pinot noir. People should keep their eye on Tumbarumba and look for that name when scanning a restaurant wine list or when standing in a shop reading wine labels and hunting for the right wine. They will not be disappointed in Tumbarumba.

### NEWCASTLE REGIONAL ART GALLERY

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [12.15 p.m.]: Investing in the redevelopment of the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery is good business: it is a win-win move for the Hunter. For a relatively small sum of money the New South Wales Government had the opportunity to radically transform the cultural landscape of Newcastle to provide a massive boost to the profitability of a cultural icon with the flow-on benefit of boosted economic activity to the rest of the region. That is why our community finds it so hard to believe that the New South Wales Minister for the Hunter, the Premier and my colleague the member for Newcastle failed to support the Hunter region with such an obviously beneficial and economically sensible decision.

In his inaugural speech the member for Newcastle verbally promised support for the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, one of the greatest cultural resources in his electorate and one of the great drawcards attracting tourists to the Hunter, thus benefiting our standing in the cultural community in New South Wales as well as enhancing our economy. When Sharon Grierson, the former Federal member for Newcastle, secured Federal funding of \$7,000 for the gallery upgrade, the member for Newcastle assured the people of Newcastle—a community which includes many artists and art lovers, and which has raised \$1 million of its own community money—that State funding for the redevelopment of the art gallery was forthcoming. But the member for Newcastle never came up with the money.

Sydney received \$310 million in the last State budget for its cultural institutions. Newcastle was asking for a total of \$7 million. According to my calculations, that is about a forty-fourth of the amount allocated to Sydney, which is not much when one considers that our Hunter-based State-owned corporations provide \$629.6 million in dividend and tax payments to Sydney. On top of that, Sydney receives close to \$900 million in coal royalties from the Hunter region. When the figures show clearly a total contribution of \$1.5 billion from the Hunter to the State, I see no reason why Sydney could not give back \$7 million for this essential work.

The State Government has highlighted the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery redevelopment as a catalyst project for the renewal of the Newcastle central business district in its own Hunter Regional Strategy for the NSW 2021 document. An economic impact report produced in March 2013 by the Prosperity Advisers Group shows that the construction involved in the gallery redesign would result in the generation of \$12.5 million in additional production and \$7,400,000 in additional consumption.

The combined flow-on benefit is estimated to total \$19,900,000. Including the construction costs, the total and immediate economic benefit from the development was estimated at \$40,900,000. The redevelopment also would generate an additional 152 jobs during the construction period. The effect of the gallery redevelopment on tourism in the Hunter is shown to be significant with the report indicating an additional 2,819 tourist visits generating additional expenditure in the region of \$873,890 per annum. I want to know why the member for Newcastle, the Minister for the Arts and the Premier of New South Wales let such a wonderful opportunity slip through their hands as a result of their inaction and be lost to the region.

### **GUNNEDAH WEEK OF SPEED**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [12.20 p.m.]: On Saturday 15 March I had the pleasure of attending the Gunnedah Week of Speed, which is held over a five-day period. I congratulate the Week of Speed committee which spent a great deal of time helping to coordinate events. Organisations across the great Gunnedah community have worked together to stage events to highlight the Week of Speed—a massive community effort. The Week of Speed committee is led by Ray Darcey. I sincerely congratulate Ray and his team, as well as Chris Friend, Economic Development Manager for Gunnedah Shire Council, who also worked hard to organise the Week of Speed. The Week of Speed was officially opened by Councillor Owen Hasler, mayor of Gunnedah.

Some of the events included the Gunnedah Triathlon Club teams events, the Gunnedah Jockey Club Boggabri Cup race meeting, the Gunnedah Coursing Club Week of Speed finals day at the greyhound track, the Gunnedah and Tamworth Motorcycle Clubs Bikes Speedway Spectacular at the Gunnedah Showground, the Gunnedah Tens for Ten Thousand Rugby Union tournament at Gunnedah's Rugby Park and the Mount Porcupine Hill Climb at Apex Drive on Porcupine Hill, which is always a spectacular event. The Gunnedah markets also participated, displaying a range of produce from handcrafted goods, delicious cakes, slices, homemade goods and lots of other knick-knacks from our great region to sample and take home. Spectators watched 500 rubber ducks float down the mighty Namoi River during the Week of Speed duck race. Michelle Pyke won the first prize of \$300. My duck sank to the bottom of the Namoi River but I will certainly try again next year in the hope of winning some money to donate to the community.

On Saturday morning the big event was the Rural Museum Tractor Trek, street parade and car, bike, ute and tractor display Show 'n Shine, which trekked down Conadilly Street. I had the pleasure of driving and riding in a magnificent 1964 Humber Super Snipe owned by Graham and Jean Hutchison—a premium luxury saloon. The ride was as smooth as silk. Sitting in the back seat was the lovely Jean Hutchison who took on the role of the Queen. As timber tables fold down from the front seats she was able to sit in the back seat and sip a glass of champagne. Sam, my eight-year-old son, who was sitting in the front enjoyed the smell of leather and the beautiful timber dash. I sincerely thank Graham and Jean for entrusting me with their pride and joy which I slowly and delicately drove down the main street of Gunnedah.

In addition to the street parade there were a number of other events such as the Tamworth Drag Club Drag Racing and the Gunnedah Aero Modellers Club Day. On Saturday 22 March the big finale will take place with the Gunnedah Blue Vale Speedway Spectacular. The Gunnedah Week of Speed is an example of how community organisations can work together to showcase what our region can do. The Week of Speed lives up to its title, "Do you feel the need ... the need for speed?" Good luck to Ray Darcey, who drives a street stocker and who will be rolling around at the Blue Vale Speedway this Saturday night. I sat in Ray Darcey's Holden street stocker and comfort is a minimum requirement. I have been invited to drive one of the cars around Gunnedah's Blue Vale Speedway and I look forward to doing so one day. The region's leading fender benders will also be on show. Scott Riley, one of the best drivers in our region, will be making his presence felt when the fender benders go around the track. I again congratulate Ray Darcey and his team and I thank them for allowing me to be part of Gunnedah's Week of Speed. I look forward to a bigger and brighter event in 2015.

### **NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST BULLYING AND VIOLENCE**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK** (South Coast—The Speaker) [12.25 p.m.]: This week we acknowledge National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence. Established in 2011, the National Day of Action

Against Bullying and Violence is an initiative that aims to raise awareness of how young people, schools, parents and communities can make a stand against bullying and violence. In addition to the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence, the Bully Zero Australia Foundation has established the digital detox program A Safer Nation for Every Generation. It is reported that one in five Australians is cyberbullied, which is almost five million people. Unfortunately, bullying has been around for far too long. As a former schoolteacher I have seen firsthand the effects that bullying has on children.

With the rapid expansion of social media, smart phones, mobile phones and the ever increasing use of the internet, the scale of bullying, cyberbullying, and internet trolling has reached totally unacceptable levels. Approximately 27 per cent or one in four Australian students in year 4 to year 9 report bullying every few weeks or more often. Unfortunately, being on the receiving end of bullying, cyberbullying or internet trolling is too much for some people. Such was the case for Courtney, a 15-year-old student in Kiama. She was a constant victim of bullying. She turned to self-harm and posted photos on social media of the damage she had done to herself. The response she received was grotesque, to say the least. Anonymous trolls posted comments such as "Show us more" and "Just do it and stop talking". Unfortunately, on 5 October 2012 that is exactly what Courtney did. She had been battling face-to-face bullying, online bullying and oppression for approximately two years when she finally succumbed to the pressure.

According to the 2009 Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study conducted by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre, 32 per cent of frequent school bullying occurs amongst year 5 students and 29 per cent amongst year 8 students; 83 per cent of students who bully others online also bully others offline; and 84 per cent of students who were bullied online were also bullied offline. Peers are present as onlookers for 87 per cent of the time during bullying interactions and play a central role in the bullying process. Hurtful teasing was the most prevalent of all bullying behaviours experienced by students, followed by hurtful lies being told about them. Cyberbullying appears to be related to age or access to technology with older students more likely to engage in cyberbullying than younger students.

Enough is enough. As adults we have a responsibility to set an example for students and young people. Unfortunately members in this Chamber are not immune to bullying. Politicians are fair game when it comes to internet trolling and cyberbullying. I am sure that not one member of this House has not received bullying emails from anonymous trolls. There is an expectation that we face a fair share of criticism and I welcome healthy debates on this subject. However, the line that is all too often crossed is when those in the public eye are subject to personal, vicious and malicious attacks online from anonymous individuals. Over the years most members have developed very thick skins. We can take the name calling, abuse and lies that are directed at us. However, for young people such as Courtney, it is simply unacceptable. How can adults set examples for students and young people when they allow themselves to be the victims of bullying?

We all have a responsibility, including the media. The media presides over many of the chat and internet forums with little or no regulation for comments. In fact, on many online media websites, names, ages and locations are often falsified or left blank, creating surges of abuse from internet trolls against many public and private figures. Most people can turn a blind eye or simply ignore the mis-truths and abuse. Unfortunately for others, as in the case of media identity Charlotte Dawson, it can become all too much. Today I call on the media to lead the way in diminishing the level of cyberbullying and the effects internet trolls have on today's society. Moderators of online forums must themselves display higher standards for all of us to follow. Appropriate identification of those posting, including ages, locations and names must be disclosed, and that will make a difference.

Further, email registration and verification of online posters must be sought from moderators. As adults we must set an example. It starts with us. It is too late for 15-year-old Courtney and others such as Charlotte Dawson but it is not too late for the rest of us to start setting an example; our own behaviour should be on show. I acknowledge Orange Ribbon Day on Friday, and ribbons will be available from my office on Friday.

### **VIETNAMESE LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL**

**Mr NICK LALICH** (Cabramatta) [12.30 p.m.]: As one of the most culturally diverse communities in Australia, Cabramatta is home to more than 6,000 people of Vietnamese ancestry of whom more than 37 per cent speak Vietnamese at home. So it makes sense that one of the biggest events in the Cabramatta calendar is the Vietnamese Tet Festival, which in February celebrates the Lunar New Year and is considered by Vietnamese people to be the most important annual event. In Sydney the Tet Festival has been organised by the Vietnamese Community in Australia New South Wales Chapter since the early 1980s. The organisation

represents about 80,000 Vietnamese-Australian people Australia-wide. The Vietnamese Tet Festival was originally held at Cabra-Vale Park for a number of years, until the festival got too popular and outgrew the small park. It then moved to Warwick Farm Racecourse before returning home to the City of Fairfield in 2009, where it started and where it truly belongs.

The Tet Festival is an experience that should not be missed. When the sun starts to sink, there is usually a line of hundreds of people, many of them children, waiting to come through the gates of Fairfield Showground. The three-day event attracts about 50,000 people including families from all over Sydney. They come for a family outing to enjoy the excitement of the lion and dragon dances, the thrilling rides, games, interesting stalls, firecrackers, Vietnamese music and entertainment and, importantly, the food. People can try all the delicacies that Vietnamese cuisine has to offer at the Tet Festival. I had a great time at the festival this year, where Mr Guy Zangari, the member for Fairfield and shadow Minister for Citizenship and Communities and I had a stall. It was great to be there to meet members of our community and listen to their concerns. Strangely, but not surprisingly, not one Liberal stall was to be seen.

**Mr Chris Patterson:** Were there any Greens?

**Mr NICK LALICH:** Walking around the showground it was heartwarming to see the excitement on children's faces; some were getting in touch with their cultural backgrounds and some were enjoying the experience of learning about another culture. Madam Speaker, sometimes interjections can be classed as bullying.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! Addressing me as "Madam Speaker" could be considered bullying.

**Mr NICK LALICH:** One of the really nice touches at the festival this year was a sculpture of a small wooden boat, which resembles the type of craft in which many refugees escaped war-torn Vietnam. It is a reminder to young Australian-Vietnamese of what their parents endured to give them a better life and a reminder to everyone of how much we have to be grateful for, living in this great country. The Vietnamese community in Australia, and particularly Cabramatta, can be proud of its contribution to this country. Vietnamese people have set up businesses, created jobs, become doctors, teachers and nurses and raised children to be productive members of society. As the member for Cabramatta I have the great honour of working closely with the Vietnamese community and I look forward to continuing to do so. I am pleased to have this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Vietnamese Community in Australia, its Federal President, Mr Tri Vo, Vietnamese Community in Australia New South Wales Chapter President, Dr Thang Ha, and Vice-Presidents Maria Tran, Dinh Thuy Cong Tran, Davy Nguyen and Linh Duy Nguyen. I am looking forward to next year's festival and hope that many members in this Chamber will join me.

### SENIORS WEEK

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS** (Port Macquarie) [12.34 p.m.]: Seniors make a wonderful contribution in our community and Seniors Week is one way to celebrate and acknowledge their work. On Sunday afternoon I joined hundreds in the audience at the Glasshouse in Port Macquarie for the Salute to Our Seniors Concert. This very fittingly titled concert program, performed by Sinfonia Mid North Coast and conducted by James Hanna and Iain Pole, was subsidised by the New South Wales Government. Yesterday I attended the sensational Seniors Lifestyle Expo held at Port Panthers; again this program was subsidised by State funding. I had the great pleasure to present a number of Seniors Achievement Awards at the expo, which again was well attended.

As Minister Ajaka said, these awards are the community's way of saying thank you to seniors for their enthusiasm and their impressive commitment to their community. The first person I acknowledge is Sandra Graham. Sandra received an award as the founder of Golden Girls, which provides companionship and support for many women who are living alone in our local area. Often women who have lost their spouse or partner do not have the support of family nearby and do not have the confidence to attend public events alone. Sandra could see a need in the community in this space and so formed the Golden Girls in 2008. Since its inception some 200 women living in the Hastings have been the beneficiaries of Sandra's network.

I also acknowledge Jill King who was recognised yesterday for her support and advocacy assisting others in our local community. Jill resides in a residential village in Port Macquarie and is renowned among all who live there for her kindness, selflessness and the support and companionship she provides to others in their time of need. As one nominator said:

... you can be sure that at any given time Jill will be caring for somebody in one way or another be it providing transport, taking people to medical appointments, shopping, visiting the sick in hospital, preparing meals for others. Well done Jill.

Brian Buckett is well known throughout the Hastings community for his many leadership roles including President of the Douglas Vale Historic Vineyard, the Hastings Combined Seniors and the Foreshore Protection Association. Brian is also actively involved with other organisations including the Port Macquarie Town Centre Committee, the Hastings Council Access Sub-Committee, the Port Macquarie Historical Society, the Mid North Coast Maritime Museum, the Players Theatre and the Hastings Valley Fine Arts Association. On behalf of the Port Macquarie community I extend an enormous thank you to Brian for his wonderful effort.

I also had the opportunity to acknowledge two organisations at the expo. Volunteers at the Lifeline Shop at Gordon Street, Port Macquarie, work tirelessly to make a positive difference in the lives of people in the Hastings area and were deservedly recognised at the event. All proceeds from the hard work of the many volunteers in the shop are directed to the Lifeline telephone crisis support and suicide prevention service. The volunteers in the shop consist mainly of senior members of the community who work to not only fundraise for this vital service but also to provide those who are struggling financially in the community with a place to shop for clothing and goods. The shop has been in operation for 24 years and is working towards the vision of a suicide-free local community.

Finally, I recognise Hastings District Respite Care for its outstanding service to the people living with dementia in our community, their carers and families. Hastings District Respite Care provides support on a daily basis through the provision of centre-based activities in purpose-built locations at Laurieton, Greenmeadows and Sherwood. They offer innovative community-based programs tailored to meet the needs of individual clients. Hastings District Respite Care, under the strong and innovative leadership of Raymond Gouck, has recently been awarded growth funding which will allow respite services to be extended in our community to six days per week. With the Port Macquarie electorate having the second highest prevalence of dementia in the State it is vitally important that we continue to expand and diversify services. Congratulations again and an enormous thank you to all of the award recipients as well as to all seniors during this, their special week.

### CYCLISTS ROAD SAFETY

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [12.39 p.m.]: I encourage this Government to take legislative steps to protect cyclists. We know that New South Wales is the most dangerous State for cyclists as an average of 35 cyclists are killed and more than 9,500 seriously injured on the roads in New South Wales each year. In June 2013 I highlighted the fact that eight cyclists had been killed in the previous eight weeks. We know that across New South Wales there is fear amongst cyclists because of the lack of capacity of this Government to take the appropriate steps to help protect cyclists. I note in today's *Daily Telegraph* an editorial that encourages people to look out for cyclists, which is very positive, but legislative steps need to be taken.

The Queensland Government, for example, has acted on the cyclist safety education campaign by the Amy Gillett Foundation and others and legislated to ensure that there is a minimum passing distance of one metre between motor vehicles and cyclists on all roadways. I am advised that the New South Wales Government will monitor that legislation over the coming 24 months but in that time another 60 or 70 cyclists will no doubt be killed on our roads. The Greens and members of Parliament from all parties in Tasmania supported the introduction of "one metre matters" legislation. The City of Sydney Council also supports the one metre matters legislation.

Last year I gave notice of a bill to require an overtaking distance of one metre when vehicles pass cyclists and in preparing that private member's bill I had extensive discussions and negotiations with the Government and departmental officers, as well as representatives from the Minister's office. The major objection raised was to the question of enforceability—namely, the determination of a one-metre gap between a motor vehicle and a cyclist being too difficult for police to determine. I have two comments to make about that. Firstly, a stronger message needs to be sent to drivers that whilst an impact with a bike may only amount to a scratch on a car, it can also lead to the death of a cyclist. Members will recall the accident that occurred last Sunday morning on Southern Cross Drive where several cyclists were injured after a collision with a motor vehicle. Today two of those cyclists remain in a serious condition in hospital. These types of accidents are avoidable. I note that our road rules state that there should be an overtaking distance of one metre but it is only a guideline. This should be legislated and enforced, not a guideline.

Secondly, when it comes to enforcement, police already determine distances. For example, under our current road rules there is already a minimum distance requirement between long vehicles that police monitor. Riding too close to the rear of a motor vehicle is another distance-based measure that police have to make a determination about in order to be satisfied that an offence has occurred. It is nonsense to say that it is



impossible for police to be able to determine whether there is a distance of one metre between a motor vehicle and a cyclist. This issue is not whether it is a distance of 995 millimetres or 1,005 millimetres; police can clearly see a dangerous distance between a cyclist and a motor vehicle. If a motor vehicle is at fault then a penalty should be imposed to protect our cyclists and prevent further loss of lives.

Cycling has many important functions, including maintaining and improving one's health, as well as helping to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. The number of cyclists in this State is increasing dramatically. The O'Farrell Government is averse to supporting cycleways and there are ongoing stoushes about that. I call on all members to look seriously at the legislation of conservative governments that has been introduced in Queensland and is set to be introduced in Tasmania. The New South Wales Government should be doing everything possible to protect the lives of cyclists. The Government should not wait two years to review what is happening in Queensland. It should look to Europe and the United States of America, which already have introduced this law to help protect cyclists.

### **BAHA'I FAITH**

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.44 p.m.]: Pittwater is best known for its natural heritage but two cultural heritage landmarks in Pittwater are internationally renowned: the Barrenjoey Lighthouse on Barrenjoey Headland and the Baha'i Temple at Ingleside—the headquarters of the Baha'i faith in Australia and one of seven Baha'i temples across the globe. The Barrenjoey Lighthouse is unmanned and alone, but the Baha'i Temple is a vibrant and active place of learning, human interactions and prayer. For more than 50 years the nine-sided Baha'i Temple has been a landmark for people travelling through the forest to the northern beaches, and in many ways is emblematic of the hopes and expectations of visitors to the northern peninsula on a visit to the beach.

Whilst I follow a different faith, one of my real joys in being the local member for Pittwater has been getting to know and understand the people who sustain and celebrate the life and work of the Baha'i Temple. Each and every one of them is a powerful and persuasive example of the peace, joy and human development they have experienced through their faith. Baha'is are noticeably different in their patience, respectfulness and other person-centredness. Their monotheistic faith is based on the concept that there is one God and that all religions are ultimately focused on this same God as their spiritual source and foundation. Baha'is also believe that all people are created equal and that prejudice and division are destructive. The Baha'i faith envisages a very different world—one based on mutual respect and tolerance for difference and on the fundamental unity and oneness of humanity.

With a message and foundation of tolerance, respect and peace, it is disturbing, puzzling, and ironic that Baha'is have been the subject of such widespread rejection, persecution and outright violence in the land from which the Baha'i faith first developed. The origins of their modern Baha'i faith can be traced to Shiraz in Iran where a teacher calling himself the Bab—literally, the Gate—prophesied the coming of a messiah who would point the way to God. He and his followers were persecuted by the then Persian authorities. One of the Bab's followers, Mirza Husayn Ali Nuri, later took the title of Baha'u'llah, revealing that he was the messenger of whom the Bab spoke. Baha'u'llah was persecuted and exiled, and was eventually released to house arrest near the prison town of Akko, in now northern Israel. The nearby town of Haifa soon became the centre of a growing worldwide religion, and is now the international headquarters of the Baha'i movement.

I recently had the opportunity to visit Haifa, where my grandmother was born. I was delighted to visit the Baha'i headquarters and the breathtaking gardens that have been developed by the Baha'is over many years, and are now one of the major tourist attractions of the burgeoning city of Haifa. It was a great privilege as the elected representative for the area so proud to host Australia's Baha'i Temple to visit the international headquarters and meet with the newly appointed Secretary-General of the Baha'i International Community, Dr Joshua Lincoln. Sadly, the historical persecution of the Baha'i community in their traditional birthplace of Iran continues. Baha'is are among several religious minorities in Iran subject to varying degrees of persecution, including Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians.

Paul Marshall of the Hudson Institute noted that while Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians have limited rights under the constitution of Iran, the Baha'i faith has no legal status and its members therefore have no rights. He noted also that Baha'is are the most intensively persecuted religious group in Iran, and murdering a Baha'i or any other apostate carries no punishment. The Government continues to target Baha'is. In 2008 Iranian authorities arrested seven Baha'i leaders and charged them with a number of crimes, including insulting religious sanctities and propaganda against the state. In March 2011, the same year the Baha'i Temple celebrated

50 years in Australia, the seven were told, without explanation, that although an appeals courts had lowered their sentences they would continue to serve the original term of 20 years imprisonment. The Baha'i faith in Iran is also persecuted through not having access to many government jobs or being allowed to undertake higher education. Consequently the Baha'i community organised its own university but on 22 May that year authorities raided 39 homes of the administrators, staff and students of the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education and detained many of them. This is an example of the persecution that the Baha'is in Iran face.

I am appalled that the peaceful, friendly and selfless people that I have met are faced with such senseless persecution, and I earnestly hope and pray that those imprisoned might soon be released. I wish the Australian Baha'is all the best in their search for truth and peace. I conclude with the words of the Baha'u'llah:

If the learned and worldly-wise men of this age were to allow mankind to inhale the fragrance of fellowship and love, every understanding heart would apprehend the meaning of true liberty, and discover the secret of undisturbed peace and absolute composure.

### HARMONY HOUSE EXTENSIONS

**Mr BRYAN DOYLE** (Campbelltown) [12.49 p.m.]: Today I have much pleasure in sharing with the House news of the opening of the extensions to Harmony House, Bradbury, right in the heart of Campbelltown—the opal of the south-west and very best part of the Macarthur. Along with Sandra McDonald, president of the Beautiful Minds group, Rob Ramjan, chief executive officer of the Schizophrenia Fellowship, and Chris Manny, Harmony House team leader, I was privileged to attend the official opening of the extensions to Harmony House as part of \$98,000 in funding from the Community Building Partnership program.

Harmony House aims to strengthen the recovery of people living with mental illness through a number of initiatives that include the development of day-to-day living skills by learning new skills or relearning old ones; establishing new and strengthening existing social networks; increasing community participation and inclusion for people living with mental illness through community, social, recreational and educational activities; building self-confidence and encouraging the achievement of personal goals through the ability to participate in everyday living activities; and encouraging a degree of independence while improving the quality of life.

The program owes its origins to the United States where the clubhouse concept was developed. It has since spread throughout the world to provide revolutionary care and services to people living with mental illness. The \$98,000 Community Building Partnership expansion of the Harmony House facility represents one of the largest single donations as part of the Community Building Partnership program to any mental health facility across the State. The transformation of the Harmony House premises at Bradbury has been extraordinary. I am pleased that the Minister for Mental Health is present in the Chamber as he is the first Minister for Mental Health and a Minister specifically looking after people with schizophrenia.

The first stage of the Harmony House expansion includes a marvellous upgraded and expanded administrative facility. The grant has enabled the removal of a number of internal walls, facilitating an open plan building for greater service application. Harmony House was originally the usual closed residential-style house but the whole top floor area now has been opened up, which has made a big difference and enabled the installation of a café-style facility and upgraded kitchen. Harmony House members no longer have to speak across various rooms but can now sit and enjoy each other's company. Harmony House has provided longstanding support for people in the Campbelltown community and provides an invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

When I attended the opening I thanked those who were suffering, recovering or living with schizophrenia because it is only through their efforts and a community spirit that Harmony House has been expanded and developed to enable people suffering from mental illness, particularly schizophrenia, to have a happier and more enriched life. In my former role as chief inspector of police at Campbelltown I was one of the first mental health intervention police officers in the State and I developed close links and liaisons with mental health service providers in the Campbelltown and Macarthur region. It has been extraordinary to witness the improvement and change in the lives of individuals as a result of the care they receive at Harmony House. That the Government now has a Minister solely responsible for mental health is evidence that we share a future path of caring for each other and those with mental illness. I commend the work of Harmony House to the Chamber.

### BARWON ELECTORATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES** (Barwon—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales) [12.54 p.m.]: At the outset I commend the member for

Campbelltown for his ongoing work and acknowledge the terrific work undertaken by the community of Campbelltown in supporting Harmony House. I have visited Harmony House several times and I acknowledge that the improvements are fantastic.

This afternoon I pay tribute to two of the most outstanding women in my electorate of Barwon in western New South Wales. It is no coincidence that our rural towns have a camaraderie and community spirit that is both inspiring and infectious. This community pride is due largely to the scores of generous volunteers dedicated to ensuring our regions are the best that they can be. Last week I had the pleasure to award two such community members, Moree's Lee Estens and Gulargambone's Angela O'Brien, with a New South Wales Government Community Service Award. This award recognises people throughout New South Wales who have substantially contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of members of their community beyond that expected in their usual occupation. While there is a huge pool of worthy recipients in my electorate, Lee and Angela are two exceptional women who have been and continue to be leaders in their respective communities.

Lee is an incredibly active member of the Moree community, dedicating much of her time to fundraising and volunteering, particularly for Variety—the Children's Charity. For the past 13 years Lee has taken part in the annual Variety Bash, a charity motoring event that raises money for children with special needs. Lee and her team have raised more than \$890,000 to date, with much of the money directed back into the local community through a humidicrib, ventilators for babies, a heart monitor, a Liberty Swing for wheelchair users in a local park, as well as many other much-needed items throughout the community. Her fundraising efforts also include organising the hugely popular annual Variety golf day in Moree, a day which has secured its place on the local calendar as one not to miss. On top of this, Lee is also a member of the Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association community relations committee, which raises money to give scholarships to medical students, as well as an active volunteer at the Moree Show.

Angela is equally deserving of her community achievement award. Angela and her husband, Greg, were instrumental in the establishment of a popular local gathering point, Two Eight Two Eight Cafe, set up in 2002 to help attract tourists and rejuvenate the small town during the drought. The community bought and restored a dilapidated building to house a tourist information centre, which has since evolved into a multifaceted facility including a cafe manned by local volunteers, a function venue, movie night venue, art gallery and gift shop. As well as providing a social hub for the community, a drawcard for visitors and a delicious menu, the cafe also provides traineeships for local young Aboriginal people and has gone from strength to strength over the past 10 years.

With over 200 volunteers involved in the venture since the beginning and all the profits invested back into the community, much of the project's success and maintained momentum are due to Angela's dedication and passion. Angela's selfless dedication to the project—from serving customers through to organising the extremely successful annual fundraiser Dinner Under the Stars—is outstanding and goes well above and beyond the call of duty. For the past 10 years Angela has dedicated her life to Two Eight Two Eight, purely for the betterment of her town, her community and her district. Angela and Lee are invaluable members of their communities, and the work they do is truly incredible. It was a great pleasure to present them with a New South Wales Government Community Service Award and again I congratulate them on all they have done to make their communities of Moree and Gulargambone a better place for all.

### **BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE EVENTS**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT** (Baulkham Hills) [12.58 p.m.]: I update the House on the happenings in the Baulkham Hills electorate as a lot of noteworthy events have occurred since the last sitting of the House. It is of particular merit that all types of crime are down in Baulkham Hills. I have been informed by Superintendent Rob Critchlow of The Hills Local Area Command that crime rates are down in every category but in instances where windows and doors have been left open, robberies are still occurring. Therefore, I ask people in The Hills district to lock their windows and doors and not to give criminals an easy opportunity to enter homes. Unlocked letterboxes also provide an avenue for identity theft as criminals now rummage through mail to collect new driver licences, credit cards and personal documents. If we all follow the basic rule of locking doors, windows and letterboxes, we can make life more difficult for criminals and hopefully further reduce levels of crime.

I am particularly pleased that there has been a reduction in alcohol-fuelled violence in the electorate. As always, it is wonderful that the level of domestic violence has been reduced in my local community. It is always a tragedy when domestic violence occurs, and I am glad to see it reduced. It is a testament to the strength and closeness of the community that we have been able to reduce crime yet again. I commend the work of

Superintendent Rob Critchlow over the past few months and the Hills Local Area Command in working with the community to lower the levels of crime in The Hills shire. I also note the work of Councillor Dr Michelle Byrne and The Hills Shire Council in helping to reduce the level of crime in the area and commend them for their role in building strong community spirit and pride.

Last Monday night I joined 120 local ex-service personnel and returned servicemen at the Castle Hill RSL Sub-branch annual general meeting. I am delighted that Colonel Don Tait, OAM, who has been a great friend of the RSL, was re-elected unopposed as president. It will be a very big year for the RSL as we approach the centenary of Anzac next year. Colonel Tait also leads the Centenary of ANZAC Hills Community Committee, which has been organising the commemorations in The Hills. As a former peacekeeper, I understand the importance of the RSL and commemorating those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Last Tuesday, I had the pleasure of attending the Master Plumbers Association of New South Wales event to celebrate World Plumbing Day. I congratulate Chief Executive Officer Paul Naylor and the apprentice plumbers I met on the day on the awards they received. Plumbing often goes under-appreciated in the First World. Having lived in Third World countries, I know that there is nothing more important than having fresh, clean running water and proper sewerage systems. I was reminded of the importance of plumbers at Christmas when my hot water unit broke. A very helpful plumber came out and fixed it extremely quickly, much to the relief of my wife and family.

I was pleased last week to be able to join the member for Auburn at my former school, the Regents Park Christian College, where I delivered the occasional address at the annual awards evening. I calculated that I was there last 27 years and 27 kilograms ago, when it was the Christian Community High School. I spoke on the importance of thanksgiving, noting the importance of being grateful for the education which the parents and the community provide to the students and which was provided to me when I was a student. I congratulate Principal Garry Brummell on the work that he has done to make the school the great institution it is today.

**Mrs Barbara Perry:** Hear, hear!

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I acknowledge the member for Auburn and thank her for the support she has given to the school. Finally, I note the first anniversary of the opening of the Norwest graduate school of business at the University of Notre Dame Australia, which we celebrated at a reception hosted by the Mayor of The Hills Shire Council, Dr Michelle Byrne. I acknowledge the contribution of Dr Jim Taggart, Senior Lecturer, and the Dean, Associate Professor Geoff Morris, in bringing the first university campus to The Hills, and in particular to the Norwest Business Park. I know that its postgraduate business courses have proven to be extremely popular. I congratulate the students who have attended during the campus' first year of operation and thank the people who demonstrated their faith in the Norwest Business Park by establishing the university campus there.

### WOODFORD ACADEMY

**Mrs ROZA SAGE** (Blue Mountains) [1.03 p.m.]: My electorate consists of a ribbon development within the Blue Mountains National Park. It consists of many distinct townships dissected by the Great Western Highway and the Blue Mountains rail line. One of the smaller villages is Woodford, which is in the mid mountains and which has, as its greatest claim to fame, the oldest building in the Blue Mountains—that being the Woodford Academy, built in 1834. The Woodford Academy, which sits alongside the Great Western Highway, is one of three National Trust properties in the Blue Mountains—the others being the Norman Lindsay Gallery and the Everglades historic house and garden in Leura, an outstanding example of a Paul Sorensen designed garden.

The profile of the Woodford Academy is being raised by a new board and renewed enthusiasm. I have seen the business plan that the new board has developed to make the academy self-sustaining and a prominent feature of the historic attractions in the Blue Mountains. If the open day on the weekend was anything to go by then I believe the board has a winning formula. I was invited to view the newly repaired stone porch pathway, which was restored using a New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership grant. Libby Sullivan, one of the volunteer guides, explained to me that when the damaged stones were raised they found tree roots from the old angophora gum tree. The tree was planted by John MacManamey, who founded the Woodford Academy—a private boarding school—in the early 1900s. Unfortunately the tree roots had to be removed by an arborist. The stones were re-laid and a thin veneer placed over the stones to preserve them.

The building that became the Woodford Academy began life in 1831 when Woodford was known as Twenty Mile Hollow. It was an illegal or sly grog shop run by William and Mary James beside Cox's Road, which is now the Great Western Highway. Governor Darling granted former convict Thomas Pembroke two acres of flat land 30 metres down the road from the illegal shop to establish an inn. By 1834 Pembroke had constructed a "respectable inn" with a publican's licence, known as The Woodman. In 1839, after a time of desperation, alcoholism and debt, Pembroke sold the now 50 acre property and inn to Michael Hogan, who changed the name to The King's Arms.

William Buss purchased the property in 1855, during the gold rush years. He made substantial additions to the inn and it remained under his ownership until his death in 1867. The property was purchased in 1868 by Sydney merchant Alfred Fairfax to use as a gentleman's residence. Fairfax changed the name to Woodford House, from which the village got its name. Fairfax was forced to sell his home in 1897 and it was bought by David Flannery, who leased Woodford House to the distinguished scholar John McManamey, who established the Woodford Academy for Boys. Many of the boys who had attended the academy enlisted to fight in World War 1. Members of the National Trust are researching the academy's wartime association using a grant from the New South Wales Government as part of a centenary of Anzac project. The academy finally closed in 1936, by which time it had been transformed into a local day school for boys and girls. McManamey's sole surviving daughter, Gertrude, bequeathed the property to the National Trust in 1979.

Woodford Academy has been one of the properties affected by the Great Western Highway widening, which has diminished its visibility and visitation. However, if this past weekend's open day is any indication then it will soon be thriving again. When I arrived people were queuing to view the complex. The additional attraction of an all-day breakfast along with a Devonshire tea provided courtesy of the Red Pepper Cafe gave a welcome dimension to a visit. It is fitting that the former inn section of the complex was used. As with any old building, the Woodford Academy has its own ghost, which haunts the dormitory building. The ghost has featured in recent ghost tours of the property. No self-respecting old building can be without a resident ghost!

I congratulate the board members and the many National Trust volunteers on their tireless work showcasing the fascinating history of the Woodford Academy. Some of the board members are: Ian Harman, Chair; Felicity Anderson, Vice Chair; Noel Burgess, Treasurer and Events Coordinator; Jennifer Szemenyei, Secretary; Elizabeth Burgess, Marketing and Merchandise Coordinator; Ken Goodlet, Archives and Museum Coordinator; Brian Kirkby, Schools and World War 1 Program Officer; Rae Clapshaw, Schools and World War 1 Program Officer; Yvonne Katell, Primary School Program Coordinator; Margaret Harrison, Head Gardener; and Denise Macgregor Fraser, the Housekeeping Manager.

### REGIONAL EXPRESS AIRLINES

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE** (Wagga Wagga—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.08 p.m.]: Wagga Wagga is proud to be the home of Regional Express airlines, or Rex, an airline we claim as our own. It provides services across regional and rural Australia. The past few months have seen unprecedented financial strain on our nation's aviation industry, with the country's two largest carriers announcing a combined half-year loss in excess of \$420 million. Not since the collapse of Ansett Australia in 2001 has our nation's aviation sector faced such difficult times. In regional and rural Australia the situation is even worse, with small specialist airlines such as Regional Express hamstrung by a lack of economies of scale. This continued trend in the aviation sector is of particular concern to my electorate, with both QantasLink and Regional Express providing essential aviation transportation between Wagga, Sydney and Melbourne.

Simply put, without multiple daily flights from either capital to Wagga Wagga the city's economic growth would come to an abrupt halt. In the past six years Wagga Wagga has placed strong emphasis on improving its accessibility via aviation. Strong capital investment in the airport has seen increased security measures and the installation of an instrument landing system, and it is the only regional airport in Australia with such capability. The investment emphasises the strategic importance given to aviation as a driver of the region's economic growth. Air transport is an important element in ensuring the future growth of New South Wales regions and is vital in breaking down the tyranny of distance. Efficient and reliable aviation transportation is as much an element of Wagga Wagga's socioeconomic tapestry as the roads, bridges and railways that run throughout my electorate.

In the dark days following the collapse of Ansett Australia and its regional subsidiary, Kendell Airlines, the future of aviation services to country New South Wales looked grim. Out of the gloom came Regional Express, which was founded and is based at the Wagga Wagga airport complex. Regional Express today

employs more than 150 people within my electorate, including those skilled in aeronautical maintenance. The airport is also home to the Australian Airline Pilot Academy, one of the nation's leading pilot training facilities. Regional Express has not been immune to the difficulties that have beset Virgin Australia and Qantas. A slowdown in the nation's economic activity, record high fuel prices, and unfavourable movements in the exchange rate have been cited by Regional Express as the cause of its sharp decline in profit over the past financial year. In the 2012-13 financial year, Regional Express experienced a fall in profit of 45 per cent and it has fallen a further 60 per cent in the first half of this financial year.

I am sure all members are aware that the difficulties being experienced by our nation's airline industry extend well beyond Regional Express. QantasLink also provides essential aviation services to the Wagga Wagga region. Qantas is embroiled in public debate about the future of the aviation industry. That industry is too important for the process to be delayed, and particularly in regional towns and cities. In light of the current difficulties besetting the aviation industry, I urge all regional aviation stakeholders to consider how they can best support the industry in this unprecedented environment. Air services to regional communities are too important to their economic growth and social prosperity to be allowed to decline.

Another issue of concern for airlines such as Regional Express and QantasLink—and the commuters who rely on the services they provide—is access to Mascot airport. There is vigorous debate about relocating services to Badgerys Creek and Bankstown, but country people need to access Sydney airport. Without Federal Government investment in infrastructure to support the proposed Badgerys Creek facilities and the existing Bankstown facilities, regional airlines will have no choice but to use Mascot. Commuters must be able to access the central business district and transit to other destinations throughout Australia and the world. Access to Mascot is important for our regional airlines. I ask all those involved in the decision-making process to consider the difficult circumstances facing regional and rural airlines.

### NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

**Mr CRAIG BAUMANN** (Port Stephens—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.13 p.m.]: I have advised the House previously of the history and remarkable achievements of Newcastle Airport. Together with Mayor John Bartlett I was very much involved with the acquisition of Newcastle Airport in 1992 when the Federal Government, through Peter Morris, handed control of it to Port Stephens Council and Newcastle City Council. In 1994, as mayor, I was on hand when the new terminal was opened. At monthly meetings we looked enviously at Aeropelican's Belmont passenger numbers when compared to ours. That changed when Impulse Airways—which eventually became Jetstar—began operating passenger jets out of Williamstown.

When I was elected mayor in 2004 passenger numbers were around 300,000 per annum. Two years later I was present for the fourth terminal expansion and passenger numbers were approaching one million per annum. Newcastle Airport has proven to be an incredible asset for both tourist and business travellers, whether departing or arriving, and by extension a very important catalyst for the Hunter economy. Newcastle Airport Limited Chairman, Air-Vice Marshall John Kindler, AO, AFC, stated, "We are like a bus stop ... it is the airlines that determine flight schedules and destinations." The success of Newcastle Airport is as much due to the confidence that the airlines have in the facility as the support that travellers show in flying to and from Newcastle.

Jetstar now flies to Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast; Virgin Australia flies to Melbourne and Brisbane; QantasLink flies to Brisbane; and Regional Express flies to Sydney, Ballina and Byron Bay. These are great services for the people of the Hunter and the Central Coast. I guarantee that those driving to the airport will find that the roads are less congested, the parking is cheaper and that it takes only 90 minutes to drive there from Wahroonga. It could take longer to drive to Mascot. In the past, Freedom Air flew to Auckland, Norfolk Air flew to Norfolk Island and Brindabella Airlines flew to Canberra, which proves that the airport can handle international flights. The Canberra flight allowed Federal members of Parliament, public servants and military personnel to avoid transiting through Sydney.

The New South Wales Government has great confidence in the future of Newcastle Airport. I have proudly shown the Premier, the Deputy Premier and most Ministers around the facility. As recently as last October, the Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services were briefed in the board room about the Salt Ash bushfires prior to visiting the fire ground. Last September, the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund allocated \$11.1 million to provide a 2,600 square metre terminal expansion, which will provide larger arrival and departure areas and the ability to accommodate international flights.

As passenger numbers approach 1.2 million per annum invitations to tender for the expansion project have been issued. The new terminal will reduce congestion for passengers and airlines, and who knows how many more passengers will take advantage of this great facility. Newcastle Airport's capacity is limited to five million passengers per annum because the commercial terminal is operating from Australia's premier Royal Australian Air Force base; that is, its expansion is limited to 400 per cent. On behalf of Newcastle Airport and with the support of this House I invite those airlines that now operate out of Williamtown to investigate expanding their flight destinations and schedules.

An obvious new direct destination would be Canberra. It would be a great fit with the services now offered by Regional Express. Another obvious new destination would be Perth via Adelaide. The Adelaide market would support three or four return flights a week using a 100 seat aircraft. If that service were extended from Adelaide to Perth it could be strongly argued that a daily flight would be sustainable. Demand for services to Perth is greater than for services to Adelaide. Newcastle is the second largest city in New South Wales and sixth largest in Australia. There is a demand for an Adelaide service from the Australian Defence Forces, BAE Systems, OneSteel, Bradken, Westrac, Orica and Xtrata Coal, just to name a few of our large corporate citizens.

On a personal note, my son Angus lives in Adelaide and works at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. A trip home for him involves transiting through Brisbane or Melbourne or, as he had to do on Christmas Eve, flying to Sydney and hiring a car. If we visit him it is the same exercise in reverse. Every person forced to travel via Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane is adding to aircraft and passenger congestion at already crowded airports. Newcastle Airport is here to stay. Our airport and our region punch above their weight. Our diversity also positions us as a business and tourism centre.

Until recently, Brisbane Airport has ridden the crest of the resources wave, but it is now experiencing a decline in domestic demand. Similarly, the Gold Coast airport is struggling to maintain the tourist numbers it experienced a few years ago. Business and tourism in our region continues to prosper and major events in 2013, such as the British Lions and the Special Olympics, have contributed to this growth. The Bruce Springsteen concert in 2014 and the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup in 2015 will ensure continued prosperity. With the Newcastle Airport potentially entering the international market in 2015, the future looks bright.

### HARMONY DAY

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY** (Riverstone) [1.18 p.m.]: On Sunday 16 March I had the pleasure of attending a unique event organised to celebrate Harmony Day, which officially falls on this Friday 21 March. The event was hosted by the Council of Indian Australians in conjunction with the Gujarati Samaj of New South Wales at Lakeside Park in The Ponds in my electorate. The initiative of the Council of Indian Australians was to incorporate the traditional Indian festival of Holi, which occurs around this time of the year, with the modern Australian celebration of Harmony Day. This made a good fit because Holi is a festival that cuts across social and ethnic barriers to allow people to celebrate in a spirit of fun. The tradition of Holi is that even enemies become friends during the festival and forget any animosity. On this day people do not differentiate between rich and poor, and everybody celebrates together with a spirit of brotherhood.

Traditionally, younger people prepare coloured dyes mixed in water to throw over each other in a game of water bombing and colour smearing, which sounds like a great leveller. Older people may not run around throwing water bombs but, rather, ceremonially daub each other's faces with colours so that all enjoy the spirit of the occasion. True to this tradition, the Council of Indian Australians and Gujarati Samaj, the organisers of last Sunday's event, organised hundreds of packets of water-soluble coloured dyes for participants to use at the wonderfully appealing venue at The Ponds. It would seem that they organised far more water than anyone would have wanted: A fierce batch of storms bucketed torrents of rain on the event for almost an hour. However, undeterred the event organisers continued, with the welcome speeches taking place under a picnic shelter. The members of Parliament who were present included me, the member for Blacktown and the Hon. David Clarke from the other place. It was an unusual sight to see members of Parliament applying face paint to each other's faces as well as to the Indian consul and members of the Council of Indian Australians committee.

The organisers were rewarded for their persistence when the skies later cleared and hundreds of local residents, many of Indian heritage and many others of other backgrounds, came out to the park to join in the festivities, which went for longer than anticipated and only concluded when the supplies of coloured paint ran

out. I congratulate the Council of Indian Australians on its initiative, which followed from its contribution on Australia Day when a free outdoor cinema showing of a Bollywood comedy movie with a wonderfully uplifting theme was staged. The Council of Indian Australians clearly is looking for ways to facilitate engagement between Australians of Indian background and their neighbours of other backgrounds. This is an important and constructive approach for the council to be taking in an area like The Ponds, where everyone is a new resident of this newly developed suburb and where so many of the new residents have Indian heritage. I commend the Council of Indian Australians for this proactive approach in taking the celebrations outdoors to reach out to the people of the area.

I acknowledge the work of the Council of Indian Australians committee, including Mohit Kumar, Praful Desai, Dr Balu Vijay, Jaspreet Chopra, Shail Wadhwa and Rakesh Puri. Unfortunately, the Council of Indian Australians President, Subba Rao Varigonda, was detained overseas, yet the committee delivered the event flawlessly in his absence. My thanks also go to the Gujarati Samaj of New South Wales committee, including the President Jaydatt Nayak and the Vice-president Sanjay Amin. Harmony Day is an Australian Government program and coincides with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The message of Harmony Day is "Everyone Belongs". It is a day to celebrate Australia's diversity. It is a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home, from the traditional owners of this land to those who have come from many countries around the world.

There are many ways in which people can celebrate Harmony Day: through sport, dance, art, film, music, storytelling, cooking, sharing cultural meals and, as I saw on the weekend, throwing coloured paint over each other. By participating in Harmony Day activities we can learn and understand how all Australians from diverse backgrounds equally belong to this nation and make it a better place. The Ponds is a community at the cutting edge of modern Australia in terms of its newness, its best-practice urban design and its demographics as it reflects the most recent trends in migration to Australia. It is a particularly apt place for a fun event to be held celebrating all that is good about this country and the people who comprise it. I congratulate those who helped to stage the event and all those who got wet and coloured in the name of harmony.

#### **Private members' statements concluded.**

*[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.23 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

### **ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following bills reported:

Bail (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2013  
Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment Bill 2013  
Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2013

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Notices of Motions**

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

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **Routine of Business**

*[During notices of motions to be accorded priority.]*

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: If the motion is about establishing priority, it is urgent and members should put the motion in a succinct form. The motion of the member for Maroubra is longer than his speech will be.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will make some remarks about the length of motions. There is a tendency for motions to be too long. I warn the member for Maroubra that if his motion contains further paragraphs then it is too long. As the member has almost concluded reading his motion, I will allow him to continue. However, in future I will rule out of order, or request the rewording of, any motion comprising more than three paragraphs. Motions must be succinct.



**QUESTION TIME**

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

**STATE ASSETS PRIVATISATION**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Premier. Last week it was reported that he was keen to deliver Tony Abbott's economic agenda. Yesterday it was reported that the Federal Treasurer, the Hon. Joe Hockey, MP, is setting a two-year deadline for States to privatise their assets or lose Federal funding. Will the Premier stand up for the people of New South Wales or does he plan to privatise the State's poles and wires?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I heard the essay masquerading as a motion delivered by the member for Maroubra. I have heard the question by the Leader of the Opposition and have to say that I will continue to work with whoever is in Federal Government as long as they deliver benefits for this State. That has been my and this Government's record since we were elected in March 2011. Which State first signed up to the National Disability Insurance Scheme? It was New South Wales. Which State first signed up to the Gonski education reforms? It was this Government.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Which State stood up to the Federal education Minister when he tried to back away from Gonski? It was New South Wales.

**Mr Richard Amery:** Point of order: A former Speaker ruled that Ministers should not seek interjections. I suggest the Premier is seeking interjections from Government members.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am not sure that the Premier was seeking interjections. There is a difference between interjections and Government members supporting the Premier. I remind Government members that members with the call should be heard in silence. The Premier, and only the Premier, has the call.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** As I had to do so often at school, I must confess that I have encouraged those responses. I take full responsibility because I am proud of our record in government of working with Federal governments to deliver the best for this State. We are delivering the pilot program around the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the Hunter Valley, which seeks to deliver to people with disabilities the best possible care—the sort of care for which the Minister for Finance and Services argued when we were in opposition, that is, people-centred care that gave them choice and voice—thanks to cooperation between now two successive governments. We recognise that the existing education funding arrangement between public and non-public schools was unfair.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. My question was whether the Premier will rule out selling the poles and wires.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I heard the question, and the Premier is being relevant to it. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr John Robertson:** If you don't want to rule it out, just say you are not going to.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. This is not an opportunity for debate. The Premier has the call.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The Leader of the Opposition is concerned because the whole thesis of his question that I will not stand up or argue for what is best for New South Wales has fallen down on the basis of three years of experience with two successive Federal governments—three Prime Ministers. I have not yet spoken about the attempts of a Federal Prime Minister to remove a naval base from Woolloomooloo. For anyone in this State or country uncertain about my ability to stand up for the people of New South Wales, that involved 5,000 direct and indirect jobs at Woolloomooloo. When it comes to dealings with the Federal Government, we will do what is in the best interests of this State. We will honour the commitments we made at the last election campaign. We have been doing that for the past 2½ years. I understand that is unusual to a State Labor Party because it never stood up to a Federal Labor Party. Those opposites failed to

work cooperatively with the Federal Howard Liberal-Nationals Government to deliver better policies, services and infrastructure to this State. That is just one example in the entirety of the Howard Government—

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have ruled on the point of order that I anticipate the Leader of the Opposition is about to take. Does the point of order relate to relevance?

**Mr John Robertson:** My point of order is relevance.

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

**Mr John Robertson:** It is simple: Rule it out or say you are going to flog it off.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I do not know what he is talking about flogging off. This is not a conversation with Eddie Obeid.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The one exception of cooperative work between a State Labor Government and a Federal Liberal Government was when Morris Iemma and John Howard struck a great deal regarding mental health. That is in stark contrast to what this Government has done under two successive Federal governments.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. Opposition members will come to order.

#### **NORTHCONNEX MOTORWAY**

**Mr MATT KEAN:** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government getting on with the job of delivering another major infrastructure project for the people of New South Wales?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** What a great follow-up question. That is yet another example—

**Mr Richard Amery:** It makes me argumentative.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the first time.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The member for Mount Druitt is interjecting audibly. I am sure he took a point of order earlier about that issue.

**The SPEAKER:** Indeed. That is why I have called the member to order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I did not encourage it; that is why I am objecting. The latest example of Federal-State cooperation delivering better services to the people of New South Wales was on Sunday when I stood at the Traffic Management Centre with the Prime Minister and Duncan Gay, the Minister for Roads and Ports, and Jamie Briggs, the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, and announced that NorthConnex, that long sought-after connecting road, the missing link—not one of those opposite—between the M2 and the M1, previously described as the F3, would be built. That \$3 billion project—

**Mr John Robertson:** You announced an EIS.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. He will cease interjecting.

**Mr John Robertson:** Unless you've done some deal.

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

**Mr John Robertson:** Unless Nick Di Girolamo is involved in this one.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The bloke who was part of a Government that promised to build the North West Rail Link has discovered suddenly that to build infrastructure one has to actually consult the community as part of the environment impact statement.

**Mr John Robertson:** Don't say you're building. You announced it.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Those opposite are so unfamiliar with building infrastructure that they do not know the processes. I am happy to arrange a tutorial.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** And the community consultation with the people of the Hunter.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Although I suspect that it will be a waste of money because they will not ever be in government to deliver infrastructure.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** We are proposing two distinct road tunnels underneath the Pennant Hills Road corridor that will connect the M1 to the M2 and remove the need to go through 21 sets of traffic lights. Eighty thousand vehicles a day, including 10,000 trucks, ply their way along Pennant Hills Road, which is twice the amount of traffic on any other comparable road in the country. This proposal is expected to transfer 5,000 truck movements into the tunnel, which will provide great relief for those people who live in adjacent areas. This project could have been called Newcastle Connex because of the benefits that it will deliver to people who live in Newcastle and the Hunter. It could have been called North Coast Connex because of the benefits it will deliver to those people who seek to travel to the North Coast and to the north-west. It could have been called Central Coast Connex because of the benefits it will deliver to the people who live on the Central Coast.

Whichever way we look at it, it is a win for motorists and a win for our economy because it will assist freight movements across the State. As I said on Monday, a truck leaving the Port of Newcastle can travel all the way to Melbourne without going through one set of traffic lights. If I knew the New England Highway as well as I know the Pacific Highway I could do the sums after the Hunter Expressway opens in the next week or two. We are assisting freight movements across our State to get products to market and to export. We are building the economy. Whichever way we look at it, it is good news.

But what did the Leader of the Opposition say about the project on Sunday? The man whose infrastructure record can be written on the back of a postage stamp said it should have been built earlier. This is an historic day because I agree with him. It could and should have been built during 16 years of Labor Government. It should and could have been driven by the former Federal Labor Government. However, it was not because it was never a priority for those opposite. We have so many missing road links in this city because Labor did not build roads that connected. This Government is getting on with the job. Not only are we building the NorthConnex missing link between the M2 and the M1, we are building WestConnex, which seeks to replicate the M4 and M5 to link them to the ports and the city.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** We are delivering the expansion of the M5 West, which Labor promised but never delivered. We have delivered the Erskine Park Link Road, which Labor said could not be done, but we have done it. We are expanding the Old Wallgrove Road to link it to the M7 to open up employment opportunities in Western Sydney, which was ignored by those opposite. In the electorate of one of the better regional members of this House— [*Extension of time granted.*]

I am happy to have two minutes to laud the efforts of the member for Kiama. The Princes Highway extension, which is being built as we speak, would not have happened if not for the election of the member for Kiama on 26 March 2011. For years those opposite promised that the planning had been done. None of it was true. It is being delivered by this Government in that electorate. I can go on. Whether it is the Pacific Highway or the Newell Highway throughout the electorate of Dubbo, we have got on with the job because we understand the importance of working with Federal governments to help deliver infrastructure. But, importantly, we understand the importance of connecting our roads and connecting our cities. I have not touched on railways, light rail, hospitals or schools.

This Government is getting on with the job of delivering the infrastructure and services that this State needs. Thanks to the great work done by the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and Services, we have a record infrastructure budget. We have the cooperation of the Federal Government, which is assisting to unlock funds for projects such as WestConnex and NorthConnex. All of that is in stark contrast with the naysayers, the whingers and the whiners opposite who did not deliver any of these projects when they were in office for 16 years. However, on Sunday when we announced a great project by any measure for this city, this State and this nation, they had the temerity to say it should have been done earlier.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition have one more interaction with Eddie Obeid to ask for funding for better advisers.

### **SYDNEY WATER ASSETS PRIVATISATION**

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** My question is directed to the Premier. Given he is very keen to deliver Tony Abbott's agenda, which requires the States to privatise their assets or lose Federal funding, will he rule out privatisation of Sydney Water assets?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Firstly, the answer to the question is we have no such plans. Scare campaigns can be run, but I think the people of this State, including a couple of newspaper editors, know that we do what is in the best interests of this State, without cheering or suggestion from anyone else.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Yesterday I was interested in a press release from a Barry. The press release was from the New South Wales shadow Minister for Water, Barry Collier, member of Parliament. Do not discourage him. That is probably more than half of the rest of the front bench did in three years. My eyes were attracted to what was at the head of the page. I phoned Scott Morrison and asked, "Is it true that Barry Collier is running against you at the next election?" Why on earth would the national coat of arms be used on a State press release? Somebody who is confused about the letterhead is confused about the erroneous claims they are making publicly.

### **RESOURCES FOR REGIONS PROGRAM**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government building infrastructure in mining-affected communities?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the member for Bathurst for a cracking good question about a cracking good program, Resources for Regions. This program was introduced by this Coalition Government after 16 long years of a Labor Government that was happy to take the wealth coming from our mining regions through royalties and not return any of it to the regions where those hard workers in our mining industry reside. In fact, we know the plan for the coalmining industry from those opposite.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Just close it down.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Simply close it down, as the member for Drummoyne reminds us. We value the 80,000 hardworking mining employees in New South Wales who contribute so much to our economy. We also value those communities that tolerate the greater demand of heavy vehicles using their local infrastructure which is often associated with the ramp-up of populations when mines are developed and/or expanded. That is why Resources for Regions was introduced. I am happy to announce that \$75 million, the largest tranche of this

program, has been allocated to the mining-affected communities across New South Wales. The total amount invested in the financial year 2013-14 is now more than \$117.7 million across 20 regional infrastructure projects.

Some communities in regional New South Wales are excited, including the electorate of the member for the Upper Hunter. We are providing more than \$23 million to Singleton and Muswellbrook councils for road and pedestrian works as well as a tertiary education centre to help provide the skills needed in the coal industry. It is positive policy. We are not running around talking down the New South Wales economy to scare people about job losses. We are helping to create jobs, which is why New South Wales currently has the highest employment growth in the nation. We are spending \$12.3 million to support the Narrabri water supply project in the electorate of the member for Barwon.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** At Lithgow, in the electorate of the member for Bathurst, \$10.1 million is to be invested to help develop a new wastewater treatment plant. At Cobar, in the electorate of the member for Barwon, we are investing almost \$10 million in projects, including a further contribution to the Cobar to Nyngan water security project. In the Central West, in the electorate of the member for Orange, we are investing \$8.7 million in projects, including works at Cope Road and Mudgee Airport. In the electorate of the member for Newcastle—who I see is beaming from ear to ear—we are investing \$5.6 million to support roadworks, shared pathways and cliff stabilisation at the Shortland Esplanade, Newcastle. We are returning that investment to improve local infrastructure for all those hardworking people in the Hunter who for decades were taken for granted by the Labor Party.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** The Government considers that it is not only fair to give something in return for the hard work and wealth generated by those regions but also an investment in our future economic productivity because this infrastructure will create and support jobs. Over the four years of the Resources for Regions program the Government will deliver at least \$160 million in infrastructure funding for those communities affected by direct and indirect pressures from mining-related activities. In fact, this year the Government is looking to widen the criteria to include some of those mining-affected regions that have missed out in past rounds. Whilst our function has always been priority needs, community feedback is always valued and is being incorporated into future criteria. The Resources for Regions program has been a huge success. We have received a lot of praise from people such as Mid-Western Regional Council General Manager Warwick Bennett. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I thank the member for Bathurst, who I know is very interested in this program that is delivering for his community. Warwick Bennett said that he was delighted to learn of the announcement of \$8.7 million for infrastructure upgrades in the mid-western region. He said, "It is an acknowledgement by the New South Wales Government of the impact that mining is having on the regions." He talked about the plans for upgrading Cope Road, which links the Cobbora coalmine, and how important it is for jobs in the region. He said that the Mudgee Airport upgrade will also be terrific for the region. The Government has also received positive feedback from the NSW Minerals Council, which recognises this as a return to those communities in which mining activities occur. This Government values the contributions of the hardworking mining industry workers and the communities that host them.

#### GENERAL PRACTITIONER FEES

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** I direct my question to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister stand up to Tony Abbott and oppose plans to introduce a Medicare general practitioner fee?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will resume his seat. Government members will come to order.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The member for Macquarie Fields well knows that this is a submission to the Commonwealth Commission of Audit, and nothing more than that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Macquarie Fields has asked his question. He will listen to the Minister's answer in silence.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I think it is disgraceful that the member is putting around information that he knows is inaccurate.

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

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Are you supporting it or not?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** It is a matter for the Commonwealth. It is a submission; it is not policy.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order. He has received an answer to his question.

### REGIONAL JOBS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I address my question to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government supporting jobs and economic growth in regional New South Wales?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. Last week I enjoyed the opportunity of visiting her electorate and touring a number of sites where the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is delivering infrastructure and jobs.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Those opposite are excited. They are looking forward to my answer.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Not surprisingly, when we came to government everyone in the State understood the extent of the problems left behind by members opposite. Members opposite create problems; the O'Farrell Government delivers solutions. One of the things we had to do to get the State back on track was get the budget back in order, and we have started that process. We had to control expenditure. We have also invested in the drivers in the economy. Members opposite do not understand that while controlling expenditure a government must also keep the economy growing. That is exactly what the O'Farrell-Stoner Government has done. We have invested in housing and provided incentives through payroll tax and new jobs. The record infrastructure program being implemented across New South Wales is helping to drive jobs in this State. Indeed, I am sure that members opposite would have been cheering when the new jobs results were released last week. New South Wales was not fifth, fourth, third or even second; it was number one in terms of the national unemployment rate.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Members opposite do not like to hear good news about New South Wales.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the country, at 5.8 per cent. Sensible stewardship has achieved that result. The highest numbers of jobs in the country are being delivered in New South Wales—namely, 109,100 jobs since the O'Farrell-Stoner Government came to office. We have also started to see this good news for everyone in New South Wales feed into economic growth. In the last two quarters economic growth in New South Wales has not been fifth, fourth, third or second; it has been number one nationally. That is in stark contrast to what occurred under members opposite. It was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that "New South Wales has emerged as Australia's economic pacesetter". A Westpac report states, "New South Wales is leading the way." New South Wales has momentum. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government does not look at individual statistics—monthly, quarterly; it looks at long-term trends. The good news for New South Wales is that since coming to power the O'Farrell-Stoner Government has started delivering the sorts of results that the community expects. It is about time we had that sort of leadership, not only in Sydney but also across rural and regional New South Wales.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Members representing the electorates of Port Macquarie and Myall Lakes will be delighted to know that 12,124 additional jobs have been created in those regions since we have been in office. Members representing the electorates of Albury and Wagga Wagga—it is good to see the member for Wagga Wagga on the frontbench—will be delighted to know that 7,905 additional jobs have been created in those regions since we came to office. In the Hunter Valley some 8,017 additional jobs have been created. In the Illawarra we have seen 6,658 jobs created on the back of the efforts of the member for Kiama and the member for Heathcote—great work.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** As I listened to the shadow Treasurer give notice of his motion to be accorded priority I began to reflect on the policies of members opposite in the economic debate, and I could think of only one about job creation in this State. That policy was announced in the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech—the day when everyone in this State hangs on every word uttered by the Leader of the Opposition. What was he going to do? He was going to create a Jobs Commissioner. That was the policy of those opposite. When you do not know what to do, you appoint someone else. That is fantastic.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. The member for Bankstown will come to order. Opposition members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time.

*[Extension of time granted.]*

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It did remind me of things like the fuel commissioner and Grocery Watch under Kevin Rudd. The Labor Party has all these magnificent ideas that come to absolutely nothing—nada. That is the way members opposite go about things.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Maroubra is going to have to step up to the plate because there is an election coming and members opposite have to try to deliver some form of economic plan for the State.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** If the example the member for Maroubra gave in his notice of motion to be accorded priority—he does not even have his facts right; it was like watching a *Rugrats* episode—

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. I cannot hear the member's point of order.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** I refer to Standing Order 129. Whatever the question was about, it was not about the notice of motion to be accorded priority given by the shadow Treasurer. The Minister should be drawn back to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The point is that members opposite are seeking to grab government and the community wants to understand who is going to drive jobs growth in this State. There is a pretty clear record for all to see. Members opposite are interested in one job: the Jobs Commissioner's job. I can tell members what the O'Farrell Government is interested in—the 109,000 new jobs created across the State. That is what we are interested in. We will continue to create jobs. We will continue the responsible economic management that will get the economy of this State moving. Members opposite have to start being sensible with their economic policy because what is being served up at the moment has no credibility. Thank goodness the O'Farrell Government is here, because under this Government New South Wales now has the lowest unemployment rate and the highest level of economic growth in the country. This Government has created the most jobs across the country—109,000 jobs. So thank goodness for the O'Farrell-Stoner Government.

**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given the Premier has said that he is very keen to help deliver Tony Abbott's agenda, will the Treasurer stand up for the people of New South Wales and oppose any increase in the GST?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I love it when the member for Maroubra actually starts to get onto policy matters. Tony Abbott has been very clear on this subject. He has said that there will be no change to the GST, and if there were to be any consideration of that it would be done at a tax summit and he would take it to a Federal election. That is the position; it is very clear. The member for Maroubra is going to have to do a lot better if he wants to pretend that members opposite are ready to take government in this State. He is going to have to start to show some ticker. Let me ask this: Where was he when his Government sold the gentraders? Where was he?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: You did not go very well on Macquarie Generation. Tell us about Macquarie Generation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will state his point of order. This is not an opportunity for him to make an argument.

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was clear: Will the Treasurer oppose any increase in the GST?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer answered the question in the first 10 seconds of his response. There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Maroubra—the middle managers' hero—has no capacity to step up because he has shown no ticker. This is an important point. He showed when his party was in government that he did not have the capacity to stand up to the then Treasurer, the Cabinet or the then Premier—whoever was in his way—and say, "This is a transaction that is going ahead and they are selling it for less than the retention value." On top of that, the Auditor-General said it was about 40 per cent of what it was worth.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. He will cease interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Maroubra did not have the ticker to stand up. On top of that, he comes in here and opposes regularly, as others opposite have done—

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

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member's point of order relate to relevance? The Treasurer answered the question in the first 10 seconds of his response and he continues to be relevant. Does the Leader of the Opposition have a different point of order?

**Mr John Robertson:** My point of order goes to relevance. The question in no way relates to anything the shadow Treasurer or member for Maroubra has done. Where the Treasurer is going now is nowhere near the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is the Leader of the Opposition's opinion. He will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Ultimately, tax reform is about how you get revenue going and how you deal with expenses.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** So it does relate to that. In relation to that and the asset transactions—

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



**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** This is a fiscal question, and members opposite are living in fiscal fantasy land. When revenue is down and there are debtors against your triple-A credit rating, the only way to get infrastructure going is through asset recycling. We have a program outlined; that is exactly what we are doing. The member for Maroubra actually agrees with it but he does not have the ticker to stand up and support it.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** He has not gone to his shadow Cabinet and said, "Listen, we want to actually get onto the government benches. We must have some economic sense about us to do that. We cannot oppose everything for the sake of opposing it, and on top of that I actually believe in it." If the member for Maroubra believes in it then he should stand up for himself and tell the shadow Cabinet what he believes. That is the best thing for this State, and the member knows it. But he does not have the ticker to do it.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** When you open up the budget papers you will see there a chart that shows what the State's position will be like if members opposite oppose every savings measure the Government has undertaken. It shows a difference of \$4 billion a year from where we are now.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Standing Order 129 requires an answer be relevant to the question asked. The standing order uses specific wording. The Treasurer has been speaking for nearly three minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked. I have ruled on the point of order three times. There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** If the member for Heffron had any ticker he would stand up to the Leader of the Opposition and take his job.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 73. Personal reflections and attacks on a member should be made by way of substantive motion. The Treasurer has spent three minutes doing just that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on both sides of the Chamber—including the Leader of the Opposition—make personal attacks during question time. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. He should get a thicker skin.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition reminds me of another example of ticker. He did not stand up to the then energy Minister when he said that the solar scheme was going to cost \$400 million and ended up costing \$1.7 billion. As we go to the election, what is the good news for the people of New South Wales? We on this side are making responsible economic decisions. There is a long way to go for those opposite.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will wait for members to come to order before I call the member for Murray-Darling.

#### AGRIBUSINESS EXPORTS

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS:** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and true comrade of regional New South Wales.

**Mr Ryan Park:** It is irony.

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

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS:** How is the Government capitalising on surging demand for high-quality produce in Asia?

**Mr Richard Amery:** Point of order: Standing Order 75 states that members should address other members by their correct titles.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** That is a very good question from the member for Murray-Darling—somewhat unexpected, but I will get on with answering it. The House has heard today about our positive plans to grow the economy and to grow jobs in New South Wales, including through a massive investment in infrastructure across the State both in regional New South Wales and in metropolitan areas. The Government's responsible financial management of the State's budget is getting the economy into shape and growing jobs. As the Treasurer said, we are ticking the boxes on growth in the economy and growth in jobs creation; we are number one in the nation. New South Wales is number one again. One of the other ways we are doing this is of course through our international engagement efforts.

**Mr Nathan Rees:** Here we go—the chairman's lounge.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Toongabbie will come to order. I almost expected that interjection.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Under the previous Government the then Premier shut down the international offices of the New South Wales Government and declared that Sydney was full. This Government is engaging internationally again and expanding its international office network to drive better deals for our exporters and to attract investment to our great State. I am happy to say that this international engagement strategy is paying off in spades for New South Wales. We know that one in five jobs in our State is related to exports. We also know, courtesy of a Deloitte Access Economics report released late last year, that one of the super sectors primed for growth in the diverse New South Wales economy is agribusiness. That is why the Premier and I have been leading trade missions to our major trading partners to discuss opportunities for those jurisdictions to invest and for our agribusiness exporters.

As a result of a trade mission I led to South-East Asia in October last year, we have been able to facilitate an opportunity for our State's food producers in one of our priority markets—that is, Singapore. Like many other Asian nations, in Singapore there is a huge demand for the very high-quality products that New South Wales produces. Here in New South Wales the agribusiness sector is well primed for this opportunity, with some 38,000 farm-based businesses, 1,400 fishing businesses and more than 2,000 food-processing companies. It behoves us to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the increasing demand for high-quality food products produced in New South Wales and to drive the export jobs growth. That is why today I was happy to facilitate an event in the Speaker's Garden for the Cold Storage supermarket chain, based in Singapore. Cold Storage has agreed to showcase a range of New South Wales products in Singapore. I visited one of its supermarkets while I was in Singapore. It actively promotes Australian food because it is what its customers want.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Give us examples.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I can give you examples, Premier.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Fredo Pies?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I know they would love Fredo Pies. There were Tim Tams, Vegemite and Arnotts' products—all produced here in New South Wales. We are leading a delegation of eight food producers to Singapore next month to take advantage of a showcase of New South Wales food by Cold Storage supermarkets. Among the producers taking part in the food showcase are: Riverina Dairy, from the electorate of the member for Albury; Byron Bay Cookies and Falwasser waterbreads from Byron Bay, in the electorate of the Minister for the North Coast, and member for Ballina; and Ducks Nuts flavoured macadamias from Newrybar, in the electorate of the member for Ballina. They are from Duck Creek and they are nuts, so they are called "Ducks Nuts."

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Sugar Free Solutions cake and muffin mixes from West Pennant Hills, in the electorate of the member for Castle Hill, are also part of the showcase. They produce delicious sugar-free and guilt-free cakes and muffins. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Also in the food showcase are the Food Company's condiments and dressings. That company, based in Sydenham, in the electorate of the member for Heffron, is very grateful for the leadership shown by the

Government in opening the doors to export. Participants from the electorate of the member for Goulburn are Appleman beverages and York Foods lamb dripping and wagyu oil—which is good for you. Also participating are Alto Olives, from Peelwood, in the electorate of the member for Burrinjuck, and Sun Valley fruit bars from fantastic Finley, in the electorate of the member for Murray-Darling. The Government is absolutely thrilled to create these opportunities for our food producers and exporters. We are growing jobs in regional and metropolitan New South Wales. We would be absolutely thrilled to see fruit bars made in Finley, which is a seven-hour drive from Sydney, on supermarket shelves in Singapore.

Last month companies from New South Wales took part in Gulfood 2014—the world's largest food and beverage trade show—in Dubai, again assisted by NSW Trade and Investment. With food imports to the Gulf Cooperation Council region forecast to reach \$US53 billion by 2020, there are huge opportunities for New South Wales food producers and companies to take advantage of the increasing demand for our high-quality products. Trade and Investment is also supporting 25 New South Wales businesses that will take part in Asia's largest international food tradeshow, Food and Hotel Asia, next month in Singapore. This side of the House is getting on with the job of growing the economy, and growing jobs in regional and metropolitan New South Wales.

### **WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT AND MR NICK DI GIROLAMO**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH:** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Premier has repeatedly changed his story about meetings and contact with lobbyist and friend Nick Di Girolamo, who is now under investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, will he now come clean about the full extent of his relationship with Mr Di Girolamo, as both Premier and Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I was wondering whether the Opposition would come back to this topic. For two weeks when Parliament last sat this was the Opposition's constant motif. I am reminded that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. That definition belongs to Einstein. It is clear that Opposition members are no Einsteins.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that he is on three calls to order.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Imagine asking this question today, the day after counsel assisting the Independent Commission Against Corruption made certain statements in his opening address. As I have five minutes—and perhaps I will be granted an additional two minutes—I am happy to go into this at length. On day one, in his opening address counsel assisting made the following point:

We have looked carefully at the activities of Mr O'Farrell and Mr Pearce and we have found no evidence to implicate either in any corruption.

Indeed, when it comes to this Government's handling of matters relating to the water issue, counsel assisting said:

It is an established fact that despite the political pressure which was brought to bear by Australian Water Holdings, the bureaucrats and the politicians did not give way.

That is a long way from what members opposite were claiming in the last sitting weeks. As I have said time and again, we have acted appropriately, at arm's length, in relation to that issue. We are acting appropriately, at arm's length, in relation to the Wallarah 2 mining proposal, which will be determined on its economic, environmental and social merits by the independent Planning Assessment Commission. That does not suit the mantra of members opposite, and at times it does not suit the mantra of the media. But those are the facts. Do not take my word for it; simply read the opening remarks made by counsel assisting the Independent Commission Against Corruption yesterday. He said, as I have said repeatedly, that these issues are being handled appropriately, at arm's length, by this Government, on the basis of good advice.

### **REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research. How is the Government improving health services in regional New South Wales?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The member for Wagga Wagga is a very appropriate person to ask such a question, as are any of my colleagues from rural and regional New South Wales, because the Government has

invested substantially in rural and regional hospitals and health services. We have improved enormously access to health services for people living in the country. People in rural New South Wales now receive 85 per cent of their health care within their local health district. That is a marvellous achievement. We have increased healthcare services in a number of areas, such as palliative care and pain management, and we have expanded renal dialysis and trauma services. We have increased cancer services so that 95 per cent of the rural population now have access to cancer services within 100 kilometres of their home. That is a major change. The most recently opened regional centres include the North West Cancer Centre at Tamworth.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Thank you.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I know the member for Tamworth is very supportive of that project. Another regional project is in Nowra in the Shoalhaven where there is a \$33 million development in the electorate of Madam Speaker. The improvements have been very well received by cancer patients. The Government also has increased support for patients who must travel more than 100 kilometres for treatment through expansion of the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme. We have also established acute stroke services in more centres such as Coffs Harbour, Armidale, Port Macquarie, Shoalhaven, Orange, Bathurst, Tweed and Wagga Wagga. This Government has made tremendous improvements to outcomes for patients in hospitals throughout the State—country and city areas.

The latest Bureau of Health Information figures for the quarter ended last December show that elective surgery patients were treated on time in most cases. In fact, 99 per cent of patients in urgent categories were treated on time compared to 93 per cent treated on time under Labor. For patients in less urgent categories, on-time treatment is 95 per cent currently compared to 91 per cent on-time treatment under Labor.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: I believe that a PowerPoint presentation is in fact a prop.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has cited the source, which makes it somewhat different from a prop.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The source is Twitter and the website. This information has been circulated far and wide and it represents the improvements in waiting times for elective surgery. Besides that, there have been incredible improvements made in emergency department performances through the Whole of Hospital Program from which 13 country hospitals have benefited. Major improvements have been made in the number of patients being received and treated through emergency departments in a number of hospitals. I know that members who represent electorates in the Hunter will be very interested to know that the John Hunter Hospital experienced a 15 per cent improvement compared to the previous period. The Wollongong Hospital experienced a 13.3 per cent improvement, the Wagga Wagga Hospital experienced a 10.5 per cent improvement, and the Coffs Harbour Hospital experienced a 9.7 per cent improvement. Other improvements were: Port Macquarie, 8.4 per cent; Tweed, 7.1 per cent; and Goulburn, 6.8 per cent. There are many other hospitals that have shown similar improvements. I have referred to only some of them.

This Government also has made major investments in infrastructure to which I have referred many times in this House. In a record spend, \$1.7 billion has been invested in rural and regional health infrastructure since the election. The first announcement by this Government about hospital infrastructure investment was the very first day of the sitting of this Parliament. I went to Tamworth with the member for Tamworth where we announced \$220 million for the new acute hospital that is expected to be completed by mid-2016. That fabulous project is well underway. I have visited it many, many times. It will make a huge difference to the people of Tamworth. The \$282 million hospital in Wagga Wagga is well underway. The 50 bed mental health unit in Wagga Wagga already has been opened. Work has commenced on the new acute hospital and is due to be completed by late 2015. It is going ahead at a great pace. In Bega in the electorate of my colleague the Minister for Finance and Services, we are constructing the South East Regional Hospital at a cost of \$171 million. It might be said that that investment resulted from a contribution from the Commonwealth Government. *[Extension of time granted.]*

The only reason the former Commonwealth Government was able to come to the party and match commitments was that the New South Wales Government committed its money first, and that was acknowledged by the Federal Minister for Health at the time. This Government's capital commitment should be compared to the commitment made by the Labor Government, which obtained a miserable share of Commonwealth funding. Further commitments are: Dubbo, \$91 million; Port Macquarie, \$110 million; Kempsey, \$80 million; Lismore, \$80 million; and funding for Parkes and Forbes is now up to \$113 million. We also have established multipurpose service centres at Hillston, Peak Hill, Gulgong, Lockhart and many other

areas. In addition to infrastructure investment, this Government also has invested in its health workforce. I have informed the House on previous occasions that 4,100 additional nurses have been employed, which amounts to 2,800 full-time equivalent positions. Fifty per cent of those additional nurses are located in rural and regional areas of New South Wales. We also have appointed 300 additional doctors in rural and regional New South Wales. I am reminded by the presence in the Chamber of the member for Dubbo that the local health service had been advertising for specialist medical staff for more than 10 years to fill vacant positions. How many of those positions have been filled in the past 18 months?

**Mr Troy Grant:** A dozen more.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** Actually, more than a dozen appointments have been made because this Government made a commitment to regional and rural hospitals. The Government also has invested \$2 million in the Rural Generalist Training Program this year for a further 15 positions, bringing the annual total of positions to 30. We have the Rural Preferential Recruitment Program to help interested graduates complete their intern training in a rural location. All round, I believe that this Government has done more for rural and regional health than any previous government—and certainly more than Labor ever did.

### SYDNEY WATER ASSETS PRIVATISATION

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** In response to the question asked of me by the member for Miranda earlier today, I lay upon the table the press release—given the scepticism in the ABC gallery.

**Question time concluded at 3.15 p.m.**

### SYDNEY WATER ASSETS PRIVATISATION

#### Personal Explanation

**Mr BARRY COLLIER,** by leave: Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. I would like to hear the personal explanation of the member for Miranda, which should be brief and to the point.

*[Interruption]*

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** Give me a break.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will cease interjecting or they will be placed on calls to order.

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** I wish to make a personal explanation. During question time, the Premier made a statement that I had used the Federal crest or the Federal coat of arms on a media release issued by me yesterday regarding the privatisation of Sydney Water. I carefully checked my records, looked at the media release that I wrote and looked at the media release that was distributed in my name and with my approval. I can honestly say that on the media release I issued there appears the New South Wales crest, similar to the crest that is immediately above the Speaker's chair.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Has the member for Miranda concluded his personal explanation?

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** No. With regret, I must say that the Premier has misled the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Miranda will make his personal explanation.

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** That is my personal explanation. I invite members to inspect the media release I circulated and I lay it on the table.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Table it.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Table it.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Seek leave to table it. It could be evidence for the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Table it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Miranda will resume his seat. Members will come to order.

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** Do you want me to table it?

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** It could be important evidence.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Miranda will resume his seat.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** It could be important evidence.

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** The Premier has called on me to table it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will rule on the matter. The Premier has requested that the member for Miranda table the media release, and he may do so.

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** I lay the media release on the table for the information of members.

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY**

### **Report**

**Mr Greg Aplin**, as Chair, tabled report No. 3/55, entitled "Report on Non-registered Motor Vehicles", dated March 2014.

**Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Greg Aplin.**

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr Stephen Bromhead**, as Chair, tabled the report entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 52/55", dated 18 March 2014, together with minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 51/55.

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

## **PETITIONS**

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

### **Palliative Care Services**

Petition requesting sufficient palliative care services and additional funds to support training of palliative care workers, received from **Mr Barry O'Farrell**.

### **Wallsend Police Station**

Petition requesting funding to reinstate a police station in Wallsend, received from **Ms Sonia Hornery**.

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

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

### **Sydney Electorate Public High School**

Petition requesting the establishment of a public high school in the Sydney electorate, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Oxford Street Traffic Arrangements**

Petition requesting the removal of the clearway and introduction of a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit in Oxford Street, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Pet Shops**

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

**Pig-dog Hunting Ban**

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

**Same-sex Marriage**

Petition supporting same-sex marriage, 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**.

**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**.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Business Lapsed**

**General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2727, 2728 and 2730 to 2737 lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 105 (3).**

**CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY****Regional New South Wales**

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.21 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority as Labor does not understand regional New South Wales but the Liberal-Nationals Government has put its needs back at the heart of government. This sad tale about the Labor Government reveals that it left New South Wales in a parlous economic state. For 16 years Labor made promise after promise but it let down regional communities by breaking those promises. Those opposite who do not understand regional New South Wales should recognise that if they break a promise to people in regional communities they cannot expect to be returned to this Chamber.

This Government's commitment can be demonstrated by the level of investment that has occurred in regional communities. On the Government frontbench we have Cabinet Ministers from Maitland, Barwon, Goulburn, Ballina, Bega, Burrinjuck, Oxley and Murrumbidgee and in the upper House we have the Minister for Roads and Ports and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Regional New South Wales is back at the heart of government because the representatives of regional New South Wales are in Cabinet and are part of the Government. Those members are making sure that the issues that are true and dear to communities in regional New South Wales are front and centre and are being addressed by investment.

Labor's 16 years of trashing the economy, of being told what to do by union bosses and of failing to invest in infrastructure left the State with an infrastructure backlog that has had a massive impact on regional New South Wales and has resulted in a massive decline in services on which regional communities rely. This Chamber is full of members from regional New South Wales because regional communities decided that 16 years of Labor was enough. Those communities said that they wanted to be properly represented and elected the members for Monaro, Tamworth, Port Macquarie, Newcastle, Charlestown and others throughout the State.

Labor does not understand regional New South Wales. Only one of the 20 or more Opposition members is a regional member but he is never given an opportunity to have his say. The Leader of the Opposition never listens to him because the Leader of the Opposition does not understand regional New South Wales. When he spoke for 20 minutes in this place about a 20-year strategy for State-significant infrastructure investment he did not mention regional New South Wales once, which is a disgrace. He wants to represent regional communities in the future but that will not happen.

**Government Performance**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.24 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority because New South Wales deserves a leadership team that will stand up for the people of this State against a rampaging

Federal Government. The Premier and the Treasurer will not resist their Federal counterparts in Canberra. It was an interesting study to see the Premier in opposition and in his early years as Premier railing against Federal Labor. He blamed Prime Minister Gillard and Prime Minister Rudd for all his woes. The Federal Labor Government was at fault on a plethora of issues. How quickly that has changed now that the north shore is in charge of the Federal Government. The Premier and his north shore Treasurer will not lift a hand against the Federal Government. If ever we needed an example of that, yesterday the Federal Treasurer, the Hon. Joe Hockey, MP, pointed his finger at the Premier and Treasurer of New South Wales and said, in effect, "You have two years to sell your assets, two years to sell poles and wires and two years to sell Sydney Water, or else." Yesterday the Premier was nowhere to be found and he did not make any comments.

What about the Treasurer? In the early days he was punted to number 11 by the Premier. In 2008 he was rolled on poles and wires, directly costing this State \$5 billion. He continues to get rolled on poles and wires day after day despite his utterings behind the Premier's back in the boardrooms across the State. The Treasurer also was rolled on the emergency services levy but he does not have the ticker to stand up to his boss. The Treasurer bungled the sale of Matcham, announcing that in a media circus with Michael Fraser, in a stunt that cost the State \$30 million in consultancy fees. It was knocked back by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] while the Treasurer was hiding under the bed, refusing to stand up to Joe Hockey. This sort of ducking and weaving and the refusal to stand up for the people of New South Wales continues with \$3.3 billion worth of health cuts.

**Mrs Jillian Skinner:** Wrong, wrong, wrong.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** It is right, Minister. There will be plenty of nurses in the gallery on Thursday afternoon talking about this Government's cuts to the Prince of Wales Hospital. There will be \$1.7 million worth in cuts to school funding. Those opposite once blamed the Federal Government for imported firearms causing gun crime. But now, presumably because Tony Abbott is in power, the importation of firearms has stopped. The shootings have not stopped in south-western Sydney but those opposite will not stand up to the north shore Government that is inhabiting Canberra. On infrastructure, workplace conditions, jobs and all these issues there is a lack of leadership from Premier Barry O'Farrell and Treasurer Mike Baird. [*Time expired.*]

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 63**

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



**Noes, 24**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Divisions and Quorums****Motion by Mr BRAD HAZZARD agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to provide that from 5.00 p.m. until the rising of the House, no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Additional Speaker**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.35 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the member for Kiama to also speak to the motion accorded priority.

In the normal course under the standing orders two members from either side of the Chamber speak to the motion accorded priority. Certainly, on past occasions, when crossbench members have sought to speak—they indicate their acknowledgement of that fact—the Government and Opposition have been accommodating and will continue in that regard. However, today a Government member also would appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion. I understand the Opposition is not comfortable with that proposal.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.36 p.m.]: Apart from this motion simply being self-congratulatory piffle, the Leader of the House can move for 20 additional members to speak on the motion, but it merely serves only to underpin that this Government has run out of Government business. Serious issues confront the State and Government members would address them if they were of a mind to do so. Instead, they offer this motion that really is an excuse for regional Coalition members to rabbit on with the self-serving nonsense we have come to expect from them in this place. The Leader of the House can move for as many additional speakers as he wishes but if there is Government business to deal with, this motion should be withdrawn. We will not support this motion.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 66**

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

**Noes, 21**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**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) [3.48 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit the conclusion of the motion accorded priority prior to the commencement of Government business.

Debate on the motion accorded priority will not now conclude at 4.00 p.m. as a result of the division that was forced upon the House by the Opposition. I am sure that, like Government members, Opposition members would like to have their say on the motion, which is what the public expects of them. To allow them to do that, we must now suspend the standing and sessional orders that preclude a motion accorded priority being debated after 4.00 p.m. In other words, debate on the motion would normally be interrupted at 4.00 p.m., and we must suspend the standing and sessional orders to allow it to be concluded. At the conclusion of the debate the House will debate Government business.

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 65**

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

**Noes, 20**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES****Motion Accorded Priority**

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.56 p.m.]: I move:

That this House notes:

- (1) The Labor Party does not understand regional New South Wales.
- (2) The Government has put regional New South Wales back at the heart of government.

Members have just witnessed the member for Maroubra trying to silence the voice of regional members, including the Independent member for Lake Macquarie. He wants to prevent them talking about regional New South Wales. The question should be why New South Wales—

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You should be ashamed of what you just did.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** You mind your own business.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Kiama will come to order. The member for Wollongong will come to order. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Noreen Hay:** The member for Dubbo is not speaking to the leave of the motion. He is talking about Opposition members.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Dubbo is speaking to his motion.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** The member for Wollongong has just demonstrated the first part of my motion—namely, that Labor members do not understand regional New South Wales. Labor members are disgracefully trying to silence debate on this motion. The Labor Party's history is littered with disastrous examples of its failure to deliver to regional New South Wales. Labor has only one regional member and he is never given the opportunity to contribute to debate on regional New South Wales. The member for Cessnock has plenty to offer, but he is constantly silenced by his own party. It is a clear indication that members opposite do not understand regional New South Wales when—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: The member for Dubbo is clearly misleading the House. I ask that the member be brought back to the leave of the motion.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Dubbo is speaking to his motion.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** The second part of my motion reads:

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has put regional New South Wales back at the heart of government.

The O'Farrell-Government has a large number of regional Ministers in Cabinet who listen to regional members, including the members for Port Macquarie, Monaro, Northern Tablelands, Clarence and Kiama, who are present in the House. The Labor Party does not listen to its single regional member—the member for Cessnock.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: The member for Dubbo is clearly misleading the House.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Wollongong will resume her seat.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** I am a regional member.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Over the past three years the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered \$13 billion in infrastructure projects across regional New South Wales, including \$1 million in funding each year to make regional roads safer and more than \$1 billion to rebuild regional hospitals. It has also provided 2,000 more nurses, teachers and police officers, and 25,000 more regional jobs. This is despite the economic climate and a busted regional economy that members opposite left behind. They made promises to regional New South Wales and then gutted those communities by breaking those promises week after week. For the life of me, I cannot understand how the Leader of the Opposition, who wishes to be the Premier of this State, can make a speech in this place about infrastructure investment without mentioning regional New South Wales at least once.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The member for Dubbo is being relevant to the motion about regional New South Wales.

**Ms Anna Watson:** No, he is not; he is talking about the Leader of the Opposition.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. I place the member for Shellharbour on three calls to order.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Many members of this House, including members representing the electorates of Wollondilly, Wagga Wagga, Albury and Goulburn, are working hard across regional New South Wales. They are part of the team that is rebuilding our economy and confidence across regional New South Wales. This Government is investing in our hospitals. I would like an explanation from members opposite. I do not think they hate regional New South Wales but they most definitely do not understand it. They promised to build hospitals in Parkes, Forbes and Dubbo and then broke those promises over 10 years. Why? The then member for Dubbo was an Independent, so it was not a party-political thing. The Labor Government could not even do the right thing by the Independent local member.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 52. Members opposite seem intent on disrupting the debate. Mr Deputy-Speaker, I ask you to call members opposite to order. If they continue to interject or to take spurious points of order they should be removed from the House.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind Opposition members that some of them are on three calls to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [4.01 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to speak in this House about rural and regional issues. Unlike the Liberals in tan pants opposite who call themselves The Nationals, I will add some sense and truth to the debate. The reality is that regional New South Wales is going backwards under this Government, as it has historically gone backwards under Coalition governments. I draw the attention of the House to something that members opposite might remember—that is, the rail service to Broken Hill. Who cancelled that service? It was the Greiner Liberal-Nationals Government. Who reinstated that service? It was the Carr Labor Government. Staying on the theme of rail, let us look at who introduced the XPT service. Was it a Liberal-Nationals government? No, it was a Labor government.

More recently, who closed the agronomy services that supported farmers across New South Wales? It was the Liberal-Nationals Government. Who transferred the New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority to Orange? It was a Liberal-Nationals government. Who closed down Department of Primary Industries regional offices? It was a Liberal-Nationals government. Who established the 600 virtual selective school places for rural New South Wales? It was a Labor government. Who established the Ben Chifley TAFE Scholarships for regional TAFE students? It was a Labor government. Who resisted the Labor Government's decentralisation of agricultural research from Rydalmere to country locations? It was The Nationals. Who decentralised the Infringement Processing Bureau to Maitland? It was a Labor government. Who was responsible for laying more bitumen on roads in the Western Division of New South Wales? It was a Labor government. Despite that, there has been not one word of thanks from members opposite.

Members opposite have mentioned the Royalties for Regions program. Some might think that the rate of reinvestment in regional New South Wales under that program was 30 per cent—that is, the same as under the Western Australian model. How much is actually reinvested in regional New South Wales? It is less than 2 per cent of the royalties collected. According to the esteemed Leader of The Nationals—who must be on borrowed time—that process was independently audited. Those are his words in the book he signed off on, not mine. As we learnt in the budget estimates hearings, that program was never audited. One of his mates reviewed it. We should call a spade a spade. Who misses out under that program? It is the Cessnock and the Maitland local government areas. Why are they missing out on it? They are missing out because they did not complete a survey. Was the survey an essential part of the process? No, it was not. The whole thing is falling over.

What does the member for Bathurst do in response to protests being held on his doorstep? He locks the door and hides. Members opposite have shut down industry in Bathurst. They have also shut down a number of local prisons. Of course, the member for Clarence would know about that because the Government also shut down prisons in his electorate. Those closures have cost hundreds of jobs. During its last 12 months in office the Labor Government created 40,000 jobs in regional New South Wales. That has been confirmed by the Auditor-General. I appreciate the mirth of members opposite. Obviously they think they know more about numbers than the Auditor-General. It is amazing and alarming that there are now 37,000 fewer jobs in New South Wales than there were when the Labor Party lost government.

I draw the attention of the House to the decimation of TAFE. People living in regional New South Wales are highly unlikely to be able to access tertiary education in their local area. What has this Government done to address that? It has decimated TAFE by scrapping 800 teaching positions. It has also

cut the Health budget by \$3 billion. Guess who misses out? It is regional New South Wales. Funding for the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program is due to be renewed this year. We will see if The Nationals can find that money.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO** (Monaro) [4.06 p.m.]: I will make a brief contribution about the fantastic investment in services and infrastructure being made in regional New South Wales by this strong Liberal-Nationals Government. We saw members opposite trash this State's economy during 16 years in government. They left this State in a mess and the Liberal-Nationals Government has started to rebuild it in just three years. This Government's investment in regional communities is greater than any investment made by the Labor Government that the member for Cessnock could mention. He referred to the Labor Government creating 40,000 jobs. Since coming to office the Liberal-Nationals Government has created 109,000 new jobs in this State. Most importantly, 30 per cent of those jobs have been created in regional areas. In addition to the 30,000 jobs created in regional New South Wales, the Government has committed \$30 billion for regional infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and schools.

I will focus on schools, and the new Lake Cathie Public School in particular, which is in the electorate of the good member for Port Macquarie. The community of Lake Cathie asked for a school, but Labor Minister after Labor Minister refused to provide it. The member for Port Macquarie, who has been in this place for less than three years, has delivered a new school for Lake Cathie. I understand that the first sod will be turned this week. It took a regional Nationals Minister, along with the Nationals member for the great electorate of Port Macquarie, to deliver the school. That is the sort of investment that this Government is making in regional communities. It has provided \$13 billion worth of infrastructure, \$1 billion to make regional roads safer and more than \$1 billion to rebuild regional hospitals.

This Government has employed 2,000 more nurses, teachers and police officers and created more than 25,000 new jobs in regional New South Wales. It is looking after the regions by making real investments in the regions. Given the investment happening in regional electorates, we should rename one electorate—perhaps the electorate of Lismore—the "electorate of Stoner" after the Deputy Premier. That would acknowledge the level of investment made by the Nationals and the Leader of the Nationals in non-metropolitan electorates. Of course, those investments are in addition to the investments being made in Sydney. If the member for Wollongong is serious about regional New South Wales, why is she undermining the preselection of the good member for Shellharbour? Why is she undermining the preselection of a good regional member who is a strong voice for the people of Shellharbour?

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Monaro will return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** That is my question for the member for Wollongong. She should stop stacking branches against the good member for Shellharbour. The Liberal-Nationals Government has invested in regional New South Wales. The creation of 25,000 jobs and \$13 billion investment in infrastructure is good news for the people of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Because the member for Mount Druitt is on a walking stick, I will not call him to order for interjecting from the floor of the House.

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [4.09 p.m.]: As the member Dubbo has absolutely no idea about regions, I think it is important I point out to him that the Illawarra is in fact a region. The member for Kiama is sitting next to the member for Dubbo. You would think he would tell the member for Dubbo that the Illawarra is a region. So there is more than one regional member of Parliament on this side of the Chamber. What has the Government done? It has duded the regions on Resources for Regions, including the Illawarra. It has duded the regions on the Regional Relocation Grant. The Government wants to pay people to leave areas such as Wollongong. The Government has made cuts to TAFE, with 800 teaching jobs to go, and TAFE fees will double. The Government has scrapped the Illawarra Advantage Fund and reneged on the promise of easy access lifts at Unanderra railway station. It made that promise in the run-up to the election then reneged on it in government. Who brought car imports in through the port of Port Kembla? It was the former Labor Government. Who sold off the port of Port Kembla? It was this Government. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages office in Wollongong is to be closed and people put out of work. Port Kembla Hospital kitchen jobs are to be lost.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Government members will come to order.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** Government members do not care about jobs.

*[Interruption]*

Drummoyne, you can interrupt all you like, but you do not care about jobs.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: The member for Wollongong has been in this place long enough to know that comments should be directed through the Chair, not across the table.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind members to direct their comments through the Chair.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** Further job losses—

**Mr John Sidoti:** Er, er.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** It is a shame that the member for Drummoyne has to be so rude. Electrolux will close its refrigeration plant in Orange, axing 540 jobs. Bathurst employer and rail manufacturer Downer EDI will lose 100 jobs. National Engineering in Young will shed 40 jobs. There will be 200 job losses at WesTrac. Centennial Coal is predicting 120 job losses. In the Illawarra, Pillar is under threat. The 700 jobs created under the Labor Government are under threat from the Liberal Government. There are to be 50 job losses at IGA in Albury and 37 job losses at Sandvik. There will be 20 job losses at Macquarie Textiles and 13 at MTU Detroit Diesel Australia in Wagga Wagga. Under this Government, all we see in the regions are job losses. Government members have been rude. The member for Murray-Darling has been outrageous. I think it is appalling.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I call the member for Murray-Darling to order for the first time.

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [4.12 p.m.]: I would like the record to show that Labor members voted against extending the speaking time on this motion so that I could stand up for my electorate. The way in which Labor members behaved in the 20 minutes that it took to hold the divisions indicates that they are a rabble. In fact, it is an insult to a rabble to describe the Opposition that way. One would have to look very carefully at a thesaurus to find an appropriate collective noun to describe that smouldering lot who sit opposite. We have heard a lot about jobs and the economy, but there is one job that the member for Wollongong wants—and it belongs to the member for Shellharbour. The member for Wollongong talks about jobs. We know which job she wants, just as the member for Bankstown wants the seat of the member for Auburn. Opposition members talk about jobs, but we know which jobs they want. I hope that the member for Shellharbour is successfully returned in the preselection.

The Government took five points to the people at the last election. We said that we wanted to work together on them as a State. The first was to fix our economy. We have heard a lot about job generation in Parliament this afternoon. I am proud to be part of a Liberal-Nationals Government that is investing in rural and regional New South Wales. Our Jobs Action Plan has seen an investment in rural and regional Australia. There is the payroll tax rebate. Recently the Treasurer introduced a legislative amendment to give a fresh start to people who have lost their jobs. That is important. In regional areas such as my electorate that have a higher than average unemployment rate we need to work together. The second point we took to the people was infrastructure investment. The largest ever investment in the Princes Highway is happening under this Government. Today I announced the start of preparatory work on the Berry bypass, a \$510 million project, coupled with the \$329 million we are spending on the Princes Highway.

That was ignored by Labor members opposite. Prior to standing for Parliament, I attended the funerals of people who had lost their lives on the Princes Highway. I saw firsthand what Labor's neglect did to my electorate. I saw firsthand what Labor's neglect did to people like my mother, who had to travel to Wollongong from the Shoalhaven to get cancer treatment. Today we have a cancer centre in the Shoalhaven that could have benefited her and will benefit thousands of others. I have spoken previously in this place about things like the positron emission tomography [PET] scanner and the aeromedical services at Albion Park. The Government was not necessarily going to support those services, but because I worked with members opposite and with the community we were able to deliver them. I will continue to ensure that we

have more front-line services. That is why we have more doctors, teachers and police in my electorate in the Illawarra now than at any other time in the State's history. We are protecting our environment, we are working towards a balanced planning system and we have tried to make the Government more accountable. I will always stand up for rural and regional New South Wales. Those opposite will continue to deride and damage it.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, I seek leave to speak in the debate.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I have sought advice on the matter. The motion to suspend standing and sessional orders permits only the member for Kiama to speak also to the motion accorded priority. I call the member for Dubbo to reply to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.15 p.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Cessnock, Monaro, Wollongong and Kiama for their contributions to the debate. The member for Cessnock is an articulate young man who represents wonderful regional communities in Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Wollombi and the like. I used to work in that community. The people of that wonderful community would like their voices to be heard by others in the member's party when they put forward proposals and opportunities for investment and counter government policy. Unfortunately, that member from regional New South Wales is denied the opportunity by his own leader to represent his community. Why is that so? I would like that question to be answered.

When the Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to talk about where investment in the State's infrastructure over the next 20 years should occur, he did not mention regional New South Wales once. He did not even mention the electorate of the member for Cessnock. That is a damning indictment on the Leader of the Opposition. On 29 May 2012 the Norsk Hydro Kurri Kurri plant, in the electorate of the member for Cessnock, was closed down. The member for Cessnock was silent. He was not supported by the Leader of the Opposition. That again demonstrates the main point of this motion: Labor does not understand regional New South Wales. The member for Wollongong indicated that the Labor Party has several members from regional New South Wales. She counts herself and the member for Shellharbour among them. Why are they not given an opportunity on the Opposition frontbench?

Labor does not understand or care about regional areas not getting a say in future directions. That is the issue. It is clear that Labor members have tried to shut down regional members having a say in debate on this important subject, but then desperately want to argue the point. The member for Monaro, the member for Kiama and others have made the point clearly about levels of investment. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Bathurst. The Bathurst Bullet train and the Bathurst fire station are just two of the initiatives promised by Labor over a long period, but they were not delivered until the member for Bathurst was elected to this House.

There is a litany of similar examples right across the State in regional areas, such as \$218 million for the Wagga Wagga Hospital redevelopment, which we have heard much about, and \$275 million for hospital or community health developments at Kempsey, Lismore, Port Macquarie and Yamba. Regional communities had been denied that investment. Because regional areas of New South Wales are now represented overwhelmingly in Cabinet and in this Parliament, the voices of people who live in rural and regional areas are being heard. Regional electorates in New South Wales have been returned to the heart of government and are at the front of the Government's mind, which is something that Labor members will never understand. Shame on them! I am not sure why the New South Wales Labor Party hates this State's regional communities so much, but in the words of Manly supporters: They hate you back.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I have examined the motion moved earlier by the Leader of the House. It stated explicitly that one additional speaker, the member for Kiama, would speak in the debate. That is clear. Opposition members voted against the motion.

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

**The House divided.**



**Ayes, 58**

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

**Noes, 22**

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

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! It being after 4.00 p.m., the House will proceed to Government business.

**OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT (ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS) BILL 2014**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO** (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [4.32 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I also pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and pay my respects to the elders of the other first nations of New South Wales. I also acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Professor Shane Houston, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) at the University of Sydney. Professor Houston was a member of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government was elected with a mandate to make New South Wales number one again. We were elected on a five-point plan, one point being to restore accountability. Historically, throughout Australia all levels of government have struggled with the issue of accountability for expenditure on Aboriginal programs. The Ombudsman Amendment (Aboriginal Programs) Bill 2014 outlines the proposal for the appointment of a Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs—an Australian first and a landmark reform for Aboriginal affairs.

The idea for this initiative came from Aboriginal community leaders and demonstrates the commitment of the Government to listen to communities and to work in genuine partnership with them to implement much-needed reform. This is an Australian first—no previous State or Federal government has opened itself up to this level of independent scrutiny of its Aboriginal programs. In three recent independent reports both the New South Wales Auditor-General and the NSW Ombudsman have called on government to have greater accountability in the design and delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal people. In May 2011 the Auditor-General stated in his report on the previous Labor Government's Aboriginal Affairs Two Ways Together plan that, "...it has not delivered the improvement in overall outcomes for Aboriginal people that was intended." The Auditor-General recommended that an independent auditor undertake an annual review of government programs and services delivered to Aboriginal people, to build an evidence base of what works in Aboriginal affairs, and to appoint an independent advisor as a champion for Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

In October 2011 the NSW Ombudsman identified similar shortfalls with the previous Government's policy in his special report to Parliament, "Addressing Aboriginal disadvantage: the need to do things differently". He found:

Wasted opportunities stemming from a large amount of funds being spent on a disparate 'grab-bag' of programs without adequate accountability.

The Ombudsman recommended that an independent agency be provided with the legislative authority to undertake and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the New South Wales Government's plan for addressing Aboriginal disadvantage. In December 2012 the NSW Ombudsman published a report, "Responding to child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities". In his report the Ombudsman recommended, inter alia, enacting legislation for an independent body to advise government on the progress of major initiatives in Aboriginal affairs. The Auditor-General and Ombudsman confirmed concerns raised by Aboriginal people over the absence of genuinely shared decision-making, the duplication of services, lack of coordination, unclear accountability pathways and—despite significant investment over time—limited demonstrable improvement in the lives of Aboriginal people across New South Wales.

In August 2011 in response to the Auditor-General's report I established and chaired the New South Wales Government Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs. The taskforce comprised seven senior Ministers and four senior Aboriginal community representatives who, for the first time, sat at the table and made decisions together. The task force had a tight focus: to improve education and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people across New South Wales, and to improve service delivery and accountability in Aboriginal affairs. In 2012 the taskforce held two rounds of community consultation and heard directly from Aboriginal people, the non-government sector and corporate Australia about what works on the ground and how to build on these initiatives. More than 2,500 people attended these community consultations, more than 400 survey forms were completed and 201 submissions were received. Aboriginal people expressed concern that they were "over-serviced but under-delivered" and that they are "talked to, not worked with". The task force listened to the community and made recommendations to the New South Wales Government concerning the areas of focus.

As a result of this partnership with Aboriginal people, Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment [OCHRE] was created. OCHRE is the New South Wales Government's plan for Aboriginal affairs, which has been developed in partnership with Aboriginal people and is the response to the taskforce's recommendations. Through consultation, we heard from thousands of people who requested support for more Aboriginal young people to stay at school; more Aboriginal young people to transition into employment; the teaching of Aboriginal language and culture in order to build people's pride and identity; increasing the skill and capacity of local governance bodies; and making both government and communities more accountable for the money they spend. These aspirations are reflected in the OCHRE initiatives, which are being introduced in partnership with Aboriginal people. Connected Communities and Opportunity Hubs aim to support more Aboriginal young people to stay at school and help with the transition into employment.

The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest aims to increase the number of Aboriginal language speakers and teachers in order to build people's pride and identity. Local decision-making models aim to increase the skill and capacity of local governance bodies and the establishment of a deputy ombudsman reflects the intention to make both government and communities more accountable for the money they spend and to ensure that the initiatives are delivered effectively and outcomes are achieved. Specifically, the OCHRE accountability framework has the following components: an Aboriginal voice in design and delivery of programs and services, a refocused role for the Aboriginal Affairs agency, improved coordination and oversight, and meaningful and measureable reporting.

Initially, to implement the accountability framework, OCHRE proposed a new position of Coordinator General for Aboriginal Affairs and a new and independent Aboriginal Council. Aboriginal Affairs consulted with the Aboriginal representatives on the taskforce, a broad range of New South Wales government agencies, the New South Wales Auditor-General and the NSW Ombudsman to further develop the coordinator general proposal, including legislation to underpin the position. In the course of the consultation, Aboriginal community leaders suggested that, on the issue of accountability, it would be more effective to appoint an Aboriginal Ombudsman to monitor and assess specified initiatives and programs relating to Aboriginal affairs. It was decided that the deputy ombudsman idea was a stronger model for a number of reasons including, importantly, that it utilises an existing structure and process—the Office of the NSW Ombudsman—and that the Ombudsman has proven capacity and an excellent reputation amongst Aboriginal people in our State.

In this context, I now turn my attention to the nature and detail of the bill before the House. Section 8 of the Ombudsman Act 1974 provides that the Ombudsman may appoint a Deputy Ombudsman, who can exercise functions delegated by the Ombudsman subject to certain limitations—covered in section 8A. Following amendments in 2002, the Ombudsman appointed a Deputy Ombudsman for Community and Disability Services—covered in section 8 (1A). This bill now proposes a new section 8 (1B), similar to the preceding section, that the Ombudsman appoint a deputy ombudsman to enable the Ombudsman to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs, being government initiatives or services relating to Aboriginal affairs prescribed by the regulations. It is intended that the Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs will be an Aboriginal person and will be appointed administratively. Aboriginal programs to be monitored and assessed by the deputy ombudsman will be prescribed in the regulations.

The Government has drafted regulations in readiness for the changes proposed in this bill. The draft regulations propose that OCHRE be the first Aboriginal program to be prescribed by the regulations. The deputy ombudsman's support of the Ombudsman in the independent monitoring and review of Aboriginal programs should encourage progressive and continuous improvements in those programs. It aims to avoid a critical after-the-fact report when a program has been delivered, the money has already been spent or it is simply too late to salvage a proper outcome from a poorly designed and poorly delivered program. Existing powers of the Ombudsman which may be delegated to the deputy ombudsman to compel the release of information and documents by agencies, and the power to enter premises to access documents, will apply in the same way in order to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs prescribed by the regulations. The Ombudsman may provide information obtained this way to another agency with a relevant interest. There are protections against adverse implications for individuals who disclose records and information to the Ombudsman under new section 25M.

Central to the Ombudsman's existing role within the New South Wales Government's accountability framework is the power to produce reports. The bill creates new section 25N that permits the Ombudsman to provide a report on any matter concerning an Aboriginal program, including recommendations for improvements in the delivery of the program, to the Minister responsible for the program and to any other Minister or public authority affected, in the opinion of the Ombudsman, by the report. The Minister responsible for the Aboriginal program must furnish a copy of the report to both Houses of Parliament within one month. The Ombudsman may make also a special report to Parliament on any systemic issue relating to Aboriginal affairs. As with other reports, the Ombudsman is required to consult with the responsible Minister before publishing a report concerning his or her portfolio. We do not expect that all reports from the Ombudsman will be positive—we are realistic regarding the historic challenges that face program delivery, especially in matters relating to Aboriginal affairs. No program is perfect; all programs require a degree of fine-tuning. The proposed provisions within the bill provide the opportunity for government to fine-tune programs along the way to improve the model and therefore improve the outcomes.

There is no quick fix; the reform in OCHRE is long term. However, if we build genuine partnerships with Aboriginal people and they own the initiatives, combined with a strong accountability structure to measure outcomes, we will make a difference. Under new section 25M (4), the Ombudsman and the Minister responsible for the Aboriginal program also may consult with each other on the monitoring and assessment of a program, or on any other matters relating to the program. It is intended that the Ombudsman may consult also with heads of agencies, Aboriginal peak bodies and other relevant stakeholders in monitoring and assessing Aboriginal programs. Importantly, the Ombudsman may be able to assist Aboriginal Affairs in its solution brokerage function between New South Wales government agencies, through the use of existing discretionary powers, to engage in facilitation to resolve intractable issues that cannot be resolved via escalation through internal government mechanisms. The deputy ombudsman will be supported by staff and will draw on the existing resources, knowledge and reputation of the Ombudsman to ensure genuine review and accountability for Aboriginal programs for future decades. NSW Ombudsman, Mr Bruce Barbour, said:

Having an Aboriginal person in a statutory role of this type will allow my office to continue to strengthen its work with Aboriginal communities across the State and sends a strong message about the importance of improving the circumstances of Aboriginal people.

Councillor Stephen Ryan of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, one of the Aboriginal members on the taskforce, has warmly welcomed the reform. Councillor Ryan said:

I strongly support this initiative and congratulate the Minister for delivering on his commitment. The issue of accountability was raised repeatedly by Aboriginal communities across the State during our Taskforce consultation.

It is hoped the creation of the position of Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs will lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal people, with more regular reports on how well these initiatives are being implemented in Aboriginal communities.

"NSW 2021: A Plan to make NSW Number One" dedicates an entire chapter to restoring accountability to the New South Wales Government. The New South Wales Government committed to strengthening the powers of independent watchdogs, including the NSW Ombudsman. We committed to making more government information easily available, enabling citizens to critique government services and finding more ways to involve people in government decision-making, and will require government to continuously improve its own performance. This was the mandate we were elected on and this bill delivers on that commitment to the people of New South Wales. Professor Shane Houston commented on the benefit of the proposed reform. He said:

This new position is a game changer, it shows the Government is committed to better outcomes for Aboriginal people in New South Wales. The legislation represents a significant structural reform which looks beyond political cycles and will entrench accountability across a life cycle. Having an Aboriginal voice within the Ombudsman's Office is integral to improving education and employment outcomes for future generations.

In concluding, this bill represents the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle. What we have learnt from the reports of the Auditor-General, the Ombudsman and from Aboriginal people comes down to three key points: partnership, planning and accountability. First, we created partnerships with Aboriginal people through the Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs, the success of which was demonstrated in the level of engagement with Aboriginal people throughout the consultation process. Secondly, the consultations formed the foundation upon which OCHRE was created. OCHRE now provides a planning road map for Aboriginal people and for government to follow in the years ahead. Thirdly, with the deputy ombudsman responsible for Aboriginal programs, we now have an independent accountability structure with ongoing monitoring and assessment that will help Aboriginal people realise their aspirations as detailed in OCHRE.

I thank those who assisted me in developing this bill. In particular I thank and acknowledge the critical role of the four Aboriginal community representatives on the taskforce: Councillor Stephen Ryan, Councillor for the Central Region for New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council; Professor Shane Houston, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Services at the University of Sydney; Mr Danny Lester, Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy Limited; and Ms Maydina Penrith, a young Aboriginal leader. I thank also my ministerial colleagues and senior government officials for their genuine commitment to the taskforce. I thank the members in my ministerial office, particularly my Aboriginal policy officer Caity McLoughlin, and my chief of staff, Verity Lomax, who worked tirelessly to make sure this reform was driven and realised. It was critical for community members to be directly involved in the taskforce through the community consultations. The taskforce was able to tap into their insight and knowledge to inform its deliberations on the future direction of Aboriginal affairs in New South Wales. I thank them for their time, knowledge and commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Linda Burney and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

## **CRIMINAL ASSETS RECOVERY AMENDMENT BILL 2014**

## **MINING AND PETROLEUM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 25 February 2014.**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [4.49 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 and indicate at the outset that the Opposition supports the bills. The Opposition supports the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the move by the Government to implement them. I have said before and I will say it again that I have zero tolerance for corruption. I am and will continue to be a strong advocate of legislation that strengthens our State's anticorruption framework.

First, I turn to the Government Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014, which amends the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 to allow the recovery of proceeds of crime where the person who benefitted was not the direct perpetrator of the criminal activity. The bill introduces a new test that requires the New South Wales Crime Commission to establish that the perpetrator intended the person to benefit or ought reasonably to have known that the person would benefit in order to obtain an order against him or her. Importantly, the bill will allow the New South Wales Crime Commission to seize assets held in family trusts. Labor welcomes this move. The bill also amends the definition of "proceeds" to include an increase in the value of an interest in property as a result of criminal activity. As the Premier pointed out in his second reading speech, existing safeguards to protect innocent third parties remain.

For proceeds assessment orders there will still be a requirement that the third party knew or ought reasonably to have known that the proceeds came from illegal activities. The Supreme Court still has discretion to refuse to make an unexplained wealth order if it is in the public interest. For restraining and confiscation orders, property ceases to be serious crime-derived property or illegally acquired property if it was obtained by a third party for sufficient consideration without knowledge that it was serious crime-derived property or illegally acquired property, and in circumstances that would not arouse reasonable suspicion. These amendments will operate retrospectively. In December last year the Independent Commission Against Corruption recommended:

That the NSW Government considers enacting legislation to provide for the confiscation of the proceeds of the conduct at issue obtained by those involved in, or with knowledge of, that conduct.

The bill before the House is consistent with the recommendation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Labor also supports the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, which introduces a provision into the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum Onshore Act 1991 to allow decision-makers to cancel or refuse to grant or renew a mining licence or petroleum title if a person is not a fit and proper person. At the same time, this bill removes the provision introduced last year by the Government, which established an open-ended public interest test for the cancellation of licences. The definition of a fit and proper person includes a non-exhaustive list of items that the decision-maker may consider. I note that the bill does not link the definition of a fit and proper person to any finding of a court or the Independent Commission Against Corruption. A person who is deemed by the decision-maker not to be a fit and proper person can appeal to the Land and Environment Court. The bill also includes a change in terminology throughout the legislation from "the decision-maker responsibly considers" to "the decision-maker is satisfied". Finally, the bill also ensures that a coalmining lease can be granted only if the applicant had an exploration licence over the area.

In his brief second reading speech the Premier claimed that the bill takes up the remaining issues from the Independent Commission Against Corruption. In fact, the main function of the bill is to remove the undefined public interest test that the Premier introduced last year as grounds for cancelling or refusing to grant or renew any mining rights or petroleum titles and replace it with a test of whether persons involved are fit and proper. The bill attempts to fix poorly considered legislation that was rushed through the Parliament last year. At the time the Opposition raised concerns about the public interest test. The bill is an admission that the Government got the legislation completely wrong, which is a pattern that is emerging from this Government.

While these bills address issues arising from the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption to strengthen anticorruption measures, more needs to be done in this space. It has now been more than a year since I announced a new standard for every Labor member of Parliament in New South Wales. For an entire year the Premier has refused to take up the offer of bipartisanship. What has the Premier been doing for 12 months? This Premier has been exposed for not tackling corruption in New South Wales. He is more interested in pointing the finger at his political opponents than in preventing corruption or increasing standards for his own Ministers and members of Parliament. It is no surprise that three Liberal members of Parliament are now under investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. This is the result of years of inaction by the Premier. I remind him of what he can do and I again offer the bipartisan support of the Opposition on these measures.

I believe that members of Parliament should be required to declare their full taxable income, including income from outside sources. The President of the United States does it and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom does it. Under the new standard I have announced, every Labor member of Parliament on the frontbench is doing it. I believe that spouses and family members of every member of Parliament also should be subject to stricter pecuniary interest declarations and disclosure requirements. I want to see the establishment of a new watchdog, an inspector general for parliamentary standards who has the power to fine and recommend the dismissal of members of Parliament who do the wrong thing. Under my leadership, Labor in government will establish an independent probative panel made up of expert probity officers who will scrutinise the granting of

all new mining exploration licences. Labor in government also will require all licences to be approved by Cabinet. I say to the Premier that truly tackling corruption requires us to set a new standard for every member of Parliament in this State. I reiterate that the Premier should join me in tackling corruption so that the people of New South Wales have confidence in all members in this place.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne) [4.56 p.m.]: I support the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This important legislation represents the Government's response to the findings of the Independent Commission Against Corruption last December regarding the improper granting of coal licences by the Labor Government. I wish to comment on the statement made earlier by the Leader of the Opposition, who asked what the Premier had been doing for the past 12 months. What did the Labor Government do for 16 years? As a result of the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry we will soon be aware of what has been happening.

The Leader of the Opposition referred earlier to a new standard. A new standard was implemented by this Government in 2011. This Government passed legislation to cancel certain licences in the Mining Amendment (ICAC Operations Jasper and Acacia) Bill 2014 which received assent on 31 January this year. That bill was introduced in direct response to a recommendation from the Independent Commission Against Corruption that the Government move to cancel licences for Doyles Creek, Mount Penny and Glendon Brook. Those licences featured in widely publicised hearings last year which exposed corruption on a grand scale by former Labor Ministers Macdonald and Obeid. They improperly granted those licences which enabled certain well-connected individuals to profit. That legislation restored assets to the people of New South Wales that were taken for private gain.

The inquiry found that exploration licences that had been granted to Doyles Creek Mining, Mount Penny Coal and Glendon Brook Coal were tainted by serious corruption. The Government took the appropriate decision that the only way to deal with this impropriety was to cancel the licences. The legislation further deemed that there would be no compensation to those concerned. That decision was not taken lightly and the Government carefully considered the repercussions for shareholders. The Independent Commission Against Corruption recommended that consideration be given to the provision of ex gratia financial compensation to innocent persons. However, the Independent Commission Against Corruption also noted of NuCoal that the consequences of improper transactions could not be avoided merely because its shares had been subsequently traded. Although shareholders had no legitimate claim to compensation by taxpayers under the Act, the Government believes that their grievances should be directed to those who are responsible for acts of wrongdoing. To this end, there may be other ways to pursue compensation.

I have received a number of letters, emails and phone calls from constituents in my electorate who have been seriously disadvantaged by the cancellation of these licences and the subsequent drop in share price. I am sympathetic to them, but many submissions suggested that cancellation of licences without compensation may raise concerns about sovereign risk. The Premier said in his second reading speech:

The greatest form of sovereign risk, the greatest threat to the stability and certainty needed by business in dealing with governments is the risk of corruption.

He said further:

It is the risk of corrupt public officials and their private sector mates that will distort public processes, manipulate markets and will act for their own private benefit in secret deals at the expense of the public interest.

I could not agree more. The Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry revealed some very nasty allegations involving public officials who were out to benefit themselves. They did not care about shareholders. They did not care about strengthening the State's resource economy. All they cared about was making a profit by foul means and now they have been found out. I am hopeful that this legislation will prevent this type of corruption from occurring again. This bill follows the Mining Amendment (ICAC Operations Jasper and Acacia) Bill 2014, which did not address all matters raised in the Independent Commission Against Corruption report, and will help the Government to obtain some of the profits made in this corrupt tale.

I turn now to the objects of the legislation. The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 to permit the recovery of proceeds of crime where those proceeds were derived by a person who was not the direct perpetrator of criminal activity. In the wash-up of the Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation it was revealed that many of the proceeds of improper granting of licences were placed in family trusts or other places not accessible to recovery. Criminals

invariably take steps to ensure that such proceeds are placed in an associated entity where technically they cannot be accessed. Under a new test to be introduced, the NSW Crime Commission will now be able to obtain an order against a person if it can be established that the perpetrator intended the person to benefit or knew that the person could benefit. The amendments contained in this bill clarify that proceeds will include an increase in the value of an interest in property resulting from criminal activity. I note that the amendments to the existing Act are supported by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, the cognate bill, amends the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991. It basically replaces the decision-maker's discretion to refuse to grant or cancel a mining or petroleum authority in the public interest. The decision-maker will be allowed to cancel or refuse a licence if it is believed that the applicant is not a fit or proper person. The bill has been thoroughly crafted and lists the factors a decision-maker should take into consideration when determining who is a fit and proper person, including if the person has contravened relevant legislation; if the person has held a mining right or petroleum title that has been cancelled, suspended or revoked; whether the person is of good repute; if the person has a history of bankruptcy or involvement in the management of insolvent companies; and the involvement of other persons who are not fit and proper persons in the management of the mining or petroleum activities.

Above anything else this legislation contains safeguards, and in its drafting the Government was conscious that corrupt behaviour will no longer be tolerated or possible within the law. The bill will prohibit an application for planning approval for mining that permits coal extraction under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 unless an authority under the Mining Act is in force. Prior to this addition, a potential loophole existed that could circumvent the need to obtain an exploration licence for coal. The Mining Act will be amended so that the Department of Trade and Industry, Regional Infrastructure and Services can take certain actions relating to preserved conditions under clause 13. These conditions will continue to apply to the Mount Penny, Glendon Brook and Doyles Creek tenements under the licences cancelled in January.

These cognate bills are about cleaning up the stench of the previous Government and its profiteering Ministers. They are designed to ensure that such improprieties never happen again. These bills will ensure that those engaged in illegal activity will be held accountable and those associated with them will be unable to profit from wrongdoings. The amendments will strengthen the existing criminal assets recovery mechanism. Although these amendments are relevant to the issues raised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation, they will have general application. I am proud to support legislation that will give the Government the power to recoup losses caused by criminal activity and corrupt practices by officials and Ministers. I commend these cognate bills to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [5.05 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I support and welcome the criminal asset recovery aspect of the legislation because it will make it possible to recover proceeds of crime where those proceeds were derived by a person who was not the direct perpetrator of criminal activity. Currently this is possible if the proceeds were derived "at the direction or request" of the perpetrator but the bill extends this to include situations where the perpetrator knew, or ought to have reasonably known, that the secondary person would derive a financial benefit. The bill also extends the definition of "proceeds" to include an increase in the value of an interest in property resulting from an activity.

I have some questions about the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill, which I do not expect to be answered today. Many people considered the public interest test to be a very positive test. It allowed a very open definition of what was appropriate when it came to mining and petroleum in particular. Concern has been raised that the fit and proper person replacement test will be a narrowing of that. I acknowledge that much more discussion needs to be had about this issue, and I am sure that the Premier and other Government members will address it. However, the key issue was highlighted in the Premier's second reading speech when he said:

Today the Government introduces these two further bills to complete the Government's legislative responses to the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and other associated issues.

According to the Premier this is the last of any legislative responses. I assume that means that the rest of the responses will be by way of regulation. So how many of the 26 recommendations made by the Independent Commission Against Corruption about corruption prevention will be addressed by regulation? I suspect the Premier will address this in his speech in reply. I also note that regulation can sometimes be a point of concern.

Indeed, we are dealing with this legislation because Ministers allegedly acted in a corrupt way and Ministers have a great deal of power in the making of regulations. Would it not be better for the issues raised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption to be introduced by way of legislation in this Parliament?

The Independent Commission Against Corruption gave a number of examples, including that exploration licences should be considered by an independent body which advises the Minister. I suspect the Government is looking to create this by regulation. I would argue that creating it by legislation would give a framework with less corruption risk. The Independent Commission Against Corruption also made a number of recommendations about a triple bottom line assessment by this independent body in the likelihood that the application will progress to production phase, et cetera, which I welcome.

As a member of The Greens, I believe that triple bottom line assessment supports not only sustainability but also our industries to make sure that we can continue to provide for people in New South Wales. Triple bottom line assessment is really important. The Independent Commission Against Corruption also made some recommendations on rents on exploration licences. It recommended that rents on exploration licences should not be a set fee but rather should increase exponentially to discourage companies from sitting on licences. At present companies can sit on a licence for 20 years. My question to the Minister involved and to the Premier is: If the Government is looking to deal with all 26 recommendations then why would it rather deal with them via regulation? Would it not provide greater corruption-proofing if these issues were to be dealt with by legislation rather than regulation? I understand that my colleagues in the upper House will pursue this matter to ensure that we can more thoroughly corruption-proof New South Wales.

I note that the Independent Commission Against Corruption also made a range of recommendations in 2010. One of those recommendations was that the New South Wales Government enact legislation to provide for the regulation of lobbyists, including the establishment and management of a lobbyist register et cetera. There were 17 different recommendations made in the 2010 report, which the Independent Commission Against Corruption again refers to in recommendation 26 of its more recent report, which states:

That the NSW Government reviews the recommendations contained in the Commission's 2010 publication, *Investigation into corruption risks involved in lobbying*, and considers adopting the recommendations that apply to the state government's lobbying regulatory regime, which have not been implemented to date.

We had the recommendations in the 2010 Independent Commission Against Corruption report and now, in its most recent report, the commission asks the Government to look at that report. I ask the Premier: What is the Government doing to enact the 2010 recommendations? The Independent Commission Against Corruption has again had to draw them to the Government's attention and to ask it to reconsider them. This should be dealt with not by regulation or by the Premier issuing a notice or a letter to his colleagues but rather by enacting legislation. Those are the questions I am seeking to have answered. It is very positive that we have an organisation like the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which makes recommendations, which roots out corruption and which deals with these issues that otherwise may not have come to light.

It is equally important that the recommendations and the issues that arise from them be fully ventilated in this House. It is fair to say that, where possible, legislation should address these recommendations and ensure that this State is as corruption-proof as possible. Regulations, which can be introduced by a Minister through his department and so on, allow for much less certainty than legislation. It requires the agreement of both Houses of Parliament to make any changes to legislation. I also note that, while the Premier says this is the end of the Government's legislative response to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, we should also consider reviewing the legislation dealing with petroleum and mining.

As we know, there is no right for landholders to say no to miners and there is no real certainty in the arbitration provisions. Many communities are requesting that concerns about their local licences be heard. For example, in the Bylong Valley a Korean-owned miner is currently forcing landowners to go to arbitration and a licence was granted at Appletree Flat by the now-disgraced former Minister for Mineral Resources. AGL has a licence at Gloucester and a petroleum exploration licence was renewed covering many places on the Moree Plains. Leichhardt Resources holds coal seam gas exploration licences over 5,500 square kilometres of prime land. That is a \$100 company run by a Queensland lawyer. The list of problems with mining goes on and on. I hope this Government will aggressively pursue the issues with mining. One way it can do that is to enact all 26 recommendations in the most recent Independent Commission Against Corruption report and to vigorously pursue the 17 recommendations in the 2010 report, which are referred to in recommendation 26 of the current report.



The issue of mining has raised genuine concerns in the community, particularly in rural and regional areas. We know that the former Minister for Resources and Energy, who now sits on the crossbench, tried to resolve those concerns. It is important that the Government address the findings of the Independent Commission Against Corruption legislatively to minimise the risk of corruption and to maximise the faith we have in this process. I will look forward to further discussion on these bills. I trust that the Government will aggressively pursue these Independent Commission Against Corruption recommendations and implement them in full.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.15 p.m.]: The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 were introduced recently by the Premier, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell. It was terrible going through the Independent Commission Against Corruption investigations, hearing the deliberations, watching the media circus and seeing the outcome. Like many other politicians, I believe that what occurred cast a shadow over all politicians. I applaud the work the Independent Commission Against Corruption has done and I fully support the Premier in the introduction of this legislation. This is what the people require. I cannot not pass up the opportunity to note how deeply concerned I was at the revelations and how deeply disappointed I was to learn that former members of this House had engaged in such activity. As we all know in this place, it continues to resonate day after day.

The overview of the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 states that the object of the bill is to provide for proceeds of an activity engaged in by a person to include certain interests, services, advantages or benefits derived or realised—whether directly or indirectly—by other persons if the person engaged in the activity intended that result or knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that it would be likely to be the result, and to make it clear that proceeds of an activity can include an increase in the value of an interest in property resulting from the activity, and to include provisions of a savings or transitional nature.

The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 amends two existing pieces of legislation in response to the final report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption on operations Jasper and Acacia, published in December last year. The bills to be amended are the Criminal Asset Recovery Act 1990, the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991. The Criminal Asset Recovery Act 1990 facilitates the recovery of proceeds where those proceeds were derived by a person who was not the direct perpetrator of criminal activity. This includes family trusts and other associated entities. Under this legislation the New South Wales Crime Commission can obtain an order against any person the perpetrator intended to benefit or knew, or ought to have known, would benefit. The amendment also clarifies that proceeds can include an increase in the value of an interest in property resulting from crime-related activities, such as shares. Existing safeguards under the legislation to protect innocent third parties will remain. In his second reading speech on the bills, the Premier stated:

In relation to all restraining and confiscation orders, property ceases to be "serious crime derived property" or "illegally acquired property" if it is acquired by a third party for sufficient consideration without knowing that it was serious crime derived property or illegally acquired property, and in circumstances that would not arouse a reasonable suspicion.

This amendment will extend to activities that were engaged in and proceeds that were derived or realised before the commencement of the amendments, and to application for orders under the Act made, but not yet determined, before the commencement of the amendments. Both the New South Wales Crime Commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption support this legislation.

The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 amends the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to replace the decision-maker's discretion to refuse to grant or cancel a mining or petroleum authority in "the public interest". A new test will be introduced allowing the decision-maker to cancel or refuse to grant or renew a mining licence or petroleum authority if, in the decision-maker's opinion, the applicant is not a "fit and proper person". Some of the considerations taken into account when determining a "fit and proper person" include whether that person contravened relevant legislation, whether their mining right or petroleum title was cancelled, suspended or revoked, and whether the person is of good repute. The test will also allow decision-makers to cancel or suspend operations, impose conditions and restrict operations under a mining right or petroleum title.

In order to close a potential loophole that could be used to circumvent the need to obtain an exploration licence for coal, this bill also prohibits an application for planning approval for mining that permits coal extraction under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 unless an authority under the Mining Act is in force. The bill amends the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to make it clear that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure may take into account relevant public interest considerations even if

they were not raised specifically in the report of the director-general of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure when determining an application under transitional part 3A of the Act. Other amendments include the grounds on which administrative decisions affecting mining rights and petroleum titles can be made so that administrative action can be taken based on the decision-maker's state of mind. Further, the bill introduces an amendment to the Mining Act so that NSW Trade and Investment can take certain actions relating to the conditions that continue to apply to the Mount Penny, Glendon Brook and Doyles Creek tenements under the licences cancelled in January.

This legislation is intended to clean up the mess that the Labor Government left behind and to ensure that the recently uncovered corrupt activities can never happen again. Although these amendments are relative to the issues raised in operations Jasper and Acacia, undertaken by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, they are not specific to them and will have general application. I thank the commission and the NSW Crime Commission for working with the Government to develop this legislative package. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr GARRY EDWARDS** (Swansea) [5.21 p.m.]: The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 has been drafted in direct response to the final reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption on operations Jasper and Acacia, which were published in December 2013 following revelations of deep-seated corruption, including the corrupt granting of exploration licences. This Government took action by passing the Mining Amendment (ICAC Operations Jasper and Acacia) Bill 2014, which cancelled the exploration licences in respect of Doyles Creek, Mount Penny and Glendon Brook.

This bill, which I support, continues the strong action this Government is taking to restore public confidence in the allocation of New South Wales mining licences. Amongst other things, the bill amends provisions of the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to replace the Minister's discretion to refuse to grant or to cancel a mining or petroleum authority in the public interest. A new test will allow the Minister to refuse to grant or to cancel a mining or petroleum authority if, in the Minister's opinion, the applicant is not a fit and proper person. The determining factors as to whether a person is fit and proper include: whether the person has contravened relevant legislation; whether the person has held a mining right or petroleum title that has been cancelled, suspended or revoked; and whether the person is of good repute and a person of good character, honesty and integrity. This bill will ensure that the future granting of mining leases is not affected by practices that are the same, or similarly tainted, as those we witnessed until three years ago. The bill also prohibits an application for planning approval for mining that permits coal extraction under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 unless an authority under the Mining Act is in force.

I support the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014, which will amend the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 to facilitate the recovery of proceeds of crime where those proceeds were for the benefit of a person or persons who were not the perpetrators of the criminal and corrupt activity. This initiative is directed squarely at individuals who may attempt, for example, to direct the proceeds of corrupt and criminal activities to other individuals, family trusts or other third-party entities. Targeted proceeds may include any increase in the value of an asset realised through the exercise of criminal or corrupt activity. The increase in value will be covered in the definition of "proceeds". For proceeds assessment orders to be issued there will still be a requirement to show that the third party knew or ought reasonably to have known that the proceeds came from corrupt and illegal activity.

The Government has consulted with the NSW South Wales Crime Commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption, both of which support the proposed amendments. These amendments will strengthen the existing criminal assets recovery regime, thwart the efforts of criminals to funnel illegal proceeds to third parties, and reduce the opportunities for corrupt activity. These two bills will ensure that New South Wales taxpayers have returned to them corruptly and criminally acquired funds—funds that are rightfully theirs. This includes funds tainted by corrupt and criminal intervention such as was witnessed in certain mining and petroleum dealings overseen by members opposite during their 16 years of maladministration. I commend the Premier and Cabinet for introducing these bills and I commend them to the House.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT** (Baulkham Hills) [5.26 p.m.]: I support the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The Premier introduced this legislation to complete the Government's legislative responses to the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The Labor Government—the Government that made Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald Ministers—tainted the process used to allocate the State's mineral resources. When the Independent Commission Against Corruption revealed the extent of that Government's corruption, the Coalition

decided to restore public confidence. These bills will do that. The legislation will improve transparency and make it harder for future Labor governments to return to the corrupt practices of old. Further, it will make it harder for criminals, whether a corrupt Labor Minister or otherwise, to profit from their crimes. The fact that people have been able to get away with crimes because the proceeds were in the name of another entity is disgraceful. It means that the criminals have been able to live the high life off the back of their victims. It is not a victimless crime.

As the saying goes, "Crime doesn't pay", and the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 makes this a reality. The bill facilitates the recovery of the proceeds of crime, where those proceeds were derived by a person who was not the direct perpetrator of a criminal activity, if the offender intended, knew or ought reasonably to have known that the other person would benefit from the criminal activity. This ensures that criminals will no longer be able to place the proceeds of crime in the name of a family trust or other associated entity. The bill also amends the Criminal Assets Recovery Act to make it clear that proceeds of an activity can include an increase in the value of an interest in property resulting from the activity. That means the measures in this bill will apply if a share price or a property price increases as a result of the criminal's activity.

The bill amends provisions of the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991, establishing a new test that will allow the Minister to refuse to grant or to cancel a mining or petroleum authority if, in the Minister's opinion, the applicant is not a fit and proper person. That provision replaces the Minister's existing discretion to refuse to grant or to cancel a mining or petroleum authority in the public interest. The bills amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to make it clear that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure may, when determining an application under transitional part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, take into account relevant public interest considerations even if the director-general of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure has not specifically raised public interest considerations.

The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to ensure that the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services can take certain actions relating to the preserved conditions under part 4, section 13 of schedule 6A to the Mining Act 1992. The bills will ensure that administrative action always may be taken based on the decision-maker's state of mind. For example, when the decision-maker is satisfied that grounds for the decision exist, decisions will be reviewable by the Land and Environment Court.

By ensuring that an authority under the Mining Act is in force before determining an application for development consent for a coalmine under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the bills also will close a potential loophole that could be used to circumvent obtaining an exploration licence for coal. The bills conclude the Government's legislative responses to revelations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. This legislation should promote transparency and ensure that the corruption that the State experienced under the Labor Government will not occur in the future. The bills are necessary to prevent the recurrence of activities that are now being examined in the public domain.

It is repugnant to the Government and the Parliament that legislation must be expanded to include former members of Parliament and former Ministers of the Crown to prevent them from benefiting from illegally or unethically gained profit. The Independent Commission Against Corruption is delving deeply into the activities of previous and current members of this Parliament to an extent that the people of New South Wales did not expect to experience again. I have received a number of calls from constituents who have indicated to me their little and ever-diminishing faith in a parliamentary process that has enabled members of the previous Labor Government to acquire wealth and position by subverting proper processes.

The bills also make it more difficult for criminals, such as Mr Obeid and Mr Macdonald, to profit from their crimes. It will rest the minds of the people of New South Wales to know that this legislation will be enacted. In those circumstances, I would be surprised if not horrified at Labor members seeking to amend or to block these essential bills. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr LEE EVANS** (Heathcote) [5.33 p.m.]: I will provide the House with a brief outline of the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. The main purpose of the bills is to bring legislation into line with modern measures for criminal assets recovery to deal with recent corrupt activities. One of the best disinfectants is sunlight. When we shine light into some of the darkest areas of corruption, we may be in a position to disinfect those areas. The Labor Government's problem was that the rot was so deep that no amount of light shone by good members was able to contain the rot. The

Labor Government's predicament may be likened to a rotten apple at the bottom of a barrel that taints everything. These bills will tighten controls to ensure that the people of New South Wales can rest securely in the knowledge that this State will again have parliamentary and legal systems that repel corrupt activity.

The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 to facilitate the recovery of proceeds of crime when the proceeds are derived by a person who was not a perpetrator of criminal activity, if the perpetrator intended, knew or ought reasonably to have known that the other person would benefit. This bill goes straight to the heart of what occurred when the Labor Government was in office. As we can see from the conga line of Opposition members who are appearing before the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the corruption ran deeply in the veins of the Labor Party. The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990 to make it clear that the proceeds of an activity can include an increase in the value of an interest in property resulting from the activity.

The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 will amend the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to replace the Minister's discretion to refuse, grant or cancel a mining petroleum authority in the public interest. A new test will allow the Minister to refuse, grant or cancel mining or petroleum authorities if, in the Minister's opinion, the applicant is not a fit and proper person. This provision is of particular interest to the people of my electorate, which is well known for coalmining. The system of granting approval for mines must be above board and must be a far cry from the practice of the Labor Government, which approved mines in exchange for bags of cash. Under the Labor Government, if an applicant donated enough money, approval for a mining lease application was assured. The House may be interested to know that one of the several coalmines in my electorate of Heathcote is the Helensburgh Colliery, which has been in operation for more than 140 years and stretches to the Maddens Plains.

People who live in Helensburgh depend on the mine for employment and on businesses associated with the mine for products and services and the community benefits from its operations. BHP Billiton conducts longwall mining activities under water catchment areas of my electorate that are adjacent to the Wollondilly electorate. I am pleased that after proclamation of the Dharawal National Park approximately a year ago, mining activities ceased in the parkland area. The Dharawal National Park has pristine bushland that goes straight through to the earth's core. The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 also will amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to ensure that public interest will be taken into account, even if it is not specifically raised in a report by the director-general of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure when determining applications under transitional part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. This bill also will amend the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to ensure that administrative action also may be taken based on the decision-maker's state of mind, such as when a decision-maker is satisfied that the grounds for a decision exist.

The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 will enable the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services to take certain actions relating to preserved conditions under part 4, clause 13 of schedule 6A of the Mining Act 1992. The bill also will ensure that unless an authority under the Mining Act is in force, approval of an application for coalmine planning cannot be made or granted under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The bill will define the Petroleum (Onshore) Act and provide a clearer understanding that determinations made by a court should be followed by State Government authorities.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [5.40 p.m.]: I support the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. These bills will complete the Government's response to the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and its final report on operations Jasper and Acacia, which was published on 18 December 2013. The cognate bills address the honesty, integrity and transparency that is demanded by the community at all levels of its dealings with government. There is an age-old saying that crime does not pay, but there are still many in our community who would like to think it does. The Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 is a common-sense approach to facilitating the recovery of the proceeds of crime where those proceeds were derived by a person who was not the perpetrator of a criminal activity, if the perpetrator intended, knew or ought reasonably to have known that the person would benefit.

If someone plans to undermine the effect of these bills for the benefit other than of the State, the message is clear: Think again. If someone benefits personally from a crime, that person should be held accountable and made to face the full force of the law, with the benefits derived from that crime returned to the State or whomever they were obtained from. The same will apply to the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. If someone plans to undermine the process for the benefit other than of the State, they

should think again. There is legislation introduced by this Government post 2011 implementing regulations and codes of the highest order surrounding development applications in the resources sector. There is an enormous amount of interest in the resources sector and we are seeing extreme cases of land conflicts between the mining and agricultural sectors. While we need to ensure that agricultural land is protected, we need also to make sure that we get the balance right when it comes to the energy needs of the State.

That balance must be kept well and truly at the forefront of any negotiations relating to the extraction of resources, whether coal, gas, gold or minerals. Again, it comes down to honesty, integrity and transparency. In relation to the role of the Minister, an application for planning approval for mining that permits coal extraction cannot be made or granted under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 unless an authority under the Mining Act 1992 is in force. If an application is not in the public interest—and we have seen a number of such projects come to light over the past 12 months—then it should be stopped. If a development application does not proceed in accordance with the legislation, regulations and codes, then it should not be permitted. It is our responsibility to look after the communities in which we live. An application should proceed only when the rules and regulations relating to obtaining a social licence to operate have been adhered to—the environmental impact statements, the economic impact statements and the aquifer interference policies. Everything within a development application must meet the strict criteria before a development is allowed to proceed.

I commend the Government and the Premier for introducing these cognate bills. They send a very clear message that crime does not pay, whether it is the ill-gotten gains of crime or an attempt to undermine the process to benefit someone other than the State. The Government is operating openly, honestly, transparently and with integrity. That is the way the Government should operate and it is the way the community expects us to operate. I commend the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 to the House.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Resources and Energy, and Special Minister of State) [5.45 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Barry O'Farrell, in reply: I take this opportunity to thank members representing the electorates of Blacktown, Drummoyne, Balmain, Tweed, Heathcote and Tamworth for their contributions to debate on the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. However, the Leader of the Opposition was hypocritical in his comments that the cognate bills were an admission that the Government got last year's amendment to the Mining Act wrong. The public interest test was introduced into the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 and the Mining Act 1992 last year in anticipation of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] on operations Jasper and Acacia. This will allow the Government to respond promptly, if required. The Premier made it abundantly clear that further amendments might be required following receipt of that report. There was no stuff-up—we followed to a tee the process that we outlined.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption recommended that special purpose legislation be enacted to cancel authorities and the public interest test was not used. The implementation of a "fit and proper person" test will give decision-makers the ability to make decisions on mining and petroleum titles in a way that is targeted to the conduct or past actions of the applicant or holder of a title. The bill sets out a broad, non-exhaustive list of matters that can be taken into account when making a fit and proper person determination. These provisions capture natural persons, directors and other people involved in the management of bodies corporate. The grounds are broad enough so that they are not reliant on a single, independent process such as an Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation or finding that could be challenged. The Opposition should be rightly ashamed of the corruption that has been exposed by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. This is the third time that we have had to come to Parliament to fix the mess created by those opposite. It is rich in the extreme for those opposite to criticise the thoroughness of our response.

The member for Balmain made extensive reference to the reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption delivered in October 2013 and 2010. I clarify that the Government is, with these two bills, concluding its legislative response to 18 September 2013 fourth report arising out of operations Jasper and Acacia. I refer the member for Balmain to the Government's response to the October 2013 report. That was the third report arising out of the Independent Commission Against Corruption's operations Jasper and Acacia. The Government's response to the 26 recommendations in that report was tabled in this Parliament on 21 November 2013, affirming that an implementation plan in relation to those recommendations will be delivered shortly to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. If passed, these bills will complete the Government's legislative response to the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Operations Jasper and Acacia—Addressing Outstanding Questions". The report was furnished to the Presiding Officers of Parliament on 18 December 2013.

As the Premier indicated in his second reading speech, the Independent Commission Against Corruption recommended that steps be taken to recover the ill-gotten gains derived from the conduct at issue in operations Jasper and Acacia and that the Government should consider whether sufficient powers exist to do so. While the Independent Commission Against Corruption considers that it is a matter for the Government and the Crime Commission to determine how that should be done, the commission has indicated that it does not have any concerns about the approach taken to the bill now before the House. I also flag that we will consider in detail Government amendments Nos 1 and 2, which have been circulated. I commend the Criminal Assets Recovery Amendment Bill 2014 and the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bills read a second time.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Anthony Roberts.**

### **Consideration in Detail**

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** By leave, I will propose the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 in groups of clauses and schedules.

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Resources and Energy, and Special Minister of State) [5.50 p.m.], by leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet C2014-101B in globo:

No. 1 Page 7, schedule 1 [24], lines 29-37. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (6) A relevant person who is aggrieved by a decision referred to in subsection (1) made on the ground that in the opinion of the decision-maker the person is not a fit and proper person may apply to the Land and Environment Court for a review of the decision-maker's opinion, and the following provisions apply to such a review:
  - (a) the review is to be by way of redetermination of the question of whether the relevant person is a fit and proper person, and fresh material or material in addition to, or in substitution for, the material considered by the decision-maker in the determination of that question may be given on the review and taken into consideration by the Court,
  - (b) on a review the Court is to decide whether or not the relevant person is a fit and proper person,
  - (c) the decision of the Court on a review is final and is to be given effect to by the decision-maker,
  - (d) the decision-maker is to take whatever action may be necessary to give effect to the Court's decision including action to revoke and remake any decision referred to in subsection (1).

No. 2 Page 16, schedule 5 [3], lines 37-45. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (6) A relevant person who is aggrieved by a decision referred to in subsection (1) made on the ground that in the opinion of the Minister the person is not a fit and proper person may apply to the Land and Environment Court for a review of the Minister's opinion, and the following provisions apply to such a review:
  - (a) the review is to be by way of redetermination of the question of whether the relevant person is a fit and proper person, and fresh material or material in addition to, or in substitution for, the material considered by the Minister in the determination of that question may be given on the review and taken into consideration by the Court,
  - (b) on a review the Court is to decide whether or not the relevant person is a fit and proper person,
  - (c) the decision of the Court on a review is final and is to be given effect to by the Minister,
  - (d) the Minister is to take whatever action may be necessary to give effect to the Court's decision including action to revoke and remake any decision referred to in subsection (1).

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [5.51 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the amendments.

**Question—That Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 [C2014-101B] be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 [C2014-101B] agreed to.**

**Schedules 1 and 5 as amended agreed to.**

**Schedules 2 to 4 agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail concluded.**

### **Third Reading**

**Motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, on behalf of Mr Barry O'Farrell, 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.**

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! Government business having concluded, private members' statements will now be proceeded with.

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

#### **TRIBUTE TO REX SOLOMON, OAM**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [5.54 p.m.]: I inform the House of the recent sad passing of Rex Solomon, OAM. Rex was a remarkable man, an outstanding resident of the Manning Valley, an outstanding member of the Myall Lakes community and an outstanding Australian, as recognised by the bestowing of his Order of Australia Medal in 2010. Rex Solomon is survived by his wife, Kay, and sons, Philip, Don, Paul and William, and their families. Rex moved to the Manning Valley region when he was four years old and later worked tirelessly in his family's business and for the community. Rex always thought of others and never thought himself worthy of the honours he received during his life. He spent much of his time not only working with his parents in the family business, which his children now continue, but also working for the scouting movement, Rotary, Apex and other organisations. Rex was recognised widely as a fruit and vegetable merchant—which is how I first met him and his wife, Kay, when I moved to Taree at the beginning of 1981.

Rex was born in Sydney and, as I stated earlier, moved to Taree at four years of age. He joined the scouting movement at age eight as a cub with 1st Taree and became a leader in 1948. He was scouting's district commissioner from 1968 to 1988 and again from 1992 to 1995, reserve commissioner from 1988 to 1992 and made an honorary commissioner with Scouts Australia NSW. Rex took tremendous pleasure from his involvement in scouting and often said that it had been a very rewarding part of his life. He went to world jamborees in places such as Japan, Korea and New Zealand. He saw his life and work in service organisations as equally important. He first worked in Apex and then Rotary. He credited both organisations with shaping his life. He was a foundation member of Taree Apex Club and remained a member for 20 years. He served as president, secretary and district governor, and was made a life member.

Rex was a foundation member and charter president of the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning in 1991 and served as secretary and a board member. He served nine terms as chairman of the parish council of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church as well as nine years as an alderman on Taree Municipal Council, including one term as deputy mayor to the late mayor, the Hon. Bill Kennedy, who served in this Parliament's upper House. Rex's career as a fruit and vegetable merchant began when he worked in the fruitery owned by his father, Don. He worked with his parents in the business until they retired in 1978. In 1988 Rex and his wife, Kay, took over the business and moved it to its present site, on the corner of Commerce and Victoria streets, Taree. They also opened another outlet in Wingham. The family tradition continues today, with his sons Don, Paul and Bill working in the family fruit and vegetable business. I had much pleasure playing rugby with Don and Bill for the mighty Old Bar Clams.

Rex's contribution to the community also came from his business, with his weekly donation of vegetables to the Neighbourhood Kitchen for more than 13 years. This enabled volunteers to produce nourishing soup for those less fortunate in our community. According to one volunteer, this revealed Rex's very good and generous heart. Rex was also a great sportsman. He was a keen rugby league player and played in grade teams, became a referee following an injury, was a keen hockey player and was chosen as an Olympic Torch relay runner for the Melbourne 1956 Olympic Games. He was a champion sailor, winning the Australian and New South Wales sailing championships. Any way one looks at it, Rex Solomon had an outstanding life and left his mark on the Manning Valley and the Myall Lakes electorate. He was an outstanding person. I wish his family all the very best at this sad time. Vale Rex Solomon, OAM.

#### **IRISH AUSTRALIAN CLUB (WOLLONGONG) ST PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION**

**Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [5.59 p.m.]: I congratulate the Irish Australian Club (Wollongong) Inc. on another successful St Patrick's Day celebration held at the Fraternity Club, Fairy Meadow, in my electorate of Wollongong. St Patrick's Day, or the Feast of St Patrick, is a cultural and religious holiday celebrated each year around the world on 17 March—although I must say it is probably best celebrated by the Irish with the Australians running a close second, not to mention the Irish-Australians. St Patrick's Day is named after the most commonly recognised of the patron saints of Ireland and is always well celebrated in my electorate. Once again, I had the pleasure of attending the St Patrick's Day festivities and had an extremely enjoyable time singing and doing the old Irish jig.

**Mr Geoff Provost:** Show us.

**Ms NOREEN HAY:** Actually, I did not; I was more an observer with all the other revellers at this well-attended celebration. The St Patrick's Day celebrations acknowledge the contribution of the Irish community to Wollongong, the Illawarra and, indeed, across New South Wales and Australia. I was privileged also to watch Ms Charmaine and her Wollongong Irish Dance Academy students perform spectacularly in front of a cheering crowd. Their talent and dedication to the art of Irish dancing is second to none. My granddaughter Nora is doing very nicely in her Irish dancing and I expect great things from her in the future.

Special congratulations go to the board of the Irish Australian Club Inc., particularly Sandra and Merv Roulstone, Cathy McClelland, John Costello, Tony Gleeson and not forgetting Mr Lee Lawler, who makes a great contribution—I do not say that lightly just because I am married to him. Congratulations once again to all those involved in making the evening so entertaining. As I said a moment ago, my grand-daughter is an accomplished Irish dancer—perhaps not as accomplished as I claim, but to me she is brilliant. She is following in the footsteps of her namesake, my late mother, Nora Herlihy, whom I have mentioned before in this place. She was an Irish dancing champion in Ireland in the days when they could not afford the fabulous dresses and shoes that girls wear today. Nonetheless, I am immensely proud of my grand-daughter Nora.

I acknowledge the contribution that Irish immigrants have made to Australian society. It could be said that many of them did not come here of their own free will during the early settlement of Australia. Nonetheless, they have made great contributions, not least through their humour but also the green Guinness that flows on St Patrick's Day. The Irish are an important part of the broader multicultural communities in this country. Most people would recognise that "Noreen" is an Irish name. I am extremely proud of the contribution that my parents have made, despite the struggles they experienced. I am also proud of my grandparents. I have not mentioned before in this place my grandmother Ellen O'Mahony and grandfather Thomas O'Mahony. My other grandfather was William Herlihy and my other grandmother, Bridget Herlihy. Growing up, I was proud to be a Herlihy; we have great ancestry and traditions in Cork. My parents migrated to England, where I was raised in an Irish community in London. I then followed in my parents' footsteps and migrated to Australia, where I have been privileged to be part of the Irish community in Wollongong, New South Wales.

#### **SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.04 p.m.]: I will update the House on developments at Sutherland Hospital. I will start with the good news and then turn to the need for more action. The first piece of good news is staffing. Since the election of the O'Farrell Government, an additional 210 full-time equivalent nurses now work for the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. The second piece of good news is the progress that has been made on the construction to provide extra car parking at the hospital, which will deliver an additional 300 places for the staff and the public. Last week I joined the Premier, the Minister for Health, the member Heathcote and the member for Menai to inspect that progress. I am pleased to



report that the project is on track for completion by the end of this year, which will fulfil an election commitment on time. The third piece of good news is that data released by the Bureau of Health Information last week showed that elective surgery waiting times at Sutherland Hospital have been dramatically reduced since the O'Farrell Government came to office.

Comparing the December 2010 quarter, which was the last full quarter under Labor, with the December 2013 quarter, we can see that urgent elective surgery was 78 per cent on time and is now 97 per cent on time. In the case of semi-urgent elective surgery, it was 85 per cent on time and is now 96 per cent on time. In the case of non-urgent elective surgery, it was 83 per cent on time and is now 94 per cent on time. There are also some improvements in waiting times in the Sutherland Hospital emergency department. The percentage of patients leaving the emergency department within four hours has improved from 54 per cent in the December 2010 quarter to 67 per cent in the December 2013 quarter. These achievements are a testament to the hardworking doctors, nurses and other staff at Sutherland Hospital. The fourth piece of good news is that recently the New South Wales Government announced the appointment of a lead design team to plan the redevelopment of Sutherland Hospital, in particular, a new general ward and a revamped emergency department. I understand that the first stage of planning will be finished later this year.

I now turn to the need for more action. I call on the Minister for Health to deliver a substantial allocation in the 2014-15 budget to start construction work on the redevelopment. There is a strong case for the Government to commit to that spending. Despite the improvements I have outlined that were made throughout the first three years of the O'Farrell Government, Sutherland Hospital continues to lag behind other hospitals in the timeliness of its service. That is in comparison with New South Wales as a whole and in comparison with its peer group, which is described in the data as category B or major hospitals such as Blacktown, Campbelltown, Canterbury, Fairfield and Hornsby. In the case of elective surgery, the data published by the Bureau of Health Information for the December 2013 quarter revealed that for urgent elective surgery Sutherland Hospital is 97 per cent on time, category B is 100 per cent on time and New South Wales as a whole is 99 per cent on time.

In the case of semi-urgent elective surgery, Sutherland Hospital is 96 per cent on time, category B is 97 per cent on time and New South Wales as a whole is 97 per cent on time. In the case of non-urgent elective surgery, Sutherland Hospital is 94 per cent on time, category B is 96 per cent on time and New South Wales as a whole is 95 per cent on time. In the case of emergency department performance, under median time to start non-urgent treatment, Sutherland Hospital was 28 minutes, category B was 25 minutes and New South Wales was 25 minutes. Under median time to start semi-urgent treatment, Sutherland Hospital was 29 minutes, category B was 27 minutes and New South Wales was 27 minutes. Under median time to start urgent treatment, Sutherland Hospital was 27 minutes, category B was 19 minutes and New South Wales was 20 minutes. Under median time to start emergency treatment, Sutherland Hospital was 12 minutes, category B was seven minutes and New South Wales was eight minutes.

Sutherland Hospital continues to underperform in timeliness compared with the State as a whole and its peer group in every category, especially the most urgent ones. It is nothing new; it is a problem inherited from Labor. The O'Farrell Government has made improvements but these data highlight the need to make the Sutherland Hospital upgrade a priority. The Asset Strategic Plan 2012-2017 of the local health district identifies the redevelopment of Sutherland Hospital as its number one priority for the whole of its capital investment. Clinicians and other experts have told us what they think needs to be given priority. In those circumstances, it is imperative that the 2014-15 budget and forward estimates allocate sufficient funds for substantial construction in 2014-15 and a timely conclusion thereafter. The Sutherland shire community is passionate about its hospital. This Government inherited a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog from Labor, but no new capital expenditure that the Government undertakes in the Sutherland shire is more important than redeveloping Sutherland Hospital.

#### **KIAMA ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS**

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama) [6.09 p.m.]: I am delighted to address the House on the issue of sport and recreation in and around my electorate of Kiama. Like other members of the House, I am proud to have many active sporting clubs and associations in my electorate and I wish to reflect on a few of them. In Gerringong we are blessed to be home to many great rugby league players such as former Australian and State of Origin players Michael Cronin, Paul Quinn and Rod Wishart. Paul's brother, Ron Quinn, was also a handy halfback for the Parramatta Eels and Cronulla Sharks during the mid-1980s. Current North Queensland Cowboys brothers Ashton and Tariq Sims are talented National Rugby League players and were Gerringong Lions juniors.

I grew up in Gerringong and have watched many games of Group 7 Rugby League at Michael Cronin Oval. In fact, last July 2GB broadcaster Ray Hadley was in Gerringong to call the game live with a continuous call team, and the mighty Gerringong Lions got up again. In December last year, after lobbying the Treasurer and the Minister for Sport and Recreation and collecting more than 1,200 signatures from local residents, I was pleased to present a cheque for \$55,000 to the Gerringong Lions Rugby League Football Club. The contribution will be matched by Kiama Municipal Council, and I thank Mayor Brian Petschler for his help and assistance as well as all Kiama councillors. Importantly, this funding will go towards upgrading the clubhouse facilities, which will provide a real boost for the club that is at the heart of the Gerringong community. Last year I was pleased to present a cheque for \$40,000 to the Kiama Junior Rugby League Football Club for the reconstruction of its canteen and amenities block. I look forward to attending the official grand opening on Saturday 5 April, which also is the first game of the season for the Kiama Knights. I acknowledge secretary Leah Roberts, who is a great asset to the club. She certainly worked hard for this grant.

On 15 January I was pleased to present \$34,992 to the Albion Park White Eagles soccer club for the installation of new fencing at Terry Reserve, Albion Park. I acknowledge president Goran Nikolic and vice president Frank Zammit who both do a tremendous job. Indeed, when I presented the cheque they commented that it was the first State Government grant received by the club in 30 years. On 7 March I also attended the 2014 season launch of the Albion Park White Eagles soccer club at Panorama House, Bulli Tops. In September 2012 I was pleased to present \$25,000 to Kiama Power AFL Football Club for the upgrade of sports lighting at Bonaira Oval, Kiama. I look forward to attending its official launch and presenting jerseys to the junior Kiama Power players next Friday 28 March. I acknowledge also assistant president Simon Williams for his work at the club. On Sunday 2 March I attended the 2014 Australian football league South Coast season launch at Artie Smith Oval, Bomaderry. I acknowledge chairman Peter Riley of the South Coast Australian football league and Virginia Wise, director of Australian football league operations on the South Coast.

On 17 January I was happy to present \$20,000 to the Albion Park Little Athletics Club for the refurbishment of its canteen and storage area. I was joined by Shellharbour Councillor Kellie Marsh. I acknowledge the many young children I had the opportunity to meet. In particular, I acknowledge president Patrick McPhillips and Julie Schumack for their hard work at the club. It was wonderful to see so many bright faces on the day. This funding will make a huge difference to the club. On 7 December 2013 I was pleased to present trophies at the Soundwave Australian Junior Surfing Titles closing ceremony and presentation. I helped to secure \$5,000 for that event. I acknowledge Luke Madden who helped put together a fantastic week-long event across some of our spectacular local beaches, including Surf Beach, Warri Beach, Jones Beach and Bombo Beach. More than 200 of Australia's best junior surfers took part in this event from 30 November to 7 December.

This event is a great stepping stone for junior surfers. Previous winners include world champions Tyler Wright, Sally Fitzgibbons, Tom Carroll, Mark Richards and Mick Fanning. Sally also is a terrific ambassador for Kiama tourism and a local Minnamurra resident. These major sporting events also support our local tourism industry and local businesses. I turn now to rugby in the Kiama electorate. Recently I was pleased to secure \$8,000 for the Kiama Rugby Sevens Cup, in which more than 50 teams from across the country and internationally competed on Saturday 22 February. The Kiama Rugby Sevens Cup is as prestigious as Australia's largest Rugby Sevens one-day tournament. From humble beginnings in 1973, the Kiama Sevens continues to grow bigger and better each year.

This year more than 5,000 spectators and 700 athletes descended on Kiama to enjoy the stunning Sevens action on the field. I acknowledge president Mark Bryant and secretary Lorraine Rogers for their efforts to make this a successful tournament each year. Recently I announced another \$70,000 in funding for local sporting groups to improve their facilities, including \$25,000 for Gerringong Tennis Club to upgrade its existing tennis courts. I acknowledge president Michelle Quinn for her tremendous advocacy. Sport has an important role in our lives. I am delighted to be able to advocate for those involved in sport in my electorate.

### **ILLAWARRA ROTARY BOWEL SCAN PROJECT**

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [6.14 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House about the Illawarra Rotary bowel scan project. Recently I had the privilege of attending the fifteenth annual Rotary bowel scan launch. The guest speaker on that occasion was Ian Olver, AM, chief executive officer of the Cancer Council of Australia. In particular, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Alf Harley from Corrimal Rotary. Alf has been the driver of this terrific program, which started as an individual project of Corrimal Rotary and has now been

embraced by all 14 Rotary clubs in the region. The project is about early detection—making people aware of the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer—and encouraging people to seek help as soon as possible if they have any of the symptoms. Bowel cancer kills many thousands of people each year.

Alf is a tireless worker who continues to advocate for this project in the Illawarra. Each year when I attend this annual launch Alf is there making sure that people understand the importance of early detection and that the bowel kit is cheap and easily accessible. Corrimal Rotary and Alf deserve a very big thank you not only from this Parliament but also from the thousands of people whose lives have been saved by using this kit and who may not have had the chance to say thank you. Members well know that the Illawarra is a very parochial community but we care for each other. I always enjoy attending the launch of this great project because it is important for the community to understand that preventable strategies for this type of cancer are easily accessible in the Illawarra.

The Rotary bowel cancer scan project has been recognised federally—it was the driving force behind the rollout of the National Bowel Cancer Screening program—as a leading program across Australia. Alf and his team are supported by the pharmacies throughout the Illawarra region—from Helensburgh in the north and Gerringong and beyond in the south. This program has received enormous support and, importantly, it saves lives. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, and in particular of Keira, I say very big thank you to Alf. Alf Harley will be remembered as a man who has done great things for the Illawarra. In the coming months Alf will continue to promote the bowel scan project and the Rotary organisation.

Importantly, Alf will be promoting the need for people to access these kits and to do the tests. He will also be promoting the importance of dealing with any issues before they become serious problems. Volunteers like Alf deserve recognition because they put themselves behind others. In particular, they put the best interests of the community first. Alf continues to receive community support for all that he does. Thankfully, the number of people suffering from bowel cancer will continue to decrease whilst we have people like Alf Harley and the Rotarians in the Illawarra continuing to promote the bowel scan program.

#### **WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE 2014**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [6.19 p.m.]: Yesterday I coloured my hair blue as part of the World's Greatest Shave 2014 to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. I also did it to raise awareness and it is timely that this should be a parliamentary sitting week. The Leukaemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave began in 1998 and today it is one of Australia's biggest fundraising events. People are sponsored to shave or colour their hair and all funds raised are used to support people with blood cancer, which is Australia's biggest killer after lung cancer. This year an estimated 125,000 people will take part in the World's Greatest Shave. It is a great way to raise money and awareness at the same time.

Over the years more than a million people have drastically changed their locks to help raise more than \$120 million. Those funds have helped keep the services offered by the Leukaemia Foundation free for those who need it. Right now more than 50,000 Australian families are facing the physical, emotional, and financial challenges of blood cancer. Approximately 31 people are diagnosed with leukaemia each day. The money raised from the World's Greatest Shave is used to fund blood cancer research and free support through the Leukaemia Foundation. The Leukaemia Foundation is the only national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the care and cure of people with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and blood-related disorders. In New South Wales the Leukaemia Foundation is aiming to raise \$6 million. It is well on its way; almost \$3 million has been raised so far.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge those who have sponsored me and helped me to raise \$878 so far, including the member for Heathcote and the member for Cronulla. I thank them for their support. There is still time to sponsor me if members have not done so already. I have vowed to keep this hair colour for longer the more money I raise. Some famous faces who have participated this year include Larry Emdur, who shaved his head. The Sydney Kings basketball team helped Aimee Downing shave her head in memory of her friend, Zoe, whom she first met while receiving treatment at the Sydney Children's Hospital when they were both fighting blood cancer. Chloe and Kelly from *My Kitchen Rules* both coloured their hair and then helped others to colour their own. Michael Klim helped people to shave and colour their hair. Josh Dugan, the fullback from the St George Illawarra Dragons, will shave off his beard as part of a membership drive with the proceeds going to the Leukaemia Foundation.

Around my local area a number of people have shaved off or coloured their hair. Casula Mall held a "shave in" where they coloured and shaved off shoppers' hair. That event raised over \$1,400 with help from

CBN Salon, Hair Matrix and Priceline. Planet Fitness Casula is holding a shaving event on Monday 31 March—I might need to get my coloured hair shaved off then! At the event, Planet Fitness will provide clippers, razors, hairspray colours and hairdressers for those who want to take part. Our local school students have also joined in. Two students at Woronora River Public School have been involved. Abbie, a year 2 student, has dyed her hair red and the school captain and year 6 student, Henry Phillips, has shaved his head. I hear he spends the year avoiding haircuts to make this shave even more dramatic when he does it every year. Menai High School banded together to form a team. So far it has raised \$2,755, which is 276 per cent of its \$1,000 goal. I also acknowledge the wonderful work of the year 12 students at Aquinas Catholic College in Menai. They raised a staggering \$8,350 for the Leukaemia Foundation. The team included three teachers—one who shaved his head, another who shaved his beard and a third who dyed her hair pink. Special mention has to go to Kate Athanasopoulos who cut a dramatic 30 centimetres off her hair.

The World's Greatest Shave is a fantastic fundraising event that anyone can get involved in, from young children to the elderly, both males and females. It is easy, does not have to cost much and is great fun for everyone involved. It is an event that can be done as an individual or as part of a team. Just by making a simple change to one's appearance or sponsoring someone who does can help the Leukaemia Foundation and all those people fighting cancer. If anyone would like to support me in this event all the money I raise will go to the Leukaemia Foundation.

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward):** Order! I thank the member for Menai for what I thought was almost a personal explanation. She is far too young for a blue rinse.

#### **Private members' statements concluded**

### **RURAL WOMEN**

#### **Matter of Public Importance**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [6.24 p.m.]: I ask the House to note as a matter of public importance the contribution of rural women and the significant effort to which they go to make rural and regional New South Wales a better place to live. I would like to highlight a number of women who are making significant contributions. Isobel Knight was inspired to work in succession planning after a dinner party at her property 20 years ago when she realised that, of all the people there, she was the only female who had an involvement in running a property, despite many being university graduates. Isobel believed that succession planning was an area in agriculture which had been dealt with poorly and she could see that there was an opportunity to do better. She studied business law, psychology, mediation and counselling and is married with three children.

Gae Swain is currently Deputy Mayor of Gunnedah Shire Council. She also runs a mixed farming and grazing property with her husband, Geoff. Gae was the Mayor of Gunnedah from 1999 to 2008 and had a brief break from local council before rejoining in 2011 due to her passion for her district and the issues that it faced at the time. Colleen Fuller was elected to Gunnedah Shire Council in March 2004 and serves on a number of council committees, including as chair of the environment and development committee and chair of the crime prevention committee. She also is on the finance committee and the Australia Day committee. Councillor Fuller was appointed as President of the Association of Mining Related Councils in November 2011. Councillor Fuller was honoured with the award for regional and rural elected representative in the Minister for Local Government Awards for Women in Local Government 2012.

Another local champion is Narelle Burke. Narelle and her husband, Bede, run a mixed farming business with an emphasis on integration and sustainability. They have a poultry laying facility producing up to 100,000 eggs per day. Some 27,000 pullets are raised from day old to point of lay. They crop 3,000 acres of winter and summer crops. These are integrated into the on-farm feed mill. They mill 5,000 tonnes of feed for the poultry. They have fat lamb production and a small beef feedlot. Narelle and Bede farm in a sustainable manner using zero-till technology. On-farm produced compost is used as a sustainable soil conditioner. This business recently won the Brownhill Cup for conservation farming and efficient management practices on their property. Their property offers on-the-job skills training, hosting Primary Industry Centre for Science Education and vocational education and training students, and runs excursions for numerous school, university and agricultural groups. Narelle also is involved in a number of community organisations. Narelle is currently vice president of the Tamworth City Swimming Club.

Another lady doing wonderful things in regional and rural New South Wales is Robbie Sefton. From the time Robbie began working, she set out to prove it was possible to run a fulfilling and successful business in rural Australia. Robbie spent many years in public relations and marketing in corporate Australia before setting up Sefton and Associates, which relocated to Tamworth in 2007 when Robbie moved to northern New South Wales to operate a farming property. The firm was established by Robbie Sefton in 1990 in Perth so it has transcended State boundaries. Sefton and Associates is the only national strategic communication firm of its kind with its heart, soul and business in country Australia.

Many more women are doing wonderful things in regional and rural New South Wales, making a significant contribution day in and day out, which we rarely hear about. I speak also of those ladies associated with show societies right across our region. For example, Bree Taber is the secretary of the Manilla Show Society. In a day and age when show societies are struggling to attract members, Bree Taber works hard to promote the Manilla Show Society. She is a credit to the wonderful town of Manilla. Kelly Foran was inspired to create the foundation called Friendly Faces, Helping Hands. So many people are doing good things in our regions but they tend to fly under the radar. They do not do it for accolades; they do it for their community, their families and great regional areas in New South Wales. They are part of what makes our State so great and that is why we need to pay tribute to them and acknowledge the significant contribution of the rural women of New South Wales.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [6.29 p.m.]: I also pay tribute to country women of New South Wales and to country women right across the country. People may or may not know that I was born in the Riverina and grew up in a small town called Whitton—perhaps the smallest town that anyone in this Chamber has come from—which has a population of 215. I spent the first 16 years of my life in that little country town and I have a deep understanding of what it is like to grow up in the country as a young woman. When one thinks about the diversity of women in regional New South Wales one realises that women run small businesses, particularly in some of the towns in the north-west, which are fundamental to those towns. I am thinking in particular of Aboriginal women who provide in all those country towns a safety net for young women in particular. I am thinking also of women who live on properties and who face the enormous challenge of isolation and of providing an education for their children who do not have easy access to schools.

We all are very much in awe of a number of rural women's organisations. The standout, the one that we all know and have seen increasingly take a leadership role, is the Country Women's Association, which was formed in 1922. Members of the Country Women's Association work tirelessly to set up baby healthcare centres, fund bush nurses, and build and staff maternity wards, hospitals, schools, rest homes, seaside and mountain holiday cottages and much more. The Country Women's Association recently took a political stand on coal seam gas and its effects on rural New South Wales.

We also acknowledge the Rural Women's Network. I have been to one of its gatherings in Griffith. Unfortunately, I have not been able to accept the invitations I have received since then. The Rural Women's Network is a statewide government program administered by the Department of Primary Industries. The network provides an extraordinarily important service to country women in New South Wales. I mention the Rural Women's Award. This year's finalists are amazing women. Edwina Beveridge, who runs a pig farm in Young, and Pip Job, a natural resource manager from Cumnock, have been selected as finalists. The winner of the prestigious award will be announced on 25 March at a gala dinner in Parliament House. These women are particularly inspirational.

It is important to mention in this debate how extremely challenging life is for women living in some areas of rural New South Wales. Take Bourke, for example, which has the highest number of assaults in New South Wales. It is the most dangerous place for women in the State. The assaults, in the main, are domestic violence related. Bourke has a large Aboriginal population. The rate of violence is of extreme concern because of the effect it has on children—an issue I want to acknowledge. We cannot leave this debate without recognising the strength of rural women in New South Wales and the challenges they have to face, particularly in times of drought. Financial stress—just getting through to the end of the week—is a real issue. I join the Government in paying tribute to rural women in New South Wales.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [6.34 p.m.]: I acknowledge the contribution of rural women across New South Wales. I was pleased to hear my colleague the member for Tamworth speak about councillors Gae Swain and Colleen Fuller from Gunnedah. I had the pleasure and privilege to serve with those women in local government. They are certainly worthy of acknowledgement. Women play a critical role in rural areas. They are the glue that binds families, community groups and businesses. They keep our regional

communities vibrant and growing. In the Northern Tablelands our 2014 Woman of the Year is a truly remarkable person who exhibits the highest qualities through her contribution to her community. Sarah McFarlane-Eagle is a mental health advocate who lets her feet do the talking.

Clocking up more than 7,000 kilometres in treks since 2001, Sarah raises awareness of mental illness through her Walking Feat initiative. Her motivation is the memory of her brother, Ben, who, during a psychotic episode, disappeared into bushland and has never been found. As an ambassador for SANE Australia, a university student and mental healthcare worker, her dedication in working to remove the stigma of mental illness and raise awareness of this often hidden disease is inspiring. Like many women in rural areas, Sarah saw a problem and came up with a unique concept to find a solution. It is that pragmatic approach to overcoming obstacles that often sets rural women apart from their big city counterparts. Maybe it is a legacy from pioneering days, but rural women are a force to be reckoned with.

The Northern Tablelands is brimming with exceptional women who make enormous contributions. They are on councils, committees, boards and charities. They work in schools and hospitals. They work for the police and ambulance services. I pay tribute to Gwen Parker from Glen Innes, who received the Medal of the Order of Australia this year. I also pay tribute to June Dangar, who is Armidale's Citizen of the Year. I acknowledge Rita Williams from Guyra, who claimed that town's crown for Citizen of the Year. I also mention Jean Muggleton from Inverell, Judi Toms from Glenn Innes and Madison Rose from Wialda, who all do a magnificent job and make an enormous contribution to their rural communities. I join the member for Tamworth and the member for Canterbury in acknowledging the contribution of rural women.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON** (Tamworth) [6.37 p.m.], in reply: I thank those members who contributed to this worthwhile discussion. I particularly thank the member Canterbury for mentioning in her contribution the need to protect women from domestic violence through programs such as Staying Home Staying Safe. We must make sure that we continue to protect vulnerable women and provide services for those who have nowhere else to turn. I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his contribution. As a former Mayor of Gunnedah he has worked, as he said, with councillors Gae Swain, Colleen Fuller and Gwen Griffen. It is great to see those women continue to make significant contributions in our region.

The Rural Women's Network is a statewide government program within the Department of Primary Industries that works in innovative ways to share information and promote action on rural women's issues, often in partnership with individuals, groups, non-government agencies and government agencies. That network provides ways for women to keep in touch with each other. One example is the Rural Women's Award, the finalists of which have recently been announced. Another example is the Hidden Treasures Honour Roll, which paid tribute to 96 women in 2013.

Several women from my region have, over the years, vied for the title of Rural Woman of the Year. Fiona Simpson, President of the NSW Farmers Association, is a finalist in the 2014 Rural Women's Award. Fiona runs a farm and supports her family while heading the peak lobbying body for New South Wales farmers. She is in fine company. A pioneering pig farmer from Young and a leader in natural resource management from Cumnock are also finalists in the 2014 Rural Women's Award. This very important discussion should continue. We should recognise the important contribution that women continue to make, including through organisations such as the Country Women's Association, in regional New South Wales. I thank the House for the opportunity to acknowledge and pay our respects to women in rural and regional New South Wales.

**Discussion concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.40 p.m. until  
Wednesday 19 March 2014 at 10.00 a.m.**

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