

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18th March, 1992

Mr Speaker (The Hon. Kevin Richard Rozzoli) took the chair at 2.15 p.m.

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr Speaker advised the House that he had received from the honourable member for South Coast notice of a matter of public importance to be listed for discussion at the conclusion of formal business.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PORT MACQUARIE PRIVATE HOSPITAL FEES

Mr CARR: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. Is the Minister aware that uninsured patients entering the Port Macquarie Private Hospital are requested to pay up to \$3,000 before they are treated? Has the hospital's owner, Health Care of Australia, agreed to run the Hastings Public Hospital? Will this practice carry over to the Hastings Public Hospital when it is privatised?

Mr PHILLIPS: I am more than happy to leave the majority of this debate until the matter of public importance, of which notice has been given, is brought on by the honourable member for South Coast at the conclusion of question time. However, I would like to stress a couple of points about the importance of the Port Macquarie hospital to the health system. First, the people of Port Macquarie will get a hospital years in advance. At present, under Federal Government funding arrangements and also because of the recession and lack of funds to do more than undertake the huge capital works program in progress in New South Wales, money is not available for many hospital projects such as that at Port Macquarie. Under a public funded program such hospital construction projects are at least five years away. Thanks to the honourable member for Port Macquarie and my colleague the Minister for Health and Community Services in the other House, the people of Port Macquarie have sought to find ways to ensure that hospitals such as that to be built at Port Macquarie can get on the list so that people in those areas who need health care can gain access to it. If the contracts are signed in April, that hospital will be built within 18 months. The people of Port Macquarie will have a hospital. An important factor to be considered is that the earliest estimate for a hospital project is five years. I do not have the funding to build it, nor do I know what is going to happen in the next five years.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Kiama to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: The people in the area will now get that hospital within 18 months. Let us look at an important factor which is misunderstood. This hospital will

be funded, built and managed by a private group.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order.

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Mr PHILLIPS: The Government will contract for that hospital to provide access to public patients. The Government will still have the responsibility of providing care for public patients, and that is exactly what it will do. The people of Port Macquarie recognise that publicly insured patients will be able to go to that hospital. I will bet that in a few years they will not know who funds it. They will be able to walk in the front door as a public patient in the same way that they will be able to walk into any public hospital in New South Wales.

Dr Refshauge: With \$3,000 cash up front.

Mr PHILLIPS: That is an absolute lie. Uninsured public patients will have the same access to this hospital as they have to the hospital at Port Macquarie now. The hospital will be expanded from 98 beds to 160 beds. I could go on for at least 30 minutes on this issue but I will leave that -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection from both sides of the House. I ask members to remain silence. I call the honourable member for Mount Druitt to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: - until the 30 minutes I will have to speak on the matter of public importance. This issue is very important. Many Opposition members come to me about the hospital developments that they need in their electorates.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Oxley to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: I include the honourable member for Bligh, who is concerned about the Royal Hospital for Women.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Kiama to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: The honourable member for South Coast is lobbying me for money to build a new hospital at Shoalhaven. Mr Speaker, you have a need for a new hospital at Hawkesbury. The list goes on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order. I call the honourable member for Kiama to order for the third time. The level of interjection from both sides of the Chamber is totally unacceptable. I ask members to be a little more co-operative. Otherwise, it will be necessary to call members to order much more frequently than they have been so far. Order! I call the honourable member for Ashfield and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order. I ask all members to co-operate in their own interests and in the interests of the House continuing question time in an orderly fashion.

Mr PHILLIPS: The people in the gallery saw all the hands go up from Opposition members wanting new hospitals and refurbishment of hospitals. No Opposition members suggest where the money will come from. That is the fundamental issue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Riverstone to order.

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Mr PHILLIPS: I have not even started on my colleagues from this side of the Chamber. They are waiting in line for new hospitals. When this Government was elected in 1988 it was left with a \$2 billion backlog for hospitals. What programs do we have on line? A \$200 million development at St George, a \$300 million new children's hospital being built at Westmead, \$100 million at Nepean -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order for the second time. I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: - \$200 million at Liverpool, \$60 million on the hospital on the Central Coast which is about to open, Lismore, Coffs Harbour -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Port Stephens to order. I call the honourable member for Cabramatta to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: From my position as Minister, while they contemplate their navels and are the only government in Australia that is out of step -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wallsend to order. I call the honourable member for Illawarra to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: The Labor Party in New South Wales is out of step with every other Labor Party in Australia and out of step with most governments throughout the world on this question of how to fund hospitals.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The Opposition wants to laugh and cackle about the serious problem of how we provide capital infrastructure for health care services in the future. It knows we are doing the job. From my point of view, I do not care whether I get the money from the Federal Government, which is gypping me \$250 million this year in reduced funding; I do not care whether I get the money from the State Government which has been topping up the money every year by its commitment to ensure that health remains the top priority of this Government; I do not care whether I get the money from private enterprise. My main concern is to ensure that people get access to top quality health care. That is the key and that is what this Government will deliver.

NEW FUEL INDUSTRIES

Mr BLACKMORE: I address my question without notice to the Minister for Natural Resources. What action is the Government taking to encourage the establishment of new fuel industries in New South Wales? Specifically, has any agreement yet been signed to help create such industries and what is the estimated employment potential?

Mr CAUSLEY: I congratulate the honourable member for Maitland on his interest in mining industries in the Hunter. I notice that I get questions with respect to mining only from this side of the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Smithfield to order.

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Mr CAUSLEY: I am pleased to say that just some minutes ago I signed a contract with Coal and Allied Industries Limited. It will do experimental work in the north Muswellbrook area for a coal resource to fuel a very impressive operation at Kooragang Island, near Newcastle. This project will make Australia the clever country. We hear a lot from the Opposition and from the undertaker in Canberra about the clever country. The coalition in New South Wales sees that these things get done; we deliver. I notice that the honourable member for Newcastle is over there with his mouth open. He did not know anything about this. He is certainly finding out that the coalition -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Newcastle to order.

Mr CAUSLEY: I was in Newcastle two days ago to announce some new mine subsidence maps. I spoke to a few people whom I have met on a number of occasions. They told me that the former member for Newcastle achieved in three years more than the Labor Party achieved in 60 years.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order for the third time. I call the honourable member for Riverstone to order for the second time.

Mr CAUSLEY: I am pleased to say that the technology involved in this development is modern. It is Japanese technology. It has been developed over seven or eight years. Basically, it is a slurry of coal dust and water.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order for the third time.

Mr CAUSLEY: This can take over in a number of the oil-fired Japanese generating plants with a few years' notice. There is no doubt that it opens up extreme possibilities for coal in the Hunter Valley. All we have to do is use the tank farms that we have for oil and put this slurry of coal and water into it. It is very simple. We can turn it around and use the coal slurry instead of oil. There is no doubt that there will be great benefits to Australia and to the Hunter Valley from this particular project. The Nissho Iwai Corporation and Ube Industries from Japan have signed an agreement with Coal and Allied, which will conduct the mining operation and will enter into a joint venture in respect of the operation at Kooragang Island. The construction of the plant will create 1,000 jobs. When the plant is commissioned, a total of 300 jobs will be available, and 200 further jobs will be available in the open-cut mine, the Mount Pleasant mine north of Muswellbrook. The Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier will well know where that area is. The State's infrastructure will not be stretched because the operation is located close to the existing railway line. Coal will not be transported by road so none of the problems normally associated with the establishment of a new mine will be encountered.

The other day all of the ghouls jumped on the fact that the Lamington underground mine had to close. On a number of occasions I have said to this Parliament that the coal industry is on a knife edge; it is an extremely competitive industry. Unfortunately, the Lamington underground mine could not change over to longwall mining and other modern methods and was not competitive. It lost money eight years

out of 10. Even though some jobs were lost as a result of that closure, many more jobs are coming on-stream as a result of competitive technology changes. The industry has confidence in the New South Wales Government. New South Wales has the strongest economy in Australia and will lead Australia out of the recession. The coalition

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Government will ensure that these types of projects will continue to service the power requirements of Japan, Taiwan and Korea. I repeat that real jobs for Australians will be provided in the Hunter Valley by a coalition Government.

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL OBSTETRIC SERVICES

Dr REFSHAUGE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. Is the Minister aware of a report by the Sutherland Hospital which states that the safety of mothers and babies at the hospital cannot be guaranteed because of doctor shortages? Does the report say that Sutherland Hospital is without a resident obstetrics doctor for eight and a half hours every night of the year? Is this part of the general winding down of services in preparation for the privatisation of the hospital's maternity unit?

Mr PHILLIPS: It is interesting to note the good humour on the other side of the House about these issues, because Opposition members know the Government is on the right track.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Cabramatta to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: I ask the honourable member for Bathurst what he wants me to do about Lithgow District Hospital.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Canterbury to order. I call the honourable member for Bathurst to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: The honourable member for Canterbury interjects. He keeps writing to me about Canterbury Hospital.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: The honourable member for Ashfield keeps writing to me. Last night in the House he raised an issue of importance about Western Suburbs Hospital. While they all want to whinge, whine and complain, I am faced with the problem of delivering.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ashfield to order for the second time. I call the honourable member for Gosford to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: I have a close knowledge of Sutherland Hospital because, thanks to the Labor Party when it was in office, that hospital plunged me into health politics, and I have never been able to get out. The previous Labor Government sacked the board, cut the budget by \$700,000 and forced the orthopaedic surgeons out of the system for four or five years. The crowd on the other side of the House, especially those on the frontbench, formed the Government that brought health in this State to its knees.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Waratah to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked me about Sutherland Hospital which is in my electorate. Let me assure him that I will ensure, as I have done for many years, that Sutherland Hospital continues to grow and provide a

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range of health care services to an ageing and growing population in that part of Sydney as it develops through Menai, Lucas Heights and Bangor. The honourable member for Sutherland would be keen to ensure that I am providing his new constituents with an improved hospital. The problem with maternity services at Sutherland Hospital results from the fact that St George Hospital is expanding; a number of new private hospitals are being developed in Sydney. The problem is similar to that at the Royal Hospital for Women. Sutherland Hospital has a range of obstetric services which were developed in the 1970s. These services are not wanted by women today. Sydney has nine birthing centres and a range of private hospitals. Sutherland Hospital is developing a plan for the next 10 years to ensure that it provides the infrastructure, the range of services and the competitiveness in the market-place that result in the people of the Sutherland shire getting the services they need, are entitled to and are used to. That is different to what was done to Sutherland Hospital by the previous Labor Government. I assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the problems at Sutherland Hospital are being addressed. If he watches this space for a little longer he will hear some good news about Sutherland Hospital.

HUNTER VALLEY AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE FACILITY

Mr TURNER: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism. What action is the Government taking to attract an aircraft maintenance facility to the Hunter Valley? Are there any estimates of the employment potential and investment benefits such a facility would bring to the area?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wallsend to order for the second time.

Mr YABSLEY: I am pleased the honourable member for Newcastle has returned to the Chamber because he might learn something about what is happening in his electorate. Honourable members can be sure of one thing: despite all the work that has been going on behind the scenes in relation to the possible establishment of this significant facility in the Hunter Valley, absolutely nothing has been heard from one person and that is the honourable member for Newcastle. There has been the same deafening silence from the honourable member for Charlestown, the honourable member for Waratah and the honourable member for Cessnock about the whole future of the Hunter Valley.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ermington to order.

Mr YABSLEY: In stark contrast, support for this project has come from the honourable member for Maitland -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Keira to order.

Mr YABSLEY: - the honourable member for Ermington, the honourable member for North Shore and a number of other Government members who know where the future of New South Wales lies.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Drummoyne to

order.

Mr YABSLEY: There has been an absolutely deafening silence from those members representing the Hunter Valley. Yesterday State Cabinet - with the full co-operation of the Minister for Housing, who has responsibility for the Water Board, and
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the Minister for Conservation and Land Management - approved the transfer of a small parcel of land to the Hunter Water Corporation. The Government understands that the transfer of that small parcel of land is a necessary prerequisite to this exciting investment proceeding in New South Wales. The proposed development is a \$100 million aircraft maintenance facility near Newcastle which has the potential to create, when fully operational, about 1,200 jobs in the Hunter Valley. This investment requires and has received the co-operation of the Federal Government. I have also been in direct contact with my colleague in Queensland because the establishment of the operation in Australia, which will basically service aircraft both domestic and those from other countries in the region, will require an operation to run in tandem from Townsville. That is supported by the Queensland Government. The proponent of this project is Matrix Aeronautics which is in the process of establishing the commercial credibility of the proposed facility. By way of background, may I say that one important reason why this facility is proposed for Williamstown in the Hunter Valley is that in recent years Qantas Airways Limited has scaled down its maintenance facility at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport in favour of off-shore maintenance. To its credit Matrix Aeronautics has established that there is a gap in the market-place, and it has moved to fill that gap. The New South Wales Government is pleased to be able to co-operate through the transfer of that land in the establishment of the facility.

It is interesting and very significant where the support for this project comes from and who is remaining silent on the other side of the House. Honourable members opposite have absolutely no interest in this project. It is a little like the situation with the Honeysuckle project. It was faithfully reported in the *Newcastle Herald* towards the end of last year that when the Leader of the Opposition was asked about the Honeysuckle project and the prospects that exist under the better cities program, he had never heard of the Honeysuckle project. The honourable member for Newcastle had to tell the Leader of the Opposition, "Bob, you had better learn a bit about the Honeysuckle project because it is actually important for the city of Newcastle". The Leader of the Opposition takes it one step further. He was invited to address a group organised by the Federation of Industrial Manufacturing Engineering Employees at Newcastle to discuss the future of Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. When asked what was the single most important thing for the future of BHP and the steel manufacturing industry in Australia, and the Hunter Valley in particular, he said it was the continuation of the program of microeconomic reform in New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition will have more to think about. I doubt that he will have too much time to be giving a great deal of thought to microeconomic reform in New South Wales because he is going out to put the pink palace in Maroubra on the market, he is going to put the flat in South Yarra on the market. He will need the proceeds from both these properties by the time Greg Daniels is finished with him.

PORT MACQUARIE PRIVATE HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr HUNTER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. Is the Minister aware of complaints from Port Macquarie Private Hospital patients about poor food and health care standards, inadequate preparation for operations, and the administration of drugs? Will the Minister seek an urgent report into these allegations before signing the contract to privatise Port

Macquarie's public hospital services with the owners of the private hospital?

Mr PHILLIPS: These are accusations about which hospital at Port Macquarie

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health Services Management has the call.

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Mr PHILLIPS: In a mere five or six months my colleague the Minister for Health and Community Services in the other place has identified a problem at Port Macquarie and found a solution - a solution that the board of Port Macquarie hospital absolutely and totally supports.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Oxley to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: The medical staff council - which is a community board, as I have mentioned before - and the Chamber of Commerce also absolutely and totally support that solution. The only people really fighting this issue - because of the concern being stirred up by the Opposition - is a small action group which still believes, unfortunately, in past funding methods. It takes the view that if it is publicly funded it must be good; if it is privately funded it must be bad. That is an absolute nonsense. My colleague in the other place is at present working through contracts which will establish the standard of care and services that that hospital will be required to provide, not only under the provisions of the Private Hospital Act but in caring for public patients for whom we will expect them to care. Through the consultation process a community board responsible for monitoring and overseeing the care of the patients in that hospital will be established and it will report back to the Department of Health to ensure health care standards are maintained. This Government will ensure that people have access to top quality health care and an improved health system rather than the sort of system that the Labor Party, over successive years, allowed to run down. The honourable member opposite who asked the question - he is so high profile I have forgotten what electorate he is from - cannot tell me which hospital he was referring to; but I assure the honourable member that the Government will deliver the goods in Port Macquarie. Honourable members opposite will be queuing up at my door seeking money for hospitals to be built in their electorates.

BUILDING INDUSTRY ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT

Mr LONGLEY: I direct my question without notice to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs. What action has so far been taken as a result of evidence to the Royal Commission into Productivity in the Building Industry? When will the commission produce its final report?

Mr GREINER: So far I have received reports from Commissioner Holland Q.C. and Commissioner Yeldham Q.C. in respect of their hearings, which cover a variety of issues affecting a number of aspects of the building industry in different parts of the State. The Government expects that Commissioner Gyles' report will deal comprehensively with the matters raised by both Commissioner Holland and Commissioner Yeldham, with the matters raised in hearings before Mr Gyles himself, and with the outcomes of the major research program undertaken. The deadline for receipt of Commissioner Gyles' report has been extended by five weeks until 8th May because of

a number of matters already before him which have been the subject of hearings and about which further information has become available. The reports depict a cross-section of the building industry, from the central business district of Sydney to the Riverina and the North Coast, in which the rule of law is routinely ignored, agreements are dishonoured, lack of integrity and honesty is rife, and industrial relations are conducted like the law of the jungle. These reports alone graphically illustrate the necessity for a drastic change in the attitude and behaviour of many in the building industry, particularly - but by no means -

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Coogee to order.

Mr GREINER: The honourable member ought go and see his friend Mr Meissner because he is going to get him into trouble.

[Interruption]

I do not know about that. The honourable member ought wait and see about that. He ought ask the honourable member about his friend Mr Meissner and, indeed, about his friend Mr Anderson. Just ask him about it. As I was about to say, the reports alone graphically illustrated the necessity for a drastic change in the attitude and behaviour of many in the building industry, particularly - but by no means only - the militant unions. Such a change of attitude is essential if the citizens of this State, who ultimately pay the bills, are not to suffer from the rorts and rip-offs -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier to order. I call the honourable member for Port Stephens to order for the second time.

Mr GREINER: - which are made possible by the behaviour exposed by these royal commission inquiries. It is not appropriate for the Government to respond comprehensively to these reports in isolation from other inquiries undertaken by the commission, to be dealt with in Commissioner Gyles' final report, but they do underline the necessity to take immediate steps to bring back order and integrity into this industry by vigorous enforcement of the existing law in all its aspects. To that end, certain steps have already been taken by the Government. A building industry task force is now operating to complete investigation of commission matters to the prosecution stage, where appropriate; procedures have also been put in place to pursue civil remedies so as to assist in stamping out unlawful conduct in the industry. The House will be interested to know that charges have already been laid in respect of eight matters that have come before the commission. These charges include intimidation, demanding money with menace, false declarations, false testimony, solicitation of corrupt reward, and wilful destruction of documents. The building industry task force is also considering all the possible criminal matters mentioned in reports by Messrs Holland and Yeldham. When the final report comes down in a little over a month's time the Government proposes to ensure that it is not pigeonholed; that it is aggressively followed up; and that we make the sorts of changes in the building industry which are decades overdue and which have contributed to the cost of building in New South Wales being wildly out of line with the cost of building anywhere else in Australia.

MEMBER FOR NORTH SHORE: GOVERNMENT CAR

Mr MILLS: My question without notice is directed to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs. Did the suspended Assistant Treasurer, Phillip Smiles,

return a ministerial car last Friday only after repeated attempts by Treasury officers to have the car returned? Has the Director-General of the Premier's Department, Mr Humphrey, since provided Mr Smiles with another government car?

Mr GREINER: I regret to say that I do not know the answer to the first question. I read the answer to the second question in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, so it must be right.

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BEGA VALLEY SHIRE COUNCIL INQUIRY

Mr SMITH: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives. Is the Minister aware of the controversy surrounding the Twofold Beach caravan park in Bega shire? If so, what action is the Government taking to resolve the issue?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for North Shore to order.

Mr PEACOCKE: I thank the honourable member for Bega for his question. The matter he raises is vitally important to the area of local government reform. From time to time Ministers for local government are called on to launch formal inquiries into one of the 176 councils in this State. An inquiry is not something that I would initiate lightly. In the past the performance of the Bega Valley Shire Council has been the subject of several unfavourable reports. My department has received numerous complaints about the council. Those complaints cover the handling of staff issues, conduct of elected members at council meetings, council's decision to discontinue legal proceedings against the shire president, and the alleged unauthorised works within the coastal protection zone undertaken at the Twofold Beach caravan park. The council suffers from divisions and warring factions and it has been continually criticised for its lack of transparency and willingness to keep ratepayers informed.

Although the council, after discussion with my department, has made some effort to address its management and organisational problems, the Twofold Beach caravan park issue is still unresolved. I am concerned that this caravan park issue be addressed fully as it has been an ongoing source of controversy and division in the council and the local community. Therefore, after consulting with my colleague the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy, and considering the issues raised, I approved an inquiry under section 212 of the Local Government Act into the Bega Valley Shire Council. The inquiry's terms of reference will be to inquire into and report on the surrounding circumstances and matters arising from the council's handling of alleged unauthorised works at the Twofold Beach caravan park and any other related issues. Should it prove necessary, the terms of reference will be widened to take other issues into account.

The inquiry should take several months to complete and members of the public will be able to give evidence to local government inspectors conducting the investigation. Both this inquiry and the inquiry I announced yesterday into the Blue Mountains City Council reflect this Government's intention to make councils more accountable and transparent to their ratepayers and to ensure that councils comply with the various laws that govern their operations. I emphasise that such inquiries are not witch hunts and are carried out independently and without bias by my inspectors. I wish to make clear to the House that I will not be drawn by the media or influenced by either local or other political

considerations into inquiries of this type. I am sure that honourable members will agree that any inquiry has the potential to damage the reputations of many people who are honestly and sincerely trying to carry out their duties and that such inquiries should not be initiated lightly. These are important issues and I wish to make clear that inquiries will take place only where there is substantial evidence that such an inquiry is necessary.

MAITLAND HOSPITAL PRIVATISATION

Mr NEILLY: My question is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. Will the Minister unequivocally rule out privatisation of Maitland Hospital?

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ermington to order for the second time. I call the honourable member for Port Stephens to order for the third time. I call the honourable member for Gosford to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: Many members in this House and many members of the public are puzzled about the Labor Party's policy on this issue. I must say that I am absolutely confused. Honourable members are aware from the statements that have been made that the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and other key Opposition members are opposed to privatisation. They do not want any private money invested in health care. Let us look at what is happening in other States and comments that are being made by other members as they relate to the question asked by the honourable member about Maitland Hospital and the decisions that have to be made. For example, a recent article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* headed "State ALP may ease stance on asset sales" read:

According to a discussion paper prepared by the Opposition spokesman on financial matters, Mr Michael Egan, privatisation should no longer be opposed for purely ideological reasons. Mr Egan also argues -

Mr A. S. Aquilina: On a point of order. The question merely asked whether the Minister would be privatising Maitland Hospital. That clear question deserves a clear answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! As the honourable member for St Marys is aware, I have no control over the way a Minister answers a question other than to ensure that it is relevant to the question. Certainly the Minister's answer has been relevant to the question. By way of observation, the Chair finds it curious that when Ministers give a yes or no answer they are criticised, yet when they give longer answers they are criticised also.

Mr PHILLIPS: The Hon. M. R. Egan, the Opposition's financial guru and waste watch spokesperson, also argues for a more flexible approach to the involvement of private companies in major public hospitals. Let us look briefly at what Labor governments in other States are doing. This is an important issue of private funding -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for St Marys to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: In the Victorian newspaper, the *Age*, this statement appeared:

The \$120 million redevelopment of St Vincent's Hospital will be one

of the first privately financed Government projects -

Mr Carr: On a point of order. We await the explanation of health funding in Afghanistan, Austria, in the -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time and ask him to refrain from taking frivolous points of order.

Mr PHILLIPS: If the Leader of the Opposition is concerned about what is happening in other Labor States perhaps he would like to hear some of the comments from members of this House. I note that the honourable member for Bathurst has left the Chamber, as he often does during question time. The local Lithgow newspaper published an interview with the honourable member for Bathurst. That article reads:

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The Labor Party was not opposed to such private hospital development and he believed it was important for the Lithgow district.

The article continued:

The ALP supports a private hospital for Lithgow, he said.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: The article continued:

Mr Clough said that he rejected the submission by the ALP shadow health minister, Dr Andrew Refshauge, that \$8 million -

Mr Clough: On a point of order. A lie has been spread around this Chamber by the Minister that in some way I support the Government -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I presume that the honourable member for Bathurst wants to make a personal explanation rather than take a point of order. He will have the opportunity to do so at the end of question time.

Mr PHILLIPS: I will be looking forward to a retraction in the *Lithgow Mercury* by the honourable member for Bathurst on this issue. I want to know whether the Leader of the Opposition in this place disowns the comments of the Leader of the Opposition in the upper House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Londonderry to order. It has obviously escaped the notice of members in this Chamber that the subject of many questions today will be dealt with this afternoon by way of a matter of public importance. Therefore a number of members - although admittedly a limited number - will have a chance to make a contribution to that debate. That will be the appropriate time for them to make a contribution. I have now made numerous calls to order, and I deem all members called to order today to be on three calls to order. If they adversely attract my attention during the remainder of question time they will leave the Chamber for the rest of the day.

Mr PHILLIPS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been strutting

around, promising the people of Maitland that the Opposition will build a hospital in that area - after we have promised them the same. Will he give a commitment on the date on which building will commence? Absolutely not. He has promised hospitals to people around the State but he will not give a date for the hospital for the people of Maitland. We have made a clear commitment to the people of Maitland that we will build a hospital - and we will start building it in this term. If it is at all within my power, we will finish the hospital this term, prior to the next election. I want the Leader of the Opposition here to tell me what is the policy of the Opposition. Will he disown the Leader of the Opposition in the upper House and the honourable member for Bathurst? Members opposite are queuing for hospitals for which they know that I do not have Federal funding. What do they want me to do about their hospitals? Members of the Opposition have to sort themselves out and tell us their policy.

SYDNEY TO NEWCASTLE FREEWAY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Mr HARTCHER: My question without notice is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads. What action is the Roads and Traffic Authority taking to improve traffic management on the Sydney to Newcastle freeway following a number of traffic jams in recent times?

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Mr W. T. J. MURRAY: I find the "Ohs" coming from the Labor Party benches rather interesting, as some of those members represent that part of New South Wales. Remarkably enough, I, like the Minister for Health Services Management in relation to hospitals, have heard nothing about how Opposition members would improve traffic flow on the F3 Freeway. I thank the honourable member for Gosford for his work in passing on to me information about the needs of the people on the Central Coast. That is having the necessary effect and, as a result, I make the following announcement. The success of any traffic system depends heavily on an efficient traffic management program. This applies whether we are talking about complex city traffic or fast-moving highway traffic. As the State Government continues its record roads upgrading program throughout New South Wales, it pays particular attention to the application of modern technology to traffic management. To this end, I have authorised the Roads and Traffic Authority to invite expressions of interest for the construction of electronic billboards at several sites along the Sydney to Newcastle freeway. It is anticipated that the signs will have an important role in traffic management in that they will warn motorists of road conditions, traffic accidents and upcoming roadworks. The scene is all too familiar when Sydney motorists head north on weekends on public holidays and the F3 turns into one big public carpark. The electronic billboards will help prevent what happened on the F3 during the State's last public holiday. The January long-weekend exodus from Sydney this year turned into a nightmare as north-bound motorists became trapped for up to six hours, with a number of accidents occurring along the northbound carriageway.

It is proposed that the signs will be linked to the Brisbane Street traffic control centre in Sydney. This link, in an emergency, will enable a message to be transmitted from Brisbane Street to the billboards and displayed almost immediately, warning motorists of the dangers ahead. Probably the most important benefit of installing electronic signs is the ability to warn motorists of impending dangerous road conditions. Experience has shown that motorists do not always alter their driving to suit road conditions. Also, one accident creates several others when drivers are not aware of the problems ahead and cannot slow down soon enough. The problem is exacerbated in wet conditions when motorists fail to exercise caution. Apart from obvious road safety benefits, the signs will also help reduce frustration for motorists sitting in long queues

and not knowing what is causing the delays. Stationary vehicles running their engines impose a further strain on the environment. It is intended that the electronic sign indicate the length of delay and advise motorists to switch off their engines. The most significant aspect of the proposal is that all this can be achieved at no expense to the taxpayer; in fact, the scheme can raise revenue be spent on further road safety projects.

An electronic sign is currently being trialled on the F4 Western Sydney Freeway. It is appropriate, following the success of the electronic sign on the F4, to investigate the use of such technology in other locations. Public opinion surveys have been commissioned regarding the effects of the F4 billboard on safety and visual impact, and the response has been most favourable. The study showed that driver safety has not been compromised and that 70 per cent of those interviewed supported the sign, given that the main purpose was to raise funds to assist the Roads and Traffic Authority with road safety projects. Also, 70 per cent said that the billboard made no difference to the look of the area. Similar responses were expressed by residents living in close proximity to the billboard. Over 90 per cent of people were able to see the sign clearly and, of those recalling having seen a road safety message, the majority felt the billboard served a good purpose. Depending on the interest of the private sector and the reaction of the public, we will consider installing the signs in several other locations, including the F5 Freeway. However, the public can be assured that the Government will resist the proliferation of such signs around the State. There are many benefits to be realised from the proposal, but the main one is the creation of safer roads by informing drivers of what is ahead.

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PETITIONS

Lidcombe Hospital

Petition praying that because of dissatisfaction with the rationalisation of health services the House prevent the downgrading and possible closure of services at Lidcombe Hospital, received from **Mr Shedden**.

Royal Hospital for Women

Petition praying that the House provide funding to the Royal Hospital for Women to ensure that it maintains its leadership role in women's health care, received from **Ms Moore**.

Health Services

Petition praying that funding cuts to health services and hospitals cease and that funding be provided to ensure that waiting lists for hospitals and operations are eliminated, received from **Mr Gaudry**.

Chaelundi State Forest

Petition praying that the proposed logging of the Chaelundi State Forest not be proceeded with and that the area be declared an extension of the Guy Fawkes River National Park, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

Royal Agricultural Society Showground

Petition praying that because the Royal Agricultural Society Showground, the E. S. Marks Athletics Field, Centennial Park, the Cricket Ground, Moore Park and Queen's Park form part of the original bequest by Lachlan Macquarie as commons land, future planning for this land be subject to open space study, received from **Ms Moore**.

Cockle Creek Railway Station

Petitions praying that the House urgently reconsider the proposal to demolish buildings at the Cockle Creek railway station and that it make no attempt to reduce the frequency of trains to that station, received from **Mr Hunter and Mr Mills**.

Newcastle Rail Services

Petition praying that the rail line between Civic railway station and Newcastle railway station not be closed, received from **Mr Mills**.

Rail Timetables

Petition praying that because the new rail timetables introduced on 12th January have resulted in a decline in the standard of service to passengers, the House abandon these timetables and reinstate the old timetables pending community consultation, received from **Mr Langton**.

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Newcastle to Central Coast Rail Services

Petition praying that rail services on the Newcastle to Central Coast line be restored and that easy access be provided to platform No. 3 at Fassifern railway station by the installation of ramps to the overhead walkway, received from **Mr Hunter**.

Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf

Petition praying that public money not be wasted demolishing the structurally sound finger wharf and establishing a walkway on the western side of Woolloomooloo Bay but instead that basic renovations be carried out on the wharf and an integrated multimedia arts centre be established, received from **Ms Moore**.

Waste Disposal

Petition praying that the House halt expansion of existing waste tips until a parliamentary select committee determines an environmentally viable legislative, administrative and financial strategy for waste generated in the Sydney Basin, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

Duck Hunting

Petition praying that the House legislate to ban the annual duck hunting season to protect native waterfowl and New South Wales wetlands, received from **Ms Moore**.

Adoption Information Act

Petition praying that the Government take urgent action to prevent the damage

that will be done by the Adoption Information Act becoming effective in its present form, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

Walker Estates

Petition praying that the Government preserve the Walker estates, including Yaralla, for public use, received from **Ms Moore**.

Ingleburn and Macquarie Fields Police Stations

Petition praying that the House provide, as a matter of urgency, a permanent police station at Ingleburn and upgrade the existing police station at Macquarie Fields, received from **Mr Knowles**.

Harbord Heathland

Petition praying that Portion 490, Gardere Avenue, Harbord, known as Harbord Heathland, be retained as open space for the enjoyment of all citizens of Warringah Shire, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

Woollahra Traffic

Petition praying that the House take all necessary steps to reduce the traffic volume in Ocean Street, Woollahra, and that Ocean Street be returned to a safe and pleasant street consistent with residential neighbourhood values, received from **Ms Moore**.

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North Head Sewage Treatment Plant

Petition praying that safe toxic trade waste and sludge management methods be implemented urgently at the North Head sewage treatment plant, Manly, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

HEALTH SERVICES PRIVATISATION

Matter of Public Importance

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.11]: I move:

That this House notes, as a matter of public importance:

1. Private ownership and management of public hospitals and community health services is misconceived and not in the interests of citizens of New South Wales.
2. Privatisation of public hospitals and community health will undermine a holistic community approach to health, increase costs, and reduce emphasis on primary health care especially preventative health, health education and community participation basic to an efficient public health system.
3. Privatisation of public health represents a significant shift of government commitment to the provision of essential public services.

4. Such a fundamental shift of major proportion in public policy should be by full parliamentary and public process, subject to the will of Parliament and not simply by Executive action.

Privatisation of public health threatens to alienate me from the Greiner Government. I supported privatisation but never imagined that the Government, without reference to Parliament, by arrogant executive action, without in depth consultation and involvement in public debate, would embark upon privatisation of not only public hospitals but also community health services. This is one of the most fundamental shifts in public policy since Federation - a decision taken by Executive Government despite the genesis and context of the Charter of Reform which was supposed to move things in the other direction. The Minister admits that the Hastings Valley proposal is a social experiment and the forerunner of privatisation of public health in many areas.

Privatisation of public health will adversely affect community health and community life across the State. The community and community health are inextricably enmeshed. Privatisation of public health is a conflict in terms. An experiment without in-depth community consultation, input or wide public discussion is to be embarked upon within three weeks with Health Care of Australia, a company with experience in private hospitals but no experience in community health. That experiment is shortly to be repeated without the time necessary for evaluation of its success. It is an experiment which flies in the face of international advice and experience, an experiment without public support even in Port Macquarie, where 70 to 80 per cent of people are against the proposal, and an experiment responsible for anger and growing disbelief in the wider community.

I will fight this fundamental shift in public policy to the bitter end, whatever that might hold for my relationship with the Greiner Government. Doctors, nurses and health officials have grown up with an ethos of public health. What happens when these people are replaced by those who grew up with an ethos of private, profit-driven public health?

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The contract at Port Macquarie is for 20 years. Doctors, nurses, health workers and the community will grow up in a profit-driven health system. Does anyone believe that contracts can be written to prevent a basic shift in attitude, or that there can be developed a two-tiered system for the haves and the have nots, with abuses inequalities and alienation of the public from their health system? It is arrant nonsense and arrogance for the Executive Government to sell off the fundamental right to a publicly owned health system. A spread of privatisation will undermine the motivation and drive of public health officials and their commitment to public health. Career opportunities will arise increasingly in the private health field as it grows to swallow up public health. What will that do to public health professionalism, policing of standards, and talent and commitment in and to public health?

I am not ideologically opposed to privatisation per se but I am implacably opposed to privatisation of public health. Will education be next, simply because there is a grave shortage of capital? My interest in community health goes back many years and that is why I feel so passionately about it. In convening meetings of doctors, teachers, and workers in housing, social work, mental health, transport, churches, charities and a wide range of community groups, the sole objective is to get better communication - to avoid duplication and fractionalisation of services. A key motivator for me has been Dr Bill Corlis, postgraduate of the Royal College of General Practitioners, who has had experience in Great Britain, is in charge of the World Health Organisation South-West Pacific health program and is a health educator in Western Australia and the Illawarra. He lives in the village of Sussex Inlet on the South Coast

where workshops are run by the Sussex Inlet Foundation for Community Development. Professor Peter Baume and Professor Webster - for both of whom I have great respect - Associate Professor Pat Mowbray and doctors from interstate participate in the workshops. Dr Michael Harris of Wollongong University is also involved in the Sanctuary Point primary health care pilot program.

Eighty per cent of young families in Australia are in a state of social or other dysfunction. There is a community problem with housing, transport, and industrial and occupational factors. The arts program in Shoalhaven and the importance of a mix of parents, the elderly and pupils - the subject of a separate submission I have made to the Minister for School Education - are further examples of a whole community approach. At Gillis Plains Community Centre in South Australia services offering development education for children aged from zero to five, family studies, welfare services, health services and primary school staff all operate together with a common objective. It is naive in the extreme to believe that a contract can be written to cover the heart of a community. We have a contract here that says that the public hospital and the community health services are now private and there has to be community involvement. That is bizarre, misconceived and socially disruptive.

The simplistic approach to food service, community health and hospital privatisation is that the services to be delivered are specifically defined, the supervision of standards is built in, outcomes are measured and contracts are written - and that is it. Where does love, care, understanding, human contact and community involvement in community health fit into the equation? The Minister for Health and Community Services points to a community board in the Port Macquarie model appointed by the Minister. How can a community identify with a public health system that is largely privatised? Twenty years on there will be no publicly owned facility but there will be loss of expertise in the public sector and a board appointed under section 20 by the Minister. In 1987 the British Prime Minister, Thatcher, tried to privatise public health. Four royal colleges of general practitioners sent a manifesto to that Government vigorously opposing

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privatisation. Opinion polls showed 89 per cent support in the United Kingdom for the retention of the present public health system. In the mid-1980s royal commissions were held in Britain, Canada and the United States which, together with other studies, revealed the importance of a holistic community approach to health care. The world health conference on primary health care at Alma Ata in Russia, in 1978, made the following key observations:

Primary health care that is fully and universally accessible is thus a means to ensure that the whole health system is used in a rational way.

Budgetary allocations need to be accompanied by simultaneous delegation of responsibility and authority.

The community itself to a large extent provides managerial control for primary health care through various mechanisms.

The Government may claim that it has embraced those principles in a private contract. I say it is not possible to embrace those principles in a private contract and get the wholehearted support and involvement of the community. A further observation made at the 1978 world health conference is as follows:

Control of primary health care therefore implies supervision, but with the double

connotation of managerial control by the community combined with technical guidance and support from the other levels of the health system, provided within a true process of education.

Lifelong education is the key to public health in addition to people taking responsibility for their own health and becoming involved in community programs. That is community education: the community supporting and embracing its public health system; the community feeling that the health system belongs to it and has not been taken over by some alienated private enterprise. The experience in Great Britain, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, and a large number of other countries was that fractionalisation and specialisation, exacerbated by privatisation of health, were costly and ineffective. Consumers must be an integral part of a community-based health support system helping to manage their own health. The emphasis must be on primary health services at the local level. Primary health care can be defined as general practice, nursing and other support services, occupational health, industrial health, children's and women's services, post-natal services and health education - an integrated community system motivated by the community, with domiciliary care rather than hospitalisation. There is overwhelming evidence that a holistic primary health care team approach is effective and cost-efficient. Unfortunately, many doctors and specialists in Australia are not involved in primary health care. And private medicine, which is profit driven, is by definition diametrically opposed to and or completely ignorant of the practical application of essential community involvement and, therefore, is born to fail - no matter what the contract says.

Studies by Ruth Commock for the United Kingdom in the Welsh scene and Garry Andrews, formerly Professor of Community Health, Sydney University, confirmed the health team approach. A team could be a community nurse, liaising between the general practitioner and the community; a community nurse-midwife who also works in food services and nutrition; and a health visitor who is an educator involved in community outreach, and able to spend the necessary time to identify problems not evident in the consulting rooms to identify real needs as opposed to felt needs. This can happen only with individuals and community ownership. Public hospitals and community health services belong to the public; not to a Minister or to a government. They are largely supported by the public, and the public must not be alienated from them. In Shoalhaven at Sanctuary Point a Commonwealth grant will enable a pilot program for
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better primary health care services. Doctor Pat Mowbray, Associate Professor at the School of Health Sciences, Wollongong - he is also in the Healthy Cities program - is working with other academics and general practitioners on the rationalisation and integration of primary health care services. Sanctuary Point has a staggering 12 per cent growth rate in the heart of Shoalhaven city, which was identified last week as having the highest growth rate of any local government area in New South Wales. The British, the Danes, the Dutch and to a lesser extent the Swedes have embraced primary health care in vocational training practices and reduced the percentage of gross domestic product consumed by the health budget. That is the reason the Commonwealth is financing this pilot program.

Community co-operation and community education in a health system owned and supported by the community, in which decisions are made by the community in consultation with health professionals, is most cost-effective. Toby Greenacre found that general practitioners spend five and a half minutes or less with each patient. What about their background? What about understanding where the problems come from? This is a recipe for cost and failure. In the face of this the Greiner Government wants to go down the path of privatisation not only of public hospital beds but of community health services. The Alma Ata World Health Organisation conference in 1978 and the European regional committee's statement in 1980 showed that the development of "an organised

system of primary health care globally" is the main target for "health for all by the year 2000". Time and again conferences have demonstrated the serious mismatch and lack of balance of tertiary and primary health care. Dr Corlis said in his submission to the Federal Government:

Tertiary health care operates in a closed system within the hospital, whilst primary health care operates in an open system of ambiguous environmental range of problems which require different skills.

A variation of skills is required to address diverse problems in different areas - inner city, outer suburban, large country towns, smaller country towns, isolated rural areas and the tropics. Preventive health education has been the basic theme operating in the Sussex Inlet Foundation for Community Development. The Greiner Government is simplistic to believe that merely by contractual arrangements with one private group - a very large and powerful one at that covering community health as well as hospital services - there will be meaningful integration. That is nonsense because it is profit driven and does not belong to the community. Members of the community will not embrace it as wholeheartedly as they have to if the health system is to work. There is room for private contracting in the provision on public health services but the Government could not even get food service privatisation right. Contract catering driven by cost erodes the "personality" of the service. Most patients are in hospital for only a few days. Food is vital to their recovery. A meal is more than food; it involves human contact and understanding. Food delivery in hospitals has not been updated for decades. The Government's solution is privatisation but no guidelines are in place to protect hospitals or to advise them on the best way to cut costs and retain full control of their food services and staff love, care and dedication to patients.

Few area health services have thought out their options. Southwest Sydney is in a quandary. Southeastern Sydney - Prince of Wales - recently called for a \$1 million to \$1.5 million re-equipment contract and interviewed only one supplier out of a preselected six companies. Goulburn did its homework and got it right. Grafton is undercapitalised and will continue to have problems. Coffs Harbour receives cook-chill from Grafton but expresses dissatisfaction with the Regethermic bulk food delivery system. Hospitals have been forced by this Government into situations for which they

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are unprepared. Area health services in the northern region, the southwestern region and northern Sydney are now undertaking reviews for centralised food services. They recognise the need to retain full control but this Government's push for privatisation may cause them to opt for contract catering. Sutherland food centre is a disaster. Mr Martin Flaxman, consultant to Sutherland Hospital, set the specifications for catering tendering. Flaxman was an adviser to Ian MacDonald, director of administrative services at Sutherland Hospital. Flaxman was and still is affiliated with Regethermic. He pushes Regethermic. He has the same telephone, fax and telex numbers as Regethermic. And he is a Department of Health employee given over to advise hospitals. He sells Regethermic equipment exclusively and does not recommend equipment other than Regethermic. All this is obvious from the copies of data sheets which I have. I could say much more but my speaking time is running out. [*Time expired*]

Mr PHILLIPS (Miranda - Minister for Health Services Management) [3.26]: The honourable member for South Coast has been in the Parliament many more years than I have. After I was elected in 1984 I watched his career in this Parliament with interest as he pursued issues of grave interest to him. I support many of them. This is the first occasion on which I have seen the honourable member for South Coast at a very early stage lock himself in and put his mind to health care funding methods of the 1970s.

One of the basic problems I have as Minister is bringing about the outcomes in health services that I want. The corporate plan and vision the Government announced recently chart publicly where we want to go with community health. I agree on the importance of giving greater priority to community health services and support for our ageing community and not having a pre-occupation with the size of hospitals and how many beds they have. Day after day I stand here for hours trying to change the perception of hospitals. The hospitals and I differ on the method of funding. The honourable member for South Coast is suggesting that we should go in the direction he has proposed. We share some community health advisers: they are common friends of ours. We share the same vision. But he is saying that we should not be doing this other than with public money; that we should get the money from the taxpayer and from nobody else. He says that private money has no role to play whatever. This Government is concentrating on what it should be concentrating on: ensuring that people have access to health care; that there is equity in the system; that the system is affordable; and that the system has quality. If they are our objectives, as long as we are tested by this Parliament and the people outside to make sure that we achieve those objectives which are appropriate, what does it matter whether the money comes from the State Government, the Federal Government or from private enterprise?

It is not necessary - the honourable member for the South Coast is trying to indicate that it is - for the Government to provide all health care services. Why is there this perception that only the Government can provide health care? The Government must be responsible for providing access, equity, affordability and quality. In Australia governments have not been the only ones providing health care services. New South Wales happens to have the lowest level of private participation in the hospital system. There is a far greater degree of involvement in other States than in New South Wales. Visiting medical officers are contracted to the public health system. They are independent business people who work in the public hospitals. Beds at St Vincent's Hospital in Lismore have been contracted for a long time to take pressure off Lismore Base Hospital. Are the people in that area getting a different type of health care? I refer to what Ron Mulock had to say in 1986. The then health Minister was lauded as the greatest reformer of the health system when he signed a contract with the St John of God Hospital at Richmond to provide the area with drug and alcohol services. They are very important community health services that we still need to expand. The contract is still

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in force today. There is no difference in what we are trying to achieve; the question is how those services are funded. If I did not have a funding problem, perhaps there would not be pressure to find the alternatives. I am not overly worried about the alternatives.

The problem in the area of health care is that there are a limited number of dollars available. The previous Government had difficulty trying to develop the system with limited funds. We face exactly the same problem. What should we do? Should we sit pat and ask, "Should I wait until the economy recovers, until the Federal Government gets more money and until we can improve State incomes before I can provide these services?" The Budget has not been cut, but we know that we are having extreme difficulty coping with growth in health care. The population is increasing; it is ageing; it is relocating. We must provide services for people, such as those in Port Macquarie. Modern technology means that doctors can do more things for people to improve their quality of life. That increases the demand on health services. Unfortunately, I doubt that the economy today, and for many years to come, will grow at the rate necessary to cope with an insatiable health budget. The Government has a responsibility to find alternative means of funding. The Opposition will have the opportunity to challenge us on the content of the contract when it is made public and query us about the community health services that we are trying to provide in Port

Macquarie. They are the sorts of things that it should be tackling. The Opposition should not shackle us now by saying we should not fund these health services with private money. If the Opposition shackles us, there will be a long list of projects I will not be able to implement.

Dr Metherell: Is that not the same issue as schools?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Davidson to order. If he wants to seek the call later in the debate, he can do so.

Mr PHILLIPS: I suspect that the honourable member for Davidson would find that private participation in the education system is greater than private participation in the health system. We are talking about a \$4.5 billion budget that is growing at a rapid rate. There is not that huge growth in demand for education funding because population growth is the limiting factor. Growth in that area depends on immigration and changing social needs. However, the same problems with respect to redistribution apply in that area. I refer to some of the hospitals that have major deficiencies that I do not have the money to fix. The honourable member for South Coast is very concerned about Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. It is what we call a dysfunctional site with services spread over the site: many of the buildings are old, have poor stock and are no longer appropriate for their current use; lifts in old buildings need to be replaced or refurbished; current energy systems are inefficient, as the hospital uses manually operated coal-fired boilers.

Dr Refshauge: Are you going to privatise it?

Mr PHILLIPS: No. I will come to that in a moment. All honourable members have probably visited the Prince of Wales Hospital. There is a new part but old second world war humpies cover most of the site. Prince Henry Hospital is falling apart where it stands. We must find the money to develop those sites, otherwise I will be faced with the dilemma of trying to renew my own stock and at the same time provide resources to western Sydney, southwestern Sydney, Port Macquarie, and so on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask honourable members who wish to contribute to the debate to do so later and not to keep interjecting.

Mr PHILLIPS: I refer to the Shoalhaven hospital. The honourable member for
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South Coast has made representations to me regarding this hospital. I do not know whether Shoalhaven hospital will be privatised in the future. In terms of the total package, I am concerned about having a wider range of funding available to me. The honourable member for South Coast, in his letter to me dated 12th February, said:

I ask for consideration of allocation of funds so that stage 1B can flow on directly after the completion of stage 1A; that is, in 1992-93 rather than 1993-94.

That will cost \$10 million. I do not have that money. All of my budget for years to come is committed to worthwhile projects. What project does the honourable member want me to slow down - the children's hospital, Nepean hospital? The Shoalhaven hospital is just one of many. The honourable member for Manly has written to me about the Kiama District Hospital. The Kiama community is trying to come to grips with the issue. The honourable member said:

I believe we have a proposal which has enormous merit and allows for community ownership and retention of a very useful facility.

That is a different type of private ownership. It will still be a private hospital owned by members of the community. We will depend on that community to care for that hospital if we go down that track. Where do I get the funding for these projects? The honourable member for South Coast raises the matter of food services. I am not locked into privatising all food services. Southwestern Sydney, for example, is one of the areas that the honourable member has mentioned. The people in that area have come forward with a proposal designed to achieve significantly greater savings than could be achieved by a private corporation. All I want is that the options be left open to me. The vast majority of savings that have been made in the contracting out of health care services have been achieved through the Health and Research Employees Association. The employees submitted a tender that resulted in a lot of fat being removed from the system. They are working very effectively. Why do we have to have one method of funding? Why can we not have a range of funding? We have had a range of funding before and we want to maintain that.

Things should be put in perspective. The honourable member for South Coast spoke about selling off the system. Let me assure him that there will be no major selling off of the health care system. The suitability of each project for privatisation will be judged with community consultation, which is what happened in Port Macquarie. Opposition to privatisation goes against the feeling in the community. The community hospital board in Port Macquarie fully supports the proposed privatisation. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows how doctors feel about particular issues. They support the proposal.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Davidson to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: That is the realistic part of life. The honourable member for Davidson enjoys the luxury of being able to sit on the other side of the House, contemplate his navel and claim that only public funding should be used.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Davidson to order for the third time.

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Mr PHILLIPS: He does not have to face the problem that I face today of limited day-to-day funding and finding where the dollars are to come from. That problem is different to the one he faced when he was a Minister. Honourable members opposite want to put handcuffs on me and say, "If the Government cannot get it out of taxes or out of the Federal Government, you cannot do it". The funding received by my department is wholly committed. Next year \$70 million in growth money - that is over and above inflation - will be needed for the new services I want to deliver. Where are those dollars to come from? The public patients in Port Macquarie have been guaranteed access to the proposed hospital, just as they would have access to any public hospital. A community committee will police the hospital to make sure that happens. [*Time expired*]

Dr MACDONALD (Manly) [3.41]: The matter of public importance raised by the honourable member for South Coast relates to a landmark fundamental shift in government policy. For that reason it is appropriate that it should be debated. It is unfortunate that it will be debated in this House for only one hour. If the motion moved by the honourable member for South Coast is carried, perhaps a much wider debate should be generated. As the honourable member for South Coast says, the fundamental

shift in policy has been exercised through Executive Government. I wish to address a number of points. I believe I have some qualifications to speak on this subject-matter, having worked in private and public hospitals and in the National Health Service in the United Kingdom. All of those bodies have a role to play. They all have strengths and weaknesses. That plurality is important within our community. I support change. Change is needed. Problems are emerging in relation to recapitalisation of our health system. Joint venturing with the private sector needs to be examined. There is scope for privatisation of certain services.

One of the messages that has come through is that the public health system needs to be corporatised. Standards, performance and outcomes need to be examined. However, let us not confuse corporatisation with total privatisation. I support another change about which I have spoken to the Minister. We need to shift away from the concept of providing more and more high-tech medicine at more and more cost. The role of preventive health care needs to be emphasised. In the long term that will lead to a reduction in the demand for the health dollar. I support all of those concepts. Two arguments have been advanced: privatisation is ideologically driven or capital works driven. If it is ideologically driven, the implications have to be examined. Core services are important. If the public health system starts to divest itself of core services - whether they be in health, education or transport - the social impact must be looked at. Once a private monopoly is established, there is an enormous risk. That risk has been recognised by the community and by the honourable member for South Coast. Checks and balances are needed.

Private sector delivery of health care, which is based on profit, and public sector delivery of health care, which is based more on service, are contradictions in terms. In his remarks the Minister said that health care is about access, equity and quality which can come from either sector. I contest that. I do not believe that statement is true; it needs to be argued. Certain community services may never be available in the private sector. On the other hand, if the concept is capital works driven, which is the argument advanced by the Minister, nothing he has said gets away from the fact that \$2 billion is likely to be spent in the next two or three years recapitalising health services. The other point that has been made is that recapitalisation programs for health, as with many other services, are cyclical in nature. We must come to terms with what is meant by that. Traditionally recapitalisation was based on loans. The alternatives to privatising Port

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Macquarie hospital need to be examined. The possibility of approaching the Commonwealth for loans needs to be looked at. The Government may have to alter its priorities and give more capital works dollars to the health sector.

Asset sales and the privatisation of the GIO have been based on the argument that they will provide capital for core services - the old guns for butter argument. That has fallen down because we have been told a certain degree of privatisation must be tolerated because it will release funds for capital works. That is not happening. Port Macquarie hospital will be a model for the remainder of the State. It is a social experiment that will have to be evaluated. Privatisation of Port Macquarie hospital is the Minister's choice. If the privatisation proceeds, as it probably will, the Minister must evaluate the results before other community services are privatised, particularly community health services which the honourable member for South Coast has mentioned. Privatisation of health care services is an experiment and it is new. [*Time expired*]

Mr JEFFERY (Oxley) [3.46]: The people of New South Wales, the mid North Coast and Port Macquarie will not be fooled by this thinly veiled point-scoring motion moved by the honourable member for South Coast to weaken electoral support for the

coalition Government. It is in the category of the recent visit by the Leader of the Opposition to Port Macquarie: it is plain political opportunism. The Leader of the Opposition promises the earth wherever he goes. Where are the funds to come from for all of his grandiose schemes and vague promises? The people of Port Macquarie and district will not be disadvantaged by the privatisation of the Port Macquarie hospital. There are many positives. Port Macquarie will have a hospital in half the time it would have taken if the hospital were to be financed by public funding. As the Minister said earlier in question time, construction is to begin in June this year and will be completed by Christmas 1993, 18 months after the commencement date. One of the promises of the Leader of the Opposition was to fund the construction of the hospital with the proceeds from a casino, but that would take a minimum of five years. Transferring the proceeds from casinos to health care is a bit of a steal from Government policy, but I repeat that under the Opposition's proposal, the completion date would be at least five years later than the Government's proposed completion date.

Nearly 20 years ago a former Labor Minister, Kevin Stewart, said Labor was going to build a brand new hospital at Port Macquarie. Where is it? The Labor Government never did anything. The concept of privatisation will be successful. The general manager of Health Care of Australia has guaranteed that in every discipline the level of services will be the same or better than the services provided by Hastings District Hospital. The Minister has said there will be government guarantees and controls. The community board will oversee the whole operation. What about the people? Unfortunately at the moment there are some waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery and knee and hip replacements. Within six months of the new hospital commencing operation, those waiting lists will be virtually eliminated. Bed occupancy for the public will be increased by 37 per cent. Honourable members should remember that under the proposal public patients will enter a privately built and run hospital which will be under contract to provide priority access to all public patients, who will have a cast-iron guarantee of free and equal access to services.

The Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce and Industry has got right behind the decision of the hospital board, the medical staff and the steering committee to proceed with the privatisation proposal without compromise. The debate against this proposal has been virtually led by the local branch of the Australian Labor Party and members of the Teachers Federation. I admit that they have run a fairly good campaign, but it has been

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instigated to confuse the people, particularly the elderly. The anti-privatisation address by the Leader of the Opposition in Port Macquarie last Wednesday left a number of major questions unanswered. Why did it leave the questions unanswered? Its reason is that he does not know the answers; he is endeavouring to pinch votes. The Leader of the Opposition says his party opposes privatisation. That is absolute rubbish. He conveniently forgot that his party, when in government, was first to introduce the contracting of services for private hospitals. His Government was the first to hand public hospitals over to the private sector - and we heard what the Minister said about the former Labor Minister, Ron Mulock.

The Leader of the Opposition also proudly told the press club recently about the private sector contract to build the harbour tunnel, when he was a Minister in the Wran-Unsworth Government. Now he says Labor is against privatisation. He just says whatever suits him. He tries to score a political point at every opportunity. As was also mentioned by the Minister, the Labor governments in Victoria and South Australia are already involved with hospital privatisation projects. The Prime Minister, Paul Keating, says that privatisation is the way to go in the future. We have an Opposition leader in

New South Wales living in the past. Members of the New South Wales Opposition cannot agree on policies among themselves; how does the Opposition expect to be able to form any effective policy if it ever gets to sit on this side of the House - heaven forbid that that should happen? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says one thing; his leader says another. They are too busy contradicting each other to form any concrete proposals on health care for the people of New South Wales. The editorial in the *Port Macquarie News* today says it all. It reads:

It is not the independents who have to make the hard policy decisions concerning State issues. It is not the independents who have to find the money to pay for services and facilities - it is the government. If the independents are able to place stumbling blocks before the government on the Port Macquarie base hospital issue it is not them who will go without a new hospital.

From the sidelines and from opposition it is easy to say the government can find the funds to construct the new hospital. But the government has no funds and as the cost of capital works increases it is unlikely that the situation will drastically improve in the short term.

[Time expired]

Dr REFSHAUGE (Marrickville - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.51]: I welcome the debate introduced by the honourable member for South Coast, and I certainly support his contribution. I welcome the contribution by the Minister, who has tried hard to explain the logic of his decision making. I believe that has contributed to the debate. The honourable member for Manly has added to the debate from his own personal experience of working in both the public and private sectors. I hope other speakers will add to the debate and not try to score political points from it. The privatisation issues must be cleared up. It is not a matter of who builds the hospital. The Labor Party has never opposed private sector involvement in construction. The Minister has posed the question: where is the money to come from? The Opposition does not mind if Fletcher Jennings builds a hospital. That has never been our concern. If the Minister says he does not mind where the money comes from, why did he not accept one of the proposals submitted by a number of construction companies to build the hospital? The Opposition is prepared to lease back that hospital. What the Opposition is concerned with is the control of health services, because privatisation means the loss of control of costs; the loss of control of planning; the loss of control of quality assurance; and the loss of the accountability that is so important in the health care system.

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Let me deal with the aspect of control of costs. The hospital at Port Macquarie at the moment charges between \$600 and \$605 a bed day. According to the board, the new hospital will be given, from taxpayers' money, \$890 a bed day. This has been denied by everybody else in the department, but the board is publicly saying that on advice from the department. The Government ought get its lines of communication right. On a simple calculation that is a \$12 million subsidy of public money to a private company to do something that the Government should be doing. The Opposition does not object to Fletcher Jennings owning the hospital. The Government must run it as a public enterprise. On the aspect of the control of costs also, let us look at what would happen in an election year in an electorate such as Port Macquarie - a marginal seat - after this issue was raised. Health Care of Australia might say to the Government that it cannot run the hospital on \$890 per bed day, or whatever the Government has agreed to so far, and that the figure needs to be \$1,500 per bed day. Which government could resist that sort of blackmail where it is told, "Give us more money or we close beds." Which government will be able to control those costs?

Microcosts must be taken into consideration as well. Suddenly a new surgeon is to join the staff of the hospital. Which surgeon will the company choose? Will the company choose a surgeon whose general operating procedures cost a lot of money, or will it choose a surgeon whose general operating procedures do not cost a lot of money? These companies are driven by the consideration of profit. The orthopaedic surgeons who are supposed to be performing hip replacement operations will not be appointed. Bad luck for the elderly, for whom we should be planning to provide services. In its contract the Government will not have absolute control to determine such matters. If the Government wants to make future changes to health care services, how locked in will it be to a particular number of beds? The Minister mentioned equity and access: equity between the public and the private; equity between public; equity between private; not equity between public and private.

Honourable members should look at the admission rates and who is to be admitted. Is the admission procedure already in place everywhere else going to be challenged in order to provide equity? Does the Government propose to provide freedom of choice for patients to go to another hospital - or only a hospital run by Health Care of Australia. What quality assurance were the people of New South Wales given in respect of Chelmsford? They were given very little. Some major changes have been made since then. The Opposition welcomes the announcement of the establishment of the new statutory authority - the complaints unit. Control in the private hospital sector is still not as great as that in the public hospital sector. I do not believe - because ways are found of getting around this time and again - that any contract will control that quality assurance that is required in the public hospitals and in our health care system. [*Time expired*]

Mr GREINER (Ku-ring-gai - Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs) [3.56]: I have been listening in my office with interest to this debate because I believe it is very important. Both the honourable member for South Coast and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition basically have a position and they then seek different arguments for their positions. I do not accept any of the four propositions stated in the motion as being remotely correct. In fact, I say to the honourable member for South Coast that I categorically reject the two items that deal with health care and the items that deal with governments of the States. I categorically reject them. They are wrong. They are wrong in fact and wrong in principle. Let me deal with them briefly, and then I will come back to the broader position. There is an assertion in the first part of the motion, which reads:

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Private ownership and management of public hospitals and community health services is misconceived and not in the interests of the citizens of New South Wales.

Quite clearly - this was spelt out by the Minister - it is fundamental to the interests of the people of New South Wales overall that there be a range of alternatives tried. There is absolutely no evidence that the Opposition can adduce on an apriori basis - which is what it is endeavouring to do before the Government tries it - that the interests of citizens will not be well served. The honourable member referred to Peter Baume. I took the trouble to call Peter Baume. Honourable member will be pleased to hear that Peter Baume supports the Government on this issue. He says that what the honourable member is trying to do is to confuse the question of goals with how those goals are achieved. He says it is a phoney debate about methods. That applies equally to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said. It is a phoney debate about methods. It is about goals.

It is about the capacity of the contract to achieve those goals. I suspect we have some common ground about what those goals ought to be.

The second item in the motion is in three parts. It says that privatisation of public hospitals will increase costs. That is simply not true. It is a factual inaccuracy. It is wrong, and there is absolutely nothing in what either the honourable member for South Coast or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said which in any way suggests that privatisation of public hospitals will increase costs. The notion that the system - which is clearly underfunded, and which everybody concedes is underfunded - would deliberately increase costs suggests, frankly, that all the people involved are somehow out of their minds. It would not increase costs. The honourable member made the point that privatisation will undermine a holistic community approach to health. I specifically asked Peter Baume, who has credibility in the community health area, about that matter. He said categorically that that is not a necessary conclusion and that it is a matter of how one goes about achieving it. Peter Baume is a professor of community health and a person of great credit. He does not accept that there will be an automatic undermining of an holistic approach to health. As I said privately to the honourable member for South Coast, it is a legitimate concern, but to suggest that this proposal would automatically undermine a holistic approach is wrong.

Much of the honourable member's speech was about the importance of primary health care. I could not agree more with most of what he said. However, he made a logical jump that is not there and that is totally unsupported when he suggested that somehow that relates to why this sort of approach should not be tried. The honourable member said, third, that privatisation would reduce the emphasis on primary health care. There is absolutely no justification for that assertion. Merely to say that primary health care is a good thing and to give examples of the good things done elsewhere in the State is no way to undermine the reason that that sort of approach is absolutely necessary if we are to try to maintain, much less improve, overall health quality. This issue is not only about Port Macquarie in the sense that we have a scarcity of resources; this is a way of getting more resources.

The third item in part says, "Privatisation of public health represents a significant shift of government commitment". The Government is not about privatising public health. It represents something like \$80 million - \$50 million when the private sector built it - of a \$2 billion backlog. The Government is not about privatising the system; that is beyond argument. The privatisation of Port Macquarie hospital is an incremental exercise, an option to try to reduce pressure. It is not about changing the system. I want to make that clear for the record. The same point about a fundamental shift of major proportion is made in item 4 of the motion. That assertion is nonsense. There is no

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fundamental shift of major proportion. The Government is trying to deliver a \$2 billion-plus program which it inherited from the Labor Party. The Government will not be able to deliver that program, and not one thing has been said by either Independent members or the Labor Party about any alternative to this approach. [*Time expired*]

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [4.2], in reply: A number of points deserve reply. The Minister for Health Services Management underestimated me when he said that I was locked into the 1970s. The international, national and State principles that I quoted are operating in the 1990s, in 1992, and are approved. Some good work has been done in Port Macquarie in identifying the quality of different programs, the amount of service, the measurement of outcomes and monitoring procedures. By all means they could be applied to public health but not as part of a program of handing over health management

to the private sector. There are options. For example, a short-term alternative for Port Macquarie would be to provide interim demountable wards until 1997. I have no argument with improved efficiency. If private money must be used, it should be on a basis similar to renting office space. If the capital is used it may result in nothing at the other end, which is a problem forced upon the Government by the Loan Council guidelines. Private ownership, with its style of management and drive for profit, will, of its very nature, undermine service delivery.

The Minister spoke about access, equity and quality, yet the Government wishes to experiment in the Hastings Valley in a climate that will guarantee monopoly. That is because the proposed developers are also involved in the retirement industry in that area and there will not be any alternative except monopoly. Under a contract system they will take over the whole of the hospital system and the community health system. They already control the private hospital system. If the Government is to carry out that experiment, to which I would not agree, it should do so in the inner city area where the people have an alternative. It should not do so in a country town where there is no alternative. That would provide an inbuilt recipe for exerting influence on business people, doctors, nurses and health professionals in that area. Contracting has its place. I have no objection to hiring beds from St Vincent's, Lismore, to visiting medical officers or to food delivery services, but not when they determine or influence policy.

I understand the nature of these contracts. I have read the booklets that were given to me. The Minister adopted the carrot and stick approach with me: if he gives me the money I want and for stage B of the Shoalhaven hospital I ought to support this program. I certainly will not be bribed and sell out my interest in public health to the private sector. The Minister has missed the point. The heart of a community cannot be written into a privatised health system contract. That is the key to the whole debate, and I have tried to keep the debate at that level. The Minister spoke about community support in Port Macquarie. He should speak frankly to the medical staff, the council and the hospital board. They will support privatisation only because they can see no alternative and, to be fair, they do see some controls and quality in the delivery of services. If given an alternative they would wholeheartedly support the public hospital system. Except for a few shire councillors and perhaps 20 per cent of the population, everyone in that community supports the public provision of health services. The Government has given them a Father Christmas option. If free beer were served in every ward every Sunday there would be no trouble having that written into the contract.

Health Care of Australia knows that it has its foot in the door to a multi-million dollar industry. It will provide a good service at Port Macquarie and the Minister will be able to use Port Macquarie as a shining example. But he wants to do that in the next few weeks without any in-depth public consultation. The Minister spoke about public

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consultation and said that he spoke to the hospital board, the medical staff council and the local council. He did not hold public meetings or a series of forums. No education program has been offered and there has been no involvement of the community. The Minister should seek the views from numerous groups that work in the community health sphere. He should speak to the Minister for Health and Community Services, because there is no doubt that that Minister is looking at an eventual investment of \$1.5 billion.

Mr Phillips: It is still a small percentage of the total.

Mr HATTON: I do not regard that as a small percentage. Community consultation at Port Macquarie was grossly inadequate and the decision to privatise was made quickly, because the Minister had to keep a commitment that had been made to the

community. Why have I received letters from 50 nurses and other people in that community? The fact is that time constraints prevented in-depth consultation and the Minister is up-front in saying that. The Minister said also that pressure on capital - and I understand why it is so urgent to the Government - will prevent the necessary performance evaluation over the years before other public hospitals and community health services are swallowed up. I understand the loan council constraints; that matter should be taken up with the Federal Government. As the honourable member for Manly said, we ought to look at the eventual costs to the Federal Government if a number of States privatise public health facilities. The guidelines should be examined to see what can be done for health as a core service which should remain in public ownership and under public control.

It is said that the contract concerns community health. The contract covers building, electricity and cleaning, and there is a budget flexibility mix which will allow the community advisory committee to have a big input into the sorts of services delivered. But how representative of the community is the committee? Will the situation be similar to that of the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company, which was to have a separate board for the building society when it took over a 100 per cent share. I said, "You are going to have a separate board, but is it not true that you will have a veto?". Those involved put their heads under their arms and said, "Yes, we will have a veto". Can anybody tell me that some cost control pressure will not be applied in this instance? There will be a loss of public health ethos.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Health Services Management to order.

Mr HATTON: The ethos will be eroded over the period of the 20-year contract. I do not want to give any impression other than that I am impressed with the doctors, the board and the communities that I spoke with. They are driven by a proper motive, but they have been bludgeoned because they know that although both sides have promised them hospitals, they have very little chance of getting them within the next five years. They have reluctantly accepted this alternative. That reluctance should never be overlooked. I was told that there is no profit for this consortium in having public patients and in having private patients who will pay \$280-plus fees, lifting their income to \$400 per day; that that is not an incentive for people to be encouraged to become private patients.

Nowra has a public hospital and a private hospital. There is very real pressure from some doctors in Nowra to take people out of the public hospital system and into the private system. The public and private services are not found in the one building; beds

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are not hired out to the public. The Premier says that this is an important debate and that there is no evidence of pressure. He should do some reading, as I have done, of evidence throughout the world of primary health care costs. He says that Professor Baume said that this is a phoney debate. I would like to discuss that with Professor Baume, for whom I have a great deal of respect. Of course there will be increased costs. The State will pay for the capital, the interest, the profit on the capital and the profit on services, but it will be over a longer period. This will undermine the provision of community health services. We will pay, and we will lose. Such changes will cost a lot of money. That disappoints me.

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr Anderson
Mr A. S. Aquilina
Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
Mr Carr
Mr Clough
Mr Crittenden
Mr Face
Mr Gaudry
Mr Gibson
Mrs Grusovin
Mr Harrison
Mr Hatton
Mr Hunter

Mr Iemma
Mr Irwin
Mr Knight
Mr Knowles
Mr Langton
Mrs Lo Po'
Mr McBride
Dr Macdonald
Mr Markham
Mr Martin
Dr Metherell
Mr Mills
Ms Moore
Mr Moss
Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Nagle

Mr Neilly
Mr Newman
Mr E. T. Page
Mr Price
Dr Refshauge
Mr Rogan
Mr Rumble
Mr Shedden
Mr Sullivan
Mr Thompson
Mr Whelan
Mr Yeadon
Mr Ziolkowski
Tellers,
Mr Beckroge
Mr Davoren

Noes, 44

Mr Armstrong
Mr Baird
Mr Blackmore
Mr Causley
Mr Chappell
Mrs Chikarovski
Mr Cochran
Mr Collins
Mr Cruickshank
Mr Downy
Mr Fahey
Mr Fraser
Mr Glachan
Mr Griffiths
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Mr Merton
Mr Moore
Mr Morris
Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Packard
Mr D. L. Page
Mr Peacocke
Mr Petch
Mr Phillips
Mr Photios
Mr Rixon

Mr Schipp
Mr Schultz
Mr Small
Mr Smiles
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
Mr Tink
Mr Turner
Mr West
Mr Windsor
Mr Yabsley
Mr Zammit
Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Mr McManus
Ms Nori
Mr Scully

Mrs Cohen
Mr Greiner
Ms Machin

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Third Day's Debate

Debate resumed from 17th March.

Mrs LO PO' (Penrith) [4.20]: I listened to the Premier's speech with interest to hear what he had planned for the western suburbs of Sydney - my area. I did not detect any attention being given to the fastest growing area in the State. The Premier waxed lyrical about the initiatives in major parliamentary and constitutional reform, streamlining the public service, the reform of local government, and plain English parliamentary standing orders - but these are not great priorities in the Penrith electorate. Since the Government took office in 1988, the greater western suburbs of Sydney - and the Penrith area in particular - have not been given services or infrastructure commensurate with the rates and taxes that the residents of those areas pay. What the Penrith area has received from the Government is a gaol, two garbage dumps - one which was not proceeded with because of community outcry and one which the Government is hellbent on proceeding with - and a tollway.

Penrith city is one of the few areas in the State to shoulder such a huge responsibility. It has three gaols, a toxic liquid waste dump, and five other commercial dumps. It has given over its sand, gravel and clay to Sydney's building needs, leaving huge craters which need special environmental attention, and ultimately this area will be near an airport. One would expect that after our residents have shouldered such huge responsibilities the Government would be prepared to give back to them a better quality of life. Instead, the Penrith area is being used as a repository for housing. Money is not being provided for sorely needed job opportunities, expanded health services, environmental enhancement and transport needs. At a recent Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils conference on western Sydney's growth the opening address was made by the director of environmental planning for Penrith City Council, Mr Bruce McDonald. He said:

Today, more vigorously than before, the value and wisdom of Sydney growing by adding more of the same to its edges is being questioned. These questions are being asked by a society very concerned with maintaining and improving its quality of life and its lifestyle, one concerned with the welfare of the environment; and one increasingly prepared to argue in support of its various positions.

Some are asking is the impact on our environment, on the quality of our air, on the quality of our river and streams, the damage to our bushlands, any longer justifiable? Has the price of continuing to develop in western Sydney become too high when its effect on our

environment is accounted?

Others are asking, as we use up our existing assets, as we are forced to develop in areas increasingly remote from existing assets of railway lines, roads and established urban centres, whether we can continue to provide accommodation to those people who have traditionally chosen

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to live in western Sydney at prices they can afford. Is development of western Sydney an affordable or economically rational urban development option any longer?

Still others question the equity of this form of growth and argue that people living at the fringe do not receive their fair share of services, for example health service and public transport, when perversely their needs are greater than others living in more established areas.

Is it fair that people should spend hours of their day driving to their work at the price of not being with their families and not being able to contribute to their communities or not have leisure time to do those things they enjoy? Is it fair that the cost of getting to work is probably highest for those least able to afford it?

Questions are being asked too whether in environmental terms that journey to work can be justified given emerging evidence that it is contributing to the pollution of the air. The very air in which we are proposing to settle more people and to build new communities.

These are relevant questions. They deserve a response. Many argue with some force that together they justify stemming or at least delaying further development in western Sydney until they are answered.

But that proposition in itself raises new questions. If we are not to continue to accommodate the growth of Sydney and its fringes, how else do we deal with it? Do we direct it away from Sydney and, if so, would we simply repeat the problems somewhere else? Alternatively, can we stem the growth of Sydney's population and in so doing remove the need for settlement at its fringe? Or can we indeed manage the process in a different and better way so that the difficult outcomes are avoided?

By contemplating those three points, it can be appreciated that Sydney growing at its edges is nothing new. It is the very story of Sydney since World War II and I dare say earlier. Growth of Sydney at its edges is not the product of any one government, political philosophy, or planning phenomenon with its own momentum. It is a phenomenon which has been influenced or organised to some extent at its margin, but one which has a power that makes it hard to otherwise influence. A power which will make it very difficult to stop, if indeed we should choose to do so.

That speech was followed by a contribution by the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy, who said in part:

Councils involved in the urban development program, the UDP, which includes most of the western Sydney councils, have taken a major share of Sydney's recent growth.

The figure is something like 70 per cent over the past ten years.

The growth of the UDP local government areas indicates that Sydney's recent growth has been reflected in the expansion of the urban fringe. When we think about Sydney growing we think of the suburbs in the west. Suburbs too often removed from public transport, employment, and the vitality of urban life. This is not what Sydney's growth has to mean.

What this boils down to is that the residents of western Sydney are questioning how much

more unsupported development can be sustained. Even the Minister says that what has happened in the past with houses being built without infrastructure is not the way growth should occur. Yet the Premier made no mention in his speech of the Government's support for residents of western Sydney in the way that they are handling problems associated with immense growth. The Government has to lift its game with regard to how it treats western Sydney. What is needed is dollars to clean up both air and water pollution. We have heard talk about air quality. I note that the Government has set up a monitoring service, and that is commendable. But the Government does not understand that the quality of our air in Penrith is work-related. Because we do not have real equal opportunity for jobs in the western suburbs, 67 per cent of workers travel by car to their places of employment. It is obvious that while ever there is a need for so many to leave the area and to move across the Penrith area by car we will have a pollution problem.

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We do not need a monitoring service to tell us that. The Premier promised, and I am quoting from his speech:

Legislative proposals in the roads and transport area will include measures introduced last week to reform the driver instruction industry flowing from the recommendations by ICAC.

There was nothing about better transport in western Sydney. Transport, or lack of it, is a problem for many residents. The only public transport that exists is a train service. Of course, there are private bus runs, although not in all areas. Given the shortsightedness of the new timetable, which has caused workers to spend more time uncomfortably on trains, we now must consider that our transport system is worse than before. What is needed is better bus and train co-ordination. In 1988 I presented the present Minister for Transport with recommendations from a committee to examine transport needs of women in western Sydney. We discovered that all members of the community were affected by the lack of efficient and effective transport links. A recommendation of the committee was the setting up of local transport boards, much like the commuters councils but with a wider brief to cover bus and train co-ordination. The board would comprise a local transport co-ordinator, local council representatives, a community transport co-ordinator, bus and coach association representatives, and State Transit Authority and transport administration representatives. This recommendation, along with the other 45 recommendations, was ignored.

Until a local group focuses on local transport needs governments will continue to get away with the ad hockery they now practice. Roads are extremely important in electorates such as Penrith; yet there has been no major road funding in the Penrith electorate since 1989. The Federal Government has provided \$7.4 million to continue the F4 Freeway from Emu Plains to Lapstone. Mulgoa Road and The Northern Road are vital road links in Penrith and are in need of funding. Although this Government pretends to be concerned about western Sydney, it does not deliver many positives. The Northern Road was being restructured until this Government became involved in the quagmire of Eastern Creek. The road plant was hijacked to Eastern Creek in 1989 and nothing has been done on the road since. It is time this Government put its money where its mouth is.

The need for more money for health services is also crucial. Every local politician in western Sydney can relate stories of people being ignored, being sent away or spending uncomfortable hours in casualty departments of hospitals. The staff work very hard but more money is needed to provide more staff. Because this Government is not providing enough funds for the growing population people's needs are not being met. Penrith has come a long way since it was founded in 1818 and named by Governor Macquarie after the town in Cumberland, England. In 1948 Penrith boasted 63 houses

and 291 people. Today the extended Penrith region has a population of around 277,000 and it is growing at the rate of 2 per cent per annum - twice the rate of any other region in Sydney. Population estimates by the Urbec study in 1989 for the New South Wales Department of Environment and Planning predicted that in 1995, 308,000 people will live in the Penrith region. It is estimated that more than 12,000 lots of residential land could be released by 1993.

Penrith is a young people's city: 50 per cent more Penrith residents are under 19 years of age than the Sydney average. The expansion of the University of Western Sydney is expected to give added impetus to regional growth. Penrith is the fastest
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growing region in Sydney. Yet we have a Government lacking in vision, a Government which cannot recognise the growth pattern of this major area. This Government has looked at the Nepean Hospital grounds, seen a parcel of five acres of land and, without acknowledging the enormous growth rate in the area, has asked for expressions of interest from the private sector to develop the land. This is a quick fix for money. Already there has been a proposal to build 250 strata title units, motel rooms, a restaurant and convenience store, and another proposal to relocate a private hospital that does nothing different from the publicly owned Nepean Hospital. This land belongs to the people of Penrith. It costs the Government nothing to leave it for the future. Westmead hospital had to be built because Parramatta hospital had no land left. The local private hospital has no land left and that is why it is thinking of relocating on the public land at Nepean Hospital. The Government wants to compound its error and make provision of public health services for the future almost impossible. Instead of truncating its ability to deliver proper services to the residents of Penrith, the Government should be earmarking not only the spare land at Nepean Hospital but other land as well to ensure that public health services can be delivered to the residents. Not only does this Government lack vision regarding health services; it lacks vision with regard to education services. A current document from the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils states:

In 1988 Western Sydney lost more than 350 teachers, producing an explosion in class sizes and the number of composite classes. In the Department of Education's Metropolitan West Region, for instance, composite classes increased by 135.

This does not mean there are only 135; it means there are 135 more than there were. The document continues:

This represented a 39 per cent increase, much higher than the State average of 28 per cent.

The greatest problem facing the region's schools is a shortage of teachers, particularly in mathematics and science. It is projected that by 1995 there will be a teacher shortfall in Western Sydney of 305 positions. This will include 65 vacancies in each of science and maths. The enrolment increases arising from the recession have placed new pressures on vocational courses. Yet these other approved studies were the courses most harshly reduced in 1989. The Premier said, "My Government's priorities are to develop a training system that is responsive to industry needs and emphasises competence in the workplace in line with national developments in curriculum and accreditation reform". Yet what do we see? Reductions in TAFE placements are also restricting the region's labour force skills. Because of Government cuts and maladministration, enrolments in Western Sydney colleges have fallen from 55,920 in 1988 to 39,747 in 1991, a 33 per cent reduction. This appalling decline needs to be reversed as a State Government priority. As the Leader of the Opposition, Bob Carr, said earlier, there is a great gap between rhetoric and action.

Western Sydney is also being targeted as a dumping ground for the city's waste. Until this Government comes to grips with recycling and pushes the issue higher on its agenda the Penrith area will always be under threat of being dumped on. The people of Penrith showed their outrage at the prospect of having the largest dump in the southern hemisphere dumped on them. The proposal was for a dump the area of 241 football fields, six storeys high, and eight metres into the water table - and all of this three kilometres from the already polluted Nepean River. Now it is proposed that there be a three-storey high dump covering the toxic liquid waste depot. The pressure will cause the liquid which already seeps out to seep out even more and spread further. The answer is to minimise waste by making recycling a high priority. Technocrats have been sent

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overseas many times to investigate state-of-the-art technology, still we are using primitive holes in the ground, or stacking on top of holes in the ground, as our most up-to-date method. We have learned nothing in 204 years. Governor Phillip probably buried his garbage - what little there was of it. The Penrith Council had a visit from a Brisbane company which changes garbage to road base and materials that resemble wood of all types - strong, and in some cases highly veneered. If we are ever to overcome our garbage problem, we must begin to take this new technology seriously. If this Government persists in using greater Western Sydney as its dump, the results will be predictable. Mr Speaker, finally I would like to talk about the Nepean River which runs through my electorate and your electorate. Everyone recognises that there is now an urgent need to manage the resources of the catchment in an ecologically sustainable way. Dr David Hughes from the Coalition of Hawkesbury and Nepean Groups for the Environment Incorporated said:

As the problems of air and water quality, and land degradation have become more critical in the Nepean-Hawkesbury River catchment, public awareness and concern has arisen over the potentially devastating effects of uncontrolled urban growth on the river basin environment. There is now an urgent need to manage the resources of the catchment in an ecologically sustainable way.

The Nepean-Hawkesbury is one of the most over-governed catchments in New South Wales. But each of the 15 state government departments and 13 local government councils has its own defined role, and makes its decisions largely in isolation. As an example of this: two state government departments currently propose to house another one million people in the catchment; in spite of the cumulative impact this will have on already stressed air and water systems.

A river catchment is tied together by the water cycle, making it vital that it be managed as a whole. Legislation is needed NOW to shift priorities from development to environmental protection; from fragmented responsibilities to coordinated management; from vested interests to expert, impartial decision making.

People in the outer areas of Sydney are desperately waiting for something serious to be done about the Nepean River. It is a beautiful river that offers many recreational avenues to people. However, the extent of the pollution of the river is such that it is becoming a danger to the community. Environmentalists are extremely concerned that the Government has set up a trust for the Nepean River which has absolutely no power - virtually gives all of its power to the Department of Housing and the Department of Planning. There is deep concern that the trust will not service the river well at all. Environmentalists are hoping that the mess of the trust for the river can be sorted out. I conclude by saying that until this Government takes seriously the needs of the rapidly growing area of Penrith and the western suburbs - an area with the largest growth rate in this State - and provides it with the necessary infrastructure and services, it cannot expect

anything but disdain from the people of the western suburbs. It is very easy for me to talk about what we do not get from this Government; it is very difficult for me to talk about what we do get. I reiterate that the most important things we have been given by this Government in the past four years are: a gaol, which we did not want; two dumps, which we do not want; and a tollway, for which we are about to refuse to pay.

Mr RIXON (Lismore) [4.40]: I too desire to express my thanks to Her Majesty for her Speech and affirm my sincere allegiance to her as our Queen. I shall continue to try to advance the best interests of all sections of my community. Given that in April 1991 the unemployment rate in New South Wales was 8.5 per cent and 15.2 per cent in the Richmond Tweed area, honourable members can begin to understand what is needed by the people of my electorate by way of services. In September 1991, 11,226 people were unemployed in the Richmond Tweed area. For the 25 and under age group, the unemployment rate was 30 per cent. The region has the fastest growing population of

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any area in New South Wales. I express thanks for the work that such organisations as St Vincent de Paul Society, Lifeline, the Salvation Army, neighbourhood centres, and the soup kitchens do for the people of my electorate. Home care and other community services are greatly appreciated. If we are to solve the unemployment problem in our part of the world and reduce the associated social problems, we must create, initially, 11,226 new jobs for those who are presently unemployed. In addition, we must create many more jobs if we are to cater for the growing population. I am pleased that the State Government has seen fit to establish business advice centres in Lismore and Casino. These centres have encouraged new businesses into the area. They have encouraged people to set up their own businesses and have preserved jobs in existing businesses by helping them to manage better. I am pleased also that the Northern Rivers Development Board has been established to try to encourage development in the area.

I wish to now refer to what the State Government has done for Casino. The Government has helped establish major sewage extensions; a distant education centre; and a business advice centre. It has provided a rural counsellor to assist farmers during the time of the recession and it has spent quite large amounts on sport and recreation from capital assistance funds. The Government is in the process of modernising the railway station so that area will have a modern transit and travel centre. The Government has built new classrooms at Casino West Public School. Spending on roadworks in Casino has more than doubled in the past four years, housing has continued to be developed, with new projects springing up all the time. The Government has built a new community centre in Casino. As another first in the region, a young mothers' housing facility has been established. Honourable members can see what the State Government has done to try to stimulate and assist the economy of Casino. In contrast, what has the Federal Government done? It set up a new Department of Social Security office so that it can hand out the job search allowance - so it can pass out the dole. The Federal Government, which caused the recession and put so many people out of work, has opened a new dole office in Casino.

If people are to overcome the problem of unemployment, they need to be given the best possible education. I am pleased that in my electorate - new schools have been built at Leeville, and Barkers Vale and new classroom blocks provided at Casino West. I will continue to work towards having a new school constructed at Kyogle and at Nimbin. With regard to education, there has been a vast increase in maintenance funding for schools in my electorate. We have at last caught up the great backlog left by the previous Labor Government. The previous Government managed to allocate funds only to Labor electorates; it completely ignored the North Coast. I am pleased also about the resources by way of computers and other facilities which have been placed in schools.

New courses such as the staying on courses have been established and are operating very successfully in the circle of towns comprising Casino, Kyogle, Woodenbong and Bonalbo. Joint schools and technical and further education courses are being developed for the benefit of students in our area. The State Government continues to assist with the provision of bus travel. The transport office in Newcastle is very approachable and is doing everything possible to ensure that adequate bus transport services are provided for children in remote areas.

For many years Lismore, especially, has lacked a decent technical and further education facility. The town has vastly outgrown the existing facility. There have been endeavours since 1960 to have a new TAFE college built in Lismore. At last something

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is happening. A new regional college will be built at Wollongbar, and that will relieve the situation in Lismore. It will give our students access to a wider range of courses and vocations. I hope that this development continues. In Casino technical and further education land adjoins the abattoirs. I would like to see more courses introduced into the TAFE college at Casino - such as food technology courses - especially with the assistance of the management of the Casino abattoirs. At the same time, such courses as automotive mechanics should be maintained. One of the big achievements of the State Government has been the establishment in my electorate the University of New England, Northern Rivers. For too long students in my electorate have not had the real opportunity of full-time tertiary education; the cost of travelling to Armidale, Sydney or elsewhere was too great for families to meet. Lismore now has one of the best universities in the country. The staff are making sure that the courses are top notch and will serve the people of our area in a way which will benefit them in their efforts to gain employment.

A sign of the advanced thinking of that university is the way in which it has joined with the local TAFE to negotiate joint accreditations. The time is fast approaching when students in high schools will be able to undertake courses which will gain accreditation in TAFE. They will then be able to undertake courses which will gain accreditation in universities and thus move on to obtain degrees. It is not surprising that the University of New England has one of the best reputations in the academic world. The old brick building in Keen Street is also of interest. In the past it has been used as a primary school, a secondary school, a teachers' college, a college of advanced education, a university, and is now being used by the Conservatorium of Music to enable students of the district to learn all styles of music to an advanced level. It is great to see that old brick building being used for such a valuable purpose. However, I am concerned that the building will become inadequate for that purpose, and I would like efforts to be made to house the conservatorium in a more permanent and purpose-built structure. The building is fast beginning to show signs of age, with cracks and similar decay faults developing.

One of the other big gains for the Lismore electorate has been the Government's effort to house the growing population. The Lismore electorate has more than 1,000 units of public accommodation and the Government intends to build as many additional units as possible. An estimated \$6 million worth of public housing is in the planning and construction stages. The Fisher Street development in Goonellabah, which should produce between 100 and 150 new housing sites, will be of great benefit to the area. Honourable members should remember that the population in the Lismore electorate has grown so rapidly that housing construction simply cannot keep pace with population growth. Anything that can be done to increase housing in the electorate is most important. That is why the HomeFund scheme has been so dramatically successful. It has enabled many people in the electorate to buy their own homes. Though some people have suffered hardship because of the recession that Paul Keating said we had to have, and job

losses have caused problems for some who bought their houses through the HomeFund scheme, banks and other institutions, I am pleased that the State Government has initiated mortgage relief and other programs to try to assist those people in their time of need.

Health care is very important, no matter where the recipients live. It is important that my electorate, which is so far from Sydney, has top-flight health care facilities. I welcome the recent announcement of the provision of the \$4.5 million which is needed to complete the development of stage four of the Lismore Base Hospital. The hospital will then provide class five services in many areas of health care. It will also provide services which in the past people had to travel to Sydney to obtain. Lismore

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Base Hospital is networked with other hospitals in my electorate - Casino, Kyogle and Coraki. The people of the area derive great benefit from those hospitals working with Lismore Base Hospital and, of course, with St Vincent's Hospital. The small community hospital in Nimbin is of some concern in that it is a wooden building which needs upgrading. The sooner an improved community health facility is built in Nimbin, the better for the people of that area.

In the past few weeks an interesting problem has arisen at Lismore Base Hospital. It has been shown that there may be a shortfall of \$500,000 in recurrent funding to that hospital for the provision of much-needed services. The blame for a large part of the difficulty must be laid at the feet of the Commonwealth Government. Because of the recession fewer people in my electorate are taking out private health insurance. That means that payments coming through to hospitals from privately insured patients is falling. I have been told that the shortfall across the State is something of the order of \$70 million to \$80 million. The bill that was picked up in the past partly by the Federal Government is now being picked up wholly by the State Government. Costs have been blatantly transferred from the Federal Government to the State Government.

I am concerned also about law and order services within my electorate and throughout the State. A dedicated group of police officers is working from the Lismore police station, a building which is quite inadequate. At present the building accommodates more than 70 officers but it was built to house only half that number. The police station is overcrowded. I am pleased that the station is now on the priority list for reconstruction. In addition the court house at Lismore will be extended by the construction of three new courtrooms at an expected cost of between \$4 million and \$7 million. It is hoped that construction will start in the 1992-93 financial year. The building of those courtrooms will place an even greater stress on Lismore police station as its holding cells are used in conjunction with courtroom work. Prisoners are brought from places as far afield as Grafton and Queensland and held in the Lismore police station holding cells, which are completely inadequate. The prisoners are escorted to and from the court house. The inadequacy of the holding cells leads to additional police being tied up in cell supervision and escorting prisoners. Better quality holding cells are needed.

Consideration should perhaps also be given to constructing a gaol between Casino and Lismore. Such a gaol would greatly assist police, who at present are expected to transport prisoners between Grafton and Lismore. On occasions prisoners are transported to Lismore but because of court schedules, their hearings are not held until the following week and they are transported back to Grafton for the weekend and then back to Lismore. That involves a great waste of time and public money. I am pleased also that the court house in Casino has been repaired. It was an old building constructed in the early part of this century or towards the end of last century. It has now been fully renovated. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

The police station in Casino has now also been upgraded. Because my electorate is so close to the Queensland border and so far from Sydney, local roads have been scandalously neglected by past Labor Governments. I am pleased that in four years the Greiner-Murray Government has managed to more than double funding for roadworks in my electorate. Improvements to the Bruxner Highway are in progress at Goonellabah from the Rous road turn-off through to the next roundabout. They should be completed in the near future. Improvement will then be required from that section through to the Kadina Street High School. I will be asking the Government to do what it can to assist in the further development of the Bruxner Highway through Goonellabah.

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Another important road in my electorate is the Summerland Way. The Summerland Way is an alternative route from Sydney to Brisbane. It is shorter by 44 kilometres than the Pacific Highway route. It is shorter by 73 kilometres than the New England Highway. It is less congested. It is relatively flood free. There are fewer speed zone restrictions. There is only one steep climb between Grafton and Brisbane. This particular road could provide great economic benefit to New South Wales - and, indeed, benefit the economy of Australia - because of the reduction in costs. I bring this particular road to the attention of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads with a request that special attention be given to the allocation of 3 x 3 funds in the near future. Honourable members will note that the 6c per litre collected by the New South Wales Government is being applied to road improvements, in contrast to the way in which the Federal Government is applying such funds. The Federal Government is collecting in excess of 26c per litre and expending only a small proportion on roads.

With regard to the Summerland Way and the improvements which are necessary - especially that part of the road east of Mount Lindsay - if they cannot be fully funded from 3 x 3 money, perhaps the Minister could consider ways and means of funding these improvements by the establishment of a toll road in the area, or a joint government toll road. Any method of funding that particular road needs to be fully investigated, because of the economic benefits which would flow to the region. A considerable amount of work is already under way on that road, including the Fawcetts Creek bridge which is currently under planning and construction. All roads within my electorate need a vast increase in funding, and continual funding, if transport links are to be provided, which the economic development of that particular area requires. An important part of the transport network is the train service. The New South Wales State Government has spent a great deal in capital funds on signal renewal and modernisation; in track upgrading; and on laying concrete sleepers and establishing and stabilising the Sydney to Brisbane rail line.

In line with the improved XPT service which has been of great benefit to people on the North Coast - there has been station upgrading with the establishment of travel centres at both Casino and Lismore - approximately \$300,000 being spent in Casino and \$400,000 Lismore. It is pleasing for the people in my electorate, which is so far from Sydney, to note that freight volume on the State Rail Authority trains has increased by about 7 per cent. That has resulted in more trucks being taken off our roads, thereby assisting the roads in my electorate. It is proposed in the near future that sleeper cars will be introduced on the XPT, together with improved catering services and upgraded carriage interiors. Aeroplanes and aeroplane services are very important to an area so far from Sydney. There are three airports in close proximity to one another - in Casino, Lismore and Ballina. My constituents continue to make representations about the

service being provided between those areas and Sydney, asking that deregulation be introduced as soon as possible to enable improved services in and out of Lismore.

My electorate has recently recovered from one of the worst droughts this century. Those who have witnessed what happens during a drought, and the effects that a drought has on the economic base of a community, will appreciate just how important the dairy industry, beef cattle industry, grain crops, small crops and horticulture are to the region. When the drought began to affect those industries the people of the region suffered an even greater trauma in respect of their economic base. One of the most important primary industries of the region is the timber industry. Over 600 people are employed in that industry in my electorate. The timber industry has been operating in the region since the middle of the nineteenth century. Since the 1850s the industry has

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been taking timber from the forests. The forest at Long Creek has been harvested for over 100 years with the use of bullock teams, tractors, and a train line. In 1980-82 that particular forest was considered good enough to be included as a national park, even after that degree of harvesting; and later it was considered good enough to be placed in the world heritage listing.

A forest that is properly managed can be valuable for scientific, recreational and economic purposes. Our forests should not be put into compartments - with one designated a wilderness; another forest designated a national park; another forest designated a scientific area; and another forest set aside for timber. Those uses can exist in one forest quite successfully. If honourable members want to see the living proof of that they should go to the Long Creek-Terrace Creek area and see what has happened. The vast population growth on the North Coast has meant many people with new ideas, new business ideas, which have stimulated the economy and which are providing a new outlook. One such company is the RESHAPE company which is based in Nimbin. RESHAPE simply stands for Renewable Energy Small Heat and Power Equipment Pty Limited. It is a small company which started in Nimbin and which is now exporting renewable energy technology right across the Pacific. It is an indication that if the Government continues to provide the right type of economic base and gives the people of my electorate confidence that a Government really cares about the region, then there is a chance of developing the area and providing the jobs the people need.

The timber industry is a classic example of that. In my electorate at the moment there are people with guaranteed access to plantation timber. They have guaranteed markets. Yet, when they want to buy new technology to upgrade their factories, and they go to a bank, the bank simply says, "Oh, you are in the timber industry. You are a risky industry". That risk has been caused by some unknowing people who are destroying the confidence of the banks and the confidence of people in that industry, so that new investment is difficult to obtain because of that particular attitude. New South Wales needs a State government which creates investment confidence in new industries, new technology, et cetera, and thus provide jobs for the 11,226 unemployed people in the region. I am pleased to be part of a government which has recognised the needs of the far North Coast and which is doing everything possible to overcome the neglect which occurred in that area during the 12 years of the previous Labor Government.

Ms ALLAN (Blacktown) [5.10]: I wish to contribute to the Address-in-Reply debate to Her Majesty's Speech on the opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament on Thursday, 20th February. Her Majesty's visit to Australia in February this year was truly a significant occasion. Her visit generated probably more debate within the Australian community on the future of Australia's political system than any of her previous visits. Since 1954 Her Majesty has visited New South Wales on nine

occasions, and since that time we have had a positive political debate about the future of the Australian constitutional system. However, that debate should not overshadow the daily concerns that affect the many residents in my electorate of Blacktown and also the many residents of western Sydney generally. The issues of concern to the majority of my constituents are the bread and butter issues of health, transport, shelter, housing, flooding, education, the well-being of their children, children's services and the environment in which they live. They are the bread and butter issues that occupy the minds of the majority of residents in my electorate of Blacktown.

I note that in Her Majesty's Speech mention was made of the problems rural New South Wales has experienced with flooding. Anyone, including her Majesty, would not have to travel beyond the Sydney metropolitan area to encounter problems caused by

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major flood and stormwater damage. My electorate has experienced many floods since 1989, and unfortunately in recent times we have had repetitive major urban flooding problems. In the past six months two major storms in my electorate have resulted in enormous costs to the insurance industry and a great deal of personal suffering to many residents. Since I became a member of this House in 1988 the major local issue that I have raised has been the issue of urban flooding. Budgeree Road Toongabbie, which before redistribution was situated in my former electorate of Wentworthville, and which is now situated in the electorate of Blacktown, has major flooding problems. At long last various public authorities, including local councils and the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust, have recognised these problems.

In its report the trust identified Budgeree Road as the highest priority for funding from both the State and Federal governments. Despite that priority status given by the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust, a relatively non-partisan group, the State Government has not contributed the relevant funds. However, all has not been lost. I was interested to hear a number of members on the Government benches berate the Federal Government on its poor funding record in relation to issues that affect their constituents. Recently the Federal Government announced its intention to bypass the State Government, which has remained inert on the issue of providing the relative flood funding for Budgeree Road, and give the money directly to the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust to ensure that flood works will proceed. I have mixed feelings about the Federal Government's decision to proceed in this manner. On the one hand I am delighted for the residents that at long last the local Budgeree Road flooding project, more technically known as the Pennant Hills Creek flood mitigation project, will commence under the western Sydney drainage initiative, but on the other hand I am concerned that this long overdue decision will let the Greiner Government off the hook in providing the much-needed money from the western Sydney drainage initiative.

I note that my colleague the honourable member for Cabramatta also has similar flooding problems in his electorate. I presume that he, like other members who represent constituents in western Sydney, will be going cap in hand to the Federal Government for money to fund these vital flood works. If residents of western Sydney are to be given genuine relief, these flood works must be initiated as soon as possible. I seek an assurance from the State Government that it will continue its contribution to urban flood mitigation projects, as it has done in the past decade. My electorate has flood problems in Toongabbie Road, the Blacktown area itself, Greystanes, Pendle Hill and Girraween. Almost every suburb of my electorate has flooding problems and there is no indication of where the money will come from to solve those long-term problems. My constituents in the suburbs of Girraween, Pendle Hill and Old Toongabbie deserve special commendation for their efforts in dealing with storm damage in the past few months. If honourable members took the opportunity to drive through the reaches of my electorate

they would see many homes with tarpaulins for roofs. The houses lost their roofs through storm damage that occurred only a month ago. Some insurance companies have addressed the needs of my constituents quickly, and in particular I commend the National Roads and Motorists Association for the work it has done in the past few weeks, which is in contrast to its performance in 1988 and 1989 when major flooding occurred in my electorate. Since then the NRMA has got its act together and has recognised it has a major responsibility to its contributors in western Sydney and has improved its ability to service those people. This cannot be said for the GIO Australia. In recent weeks it has had a mixed performance in catering for the needs of people whose homes were affected by storm damage last month.

Flooding is not the only issue that is of concern to my electorate. I turn now to the topical issue of health. We have had much debate today about the need to consolidate and improve health services in all areas of the State, both metropolitan and

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rural New South Wales. I wish to place on record my concerns for Blacktown District Hospital. Since the establishment of the Westmead hospital complex, Blacktown District hospital has become a Cinderella, situated between the ever increasing Westmead hospital, Nepean Hospital, Penrith Hospital and Fairfield and Liverpool hospitals to the southwest. The Blacktown District Hospital is held in high esteem by many of my constituents, but in the past few months an increasing concern has been expressed about the quality and quantity of care made available at that hospital. I suggest to the coalition Government that it is not just a case of addressing the needs of hospitals in burgeoning new areas on the outskirts of western and southwestern Sydney. We cannot ignore the plight of hospitals such as Blacktown District Hospital. All reports have shown that Blacktown hospital needs a planned program involving the spending of perhaps \$60 million. At the present time the hospital is seeking a commitment from the Government that the implementation of that planned program will begin, perhaps with initial contributions of between \$5 million and \$6 million. The administration, workers and patients of Blacktown Hospital have now been waiting for at least 12 months for some commitment from the Government that resources will be made available.

My office has received an increasing number of complaints about services at the hospital. There is considerable concern within the community at present that no paediatric registrar is on duty every night during the hours of midnight to 8 a.m. There is now evidence that at least one day last week the services of a paediatric registrar were not available. Paediatric registrars are on call but, as Blacktown is an area of considerable growth, the Blacktown maternity section is very popular. If any services of that hospital needed to be maintained, it is those offered by paediatric registrars. There has been an increase in the number of criticisms made about the quality of food and treatment and the cleanliness of linen provided in that hospital. Those in leadership at that hospital are desperately trying to do the right thing for its patients and for the population of Blacktown, but the State Government is not committing to Blacktown hospital the resources which it claims have been made available through the closure or rationalisation of hospitals in the inner city or the eastern suburbs.

Services other than those provided by hospitals are important for community health. It is not the case that we need be concerned only about the resources available to major health institutions in our electorates. There is a severe shortage of community health services within my electorate. There is no respite care anywhere between Penrith and Auburn for parents of children with difficulties, either intellectual or physical. The planners within government and the public service have identified that there has been enormous growth on the outskirts of metropolitan Sydney and, therefore, that services need to be provided in those areas, yet there has been an enormous shortfall in the provision of resources to these identified areas. This is very short-sighted. Nearly a

quarter of a million people have settled on the perimeter of the northwest sector of Sydney, but we have a lack of resources for community health services at Blacktown hospital. I have heard the honourable member for The Hills refer to the importance of the Rouse Hill northwest sector development. Over the next decade the people located in that area will be looking towards Blacktown for hospitals and community health facilities for their immediate needs. If we are not providing the resources necessary to allow those needs to be fulfilled, the people located in that area will be very disenchanted.

One of the most vital services of concern to my electorate is road and rail transport. I note that my colleague the honourable member for Penrith has already

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referred to increasing community disaffection as the official launch by the Government of the tollgates on the F4 Freeway - they have already been constructed - comes closer. I do not want to talk ad nauseam about the F4, as I have said a lot about it in my time as the member for Wentworthville and now as the member for Blacktown. For the benefit of the House, I note that the nine kilometre missing link currently being constructed as part of the F4 Freeway is between Mays Hill and Prospect. It is virtually entirely within my electorate of Blacktown, and it is of considerable interest to my constituents. Many people within my electorate use the F4 to get to their workplace. People who do not have cars but who live in residential streets that might be seen as alternative traffic routes will suffer from having people use side roads to avoid either paying the toll or major traffic jams, many of which occur at the present time. The Minister for Health Services Management will be interested in what is happening in western Sydney at this time. The business community of western Sydney is opposing most vehemently the F4 toll. I refer the Minister to the editorial of the *Western Sydney Business Review*, dated 15th March, which has condemned the tollway strongly. For example, the editorial alleges that the economic prospects of western Sydney will be affected by the decision to have a toll. The editorial reads:

The F4 and proposed tollways for the southwest and northwest threaten to turn western Sydney, with the State's fastest growing and the nation's most dynamic commercial industrial area, into an economic backwater. The main danger of the toll road might lie in its psychological effect on the people of greater Sydney.

[*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The editorial continues:

The people will be reluctant to move in and out of the artificial barriers that will further split the rift already apparent between old Sydney and new Sydney. The long-term effects on companies considering relocation to western Sydney can only be wondered at. There are implications for the west's burgeoning tourism industry, its established manufacturing base, the future costs of doing business in a region surrounded by invisible barriers.

A relatively conservative group in western Sydney has condemned the State Government for its decision to impose the toll. As my colleague the honourable member for Penrith noted, in a few months' time we will see widespread civil disobedience by motorists arising from the imposition of that toll. People of western Sydney might find the F4 slightly more palatable if they felt that their other roads were getting the full economic benefit of the money that will flow back to the Government when the toll is introduced. Many roads within my electorate and the electorates of my colleagues desperately need State Government funding. Some roads within the commercial business district of Blacktown are still not properly sealed and certainly do not have kerbs and guttering. That is very embarrassing for the city of Blacktown. Unfortunately, it is very common

within the electorate.

Only this morning I had the opportunity to address a local public meeting mainly involving parents and young children. They were campaigning to have traffic lights installed at the intersection of Darcy Road and Binnalong Road at Pendle Hill. That intersection has been identified as a major black spot within my electorate. For many years there has been a major campaign to have the lights installed. We were pleased to find out this morning that the Federal Government will allocate \$80,000, the amount of money required, to the installation of those traffic lights. It is very important that the \$80,000 be spent before the end of the financial year because otherwise the money will be sitting around, which would be a waste; more importantly, it is of relevance that we do not want to see any more young children hit by vehicles at that intersection. People

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have been killed at that spot. We want the Roads and Traffic Authority, which is the responsibility of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads, to ensure that the \$80,000 made available by the Federal Government is spent. A number of other road issues are of importance to the Blacktown electorate. That electorate, rather than being a tightly knit community, consists of a number of smaller communities, one being the suburb of Greystanes. During the past three years the people of Greystanes have had to face an enormous flow of traffic and pressure caused by construction of the F4 toll road.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! It being 5.30 p.m., pursuant to sessional orders the debate is interrupted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PENSIONER COUNTRYLINK RAIL TRAVEL

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoyne) [5.30]: I draw the attention of the House to a problem faced by my constituents Mr and Mrs Baker, who are both 80 years of age and live in Drummoyne. Recently they attempted to book seats on the CountryLink bus to Wodonga and then on a train to Melbourne using their pensioner concession pass. Unfortunately, they were informed by State Rail Authority officers they could not use their concession passes during the daytime but must travel at night. All members would know there are no sleepers on interstate trains any more, due to this Government's constant bungling. Therefore, the State Rail Authority asked two 80-year-old pensioners to sit up all night without sleep. The public has come to expect such measures from this Government but to target the aged is outrageous.

All that this Government wants is to introduce revenue-producing and cost-saving measures. It has no regard for the consequences of its action. Owing to public pressure, the Minister for Transport was forced to withdraw his policy of banning all free travel by pensioners and other groups for 19 days of the year - which just happened to be during school holiday periods. Once the outcry by pensioners groups and others grew, the Premier quickly called the Minister to heel and rapped him over the knuckles, and the Minister hastily modified his plans. Is it any wonder that the public has no confidence in this Government? The Government gives the impression of promoting good services and conditions on public transport. The Government's catch cry of "Putting people first by managing better" does not stand the test of time when applied to the aged.

The action of the State Rail Authority is purely and simply pensioner bashing.

The Bakers did not seek to travel during school holidays, so there should not have been any problem at all. The Bakers were not depriving school children or families of seats on the bus or train. More importantly, the actions of the State Rail Authority have added considerably to the cost the Bakers would incur. If they had used their pensioner concession on the day journey, it would have cost them \$10 to the border and then a half fare concession from the border to Melbourne, at a cost of about \$75. By being refused a day ticket they were forced to pay \$170, which is an additional \$95. Furthermore, as their friends lived 30 miles out of Melbourne, they could only arrange to meet the Bakers in the evening, which was when the day trip concluded.

What is going on? Does the Government and the State Rail Authority management know what they are doing? On the one hand they say they will give, yet on Page 1271

the other hand they are denying pensioners their rights. The situation is a disgrace, with pensioners treated as second-class citizens and discriminated against. This Government has no hesitation in using any means at its disposal to gain revenue. This example is another of the latest moves in a long line of attacks on pensioner concessions, which have included doubling the price of pensioner excursion tickets, replacing Labor's initiative of two free annual rail trips with a \$10 charge for each trip, and removing sleeper services from interstate trains. What is in store for pensioners in the future? I predict more cuts to already diminished pensioner concessions. That certainly would be no surprise, given the Greiner Government's past record and current actions. This Government seems determined to make life harder for pensioners. I call upon the Minister to investigate this paltry action and do everything possible to provide daytime travel for aged people like Mr and Mrs Baker who are unable to use public transport without sleeper facilities on evening trips.

BLUE MOUNTAINS BUSHWALKER RESCUE

Mr MORRIS (Blue Mountains) [5.35]: I wish to speak about the number of bushwalkers who become lost in the Blue Mountains. Residents of the Blue Mountains live near a national park. Each year 2.5 million to 3 million tourists visit the area and tourism is a major part of the economy of the upper Blue Mountains. In the electorate are the Jenolan Caves, the Six Foot Track and other wonderful walking tracks, and white water rafting, which can be a dangerous activity, occurs on the Wollangambe River near Mt Wilson. Inquiries that I have made of police at Katoomba suggest that up to 100 incidents occur each year involving approximately 250 to 300 people being lost ranging from single rescues to the rescue of school groups. Those rescues require the services of police, bushfire volunteers and National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel. Some rescues can take three or four long days and nights, and paid staff are required for rescue co-ordination. Average yearly rescue costs range from \$350,000 to \$400,000. It is alarming that nine out of 10 people who go bushwalking are poorly equipped. An extract from a press release in the local paper stated:

Community groups such as the SES, police, NP&WS, and Bushwalkers Federation have had to spend many hours in the field because some people go off on ill-advised trips, badly prepared, and with no knowledge of the terrain they will be going through.

The Wollangambe River near Mt Wilson, the scene of many of the overdue trips, is a popular day trip -

The National Parks and Wildlife Service suggests that people walking into that area should let others know where they are going. The press release continues:

The river here forms a canyon (i.e. there are no banks), and travellers usually paddle through on rubber air beds. A great day out if you have a little experience, reasonable fitness, the right gear, and can navigate accurately.

Failure on any one of these requirements can, and often does, lead to disaster.

NPA has surveyed groups entering the canyons of Mt Wilson for a number of years and two clear trends emerge - more and more people are discovering canyoning, and many are not prepared adequately for weather changes that are normal at that altitude.

Mount Wilson is probably 3,800 feet above sea level. The press release continued:

NPA Blue Mountains urge all intending walkers, wherever they are walking, to make adequate preparations. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best and carry extra warm clothing and food even if it is a little heavier.

If walkers want to experience the beauty and grandeur of the canyons of the Blue Mountains, NPA urges them to join a recognised bushwalking club and go with people who have experience in this sort of terrain.

We realise many of the groups that get into trouble in the Mountains are not Mountains residents, but we the Mountains residents must take extra care not to become victims of complacency because we live in the Mountains and are more used to the variable conditions . . .

Remember, if restrictions or a booking system are introduced by a government tired of spending time, energy and money rescuing ill-prepared walkers, we will all have to live with the consequences.

I bring to the attention of the House and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism the need to seek a solution for this problem, perhaps in the form of a campaign to alert the bushwalking fraternity to their responsibilities not only to themselves but to those who risk life and limb during a rescue. That campaign may be by brochure or advertisements, but a solution must be found to the problem. Recently John Laws spoke on 2UE about a teacher and boys from a prominent school being lost twice within one week. It has gone past a joke, it is a matter of public importance, and I bring it to the notice of the House.

Mr YABSLEY (Vaucluse - Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism) [5.38]: The honourable member for Blue Mountains has made a very worthwhile suggestion about those who go bushwalking within his electorate. I believe that there is scope to refer to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Police Service and State Emergency Service the suggestions made. I shall ensure that his comments are conveyed to respective Ministers and I am sure they will receive every consideration.

UNANDERRA ROUNDABOUT

Mr RUMBLE (Illawarra) [5.39]: I wish to speak about a proposed roundabout in the Illawarra electorate. According to the Roads and Traffic Authority budget figures issued to me when the last budget was brought down, \$60,000 was allocated in the 1991-92 3 x 3 road program allocation for the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Central Road and Nudjia Street at Unanderra. I made further inquiries and was informed by an officer of the Wollongong regional RTA office that \$60,000 had been allocated this financial year and that an additional \$24,000 will be allocated next

financial year. It is proposed that construction of a roundabout will be under way by the end of this financial year and that construction will be finalised early in the next financial year. He went on to say that it was expected that as at 30th June, 1992, three-quarters of the roundabout would be constructed with the \$60,000 provided. In November I received a letter from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads stating that the design of the most suitable roundabout at the location was the subject of ongoing discussions between the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Wollongong City Council. The letter also stated:

I understand that a final decision has yet to be made in this regard.

Until such time as the design is completed to the stage where requirements for utility adjustments and land acquisitions can be determined, it is not possible to advise a reliable total cost for the project.

I have recently been advised through an officer of Wollongong City Council that the RTA has no money to do the work on the roundabout. The officer confirmed that the design
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plan had been finalised back in October 1991. I was informed that the basis of the allocation of funds is a cost-benefit analysis which takes into account the accident history. I bring to the attention of the House that the RTA was allocated money for the project in the Budget. There was some concern that design plans had not been finalised and that seemed to be the hitch. I am stating that the design plans had been finalised. I was informed of that on 3rd October, 1991, by Wollongong City Council and we are approaching the end of the financial year. The \$60,000 was earmarked for this project but I am now informed that the money is for feasibility studies and this type of thing. The intersection has the Unanderra Hotel on one corner and diagonally opposite the largest Leagues club in the Illawarra region, the Western Suburbs Leagues Club. The intersection is very busy. If the \$60,000 is not spent on the intersection the money could be lost. I brought this to the attention of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads earlier in the day. The money should be spent on this most worthwhile cause, the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Central Road and Nudjia Street, Unanderra.

POTATO CYST NEMATODE

Mr FRASER (Coffs Harbour) [5.44]: I draw to the attention of the House a problem concerning the potato growing community in the Dorrigo and Bellingen area. As many people would be well aware, at the moment Dorrigo is having great financial difficulty because of the lack of ready timber resources to be cut in the area. People are relying strongly on agricultural industries. The nature of farming on the Dorrigo plateau is small cropping, beef cattle and dairying. The potato crop is worth \$5 million to \$6 million per annum to Dorrigo township and the Bellingen valley. There is a problem with a disease known as potato cyst nematode, which causes the plant to slow in growth, yellow, wilt and die back. Once the nematode attacks the plants there is no potato crop. The first outbreak of this disease in Australia was in 1986 in Fremantle, Western Australia. It quickly spread to South Australia and Victoria. People in my electorate - particularly Brian Sheridan, of Doust and Sons potato merchants in Dorrigo, and Alex Waugh, a potato grower in the Bellingen area who also has potatoes in the Dorrigo area - are concerned about the disease being carried in the soil. In Victoria quarantine restrictions have been applied to produce coming from Western Australia but it would appear that there is no such restriction on potatoes being imported to New South Wales from Victoria.

The retail industry often puts the argument that New South Wales does not produce enough potatoes to supply the demand in the State and therefore there is a need to import potatoes from Victoria. Potato cyst nematode, or golden cyst nematode as it is known, is carried in the soil. Some effort has been made to ensure that all potatoes imported from Victoria are brushed but it is possible that the nematode could be introduced quite innocently in a bag of potatoes imported to New South Wales. Someone could have a few potatoes that seed, put them into the garden and the nematode could spread to the potato crop across New South Wales. Mr Sheridan attended a Department of Agriculture conference on the subject in Orange in the past month. He has proposed a meeting with the Victorian growers' association and the Victorian Agriculture Department to ensure that all potatoes coming out of Victoria are washed rather than just brushed. There is also a concern that if this is not done the disease could ruin a crop that is worth \$56 million a year to New South Wales farmers. Quarantine zones of between five and 20 kilometres are in place in Victoria. No potatoes are allowed outside the areas. It has been suggested that not all farmers are informing the department that the disease is present in their crop.

The worst aspect of the disease is that after the plant dies the nematode remains

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in the soil. It may be localised to three or four square metres around the plant but ploughing of the paddock can spread the nematode across the field to affect next year's crop. The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs should take stronger measures to ensure that this industry, which is worth \$56 million to New South Wales, and \$5 million to \$6 million in Dorriggo and Bellingen, is not disadvantaged by the introduction of the nematode, however innocently it may occur. Strict guidelines should be introduced and potatoes should be washed. Perhaps in the long term we should encourage greater potato production in New South Wales so that we do not have to rely on the importation of potatoes from Victoria or other States. [*Time expired*]

SWANSEA BENDS DEVIATION

Mr BOWMAN (Swansea) [5.49]: I grieve this evening about the road death of a 17 year-old girl, which occurred in my electorate of Swansea on Saturday evening. Other people in the car were injured but not seriously hurt. Apart from the normal grief that is felt by the friends and relatives of this young woman, it is felt that there is a lack of sufficient allocation of road funds to make such tragic occurrences much less likely. I do not pretend for a moment that if we had the very best roads in the world there would be no road accidents or that people travelling in cars would be injured. The particular road concerned, Scenic Drive, Caves Beach, has been notorious for many years. Unfortunately, it is used by a great number of drivers to bypass the Swansea Bends. I am afraid that that will continue to happen; it cannot be prevented until the Swansea bends deviation is completed. I apologise for the very late notice that I gave the Deputy Premier and Minister for Roads and I thank him for his attendance at such short notice.

On Thursday evening preceding the fatal accident on Saturday night, there was another accident on Scenic Drive, Caves Beach, which, only by the grace of God, did not result in another fatality. A car rolled over about ten times as it fell down a bank and finally came to rest very near to where the accident was to occur on Saturday night. The upshot of these two occurrences has been that people in the electorate of Swansea, not only those who live nearby but those who traverse this road on some occasions, are grieving and are very concerned and anxious. They demand an acceleration of the roadworks in progress in the area to make such accidents that much less likely. I received an estimation from the Deputy Premier that the Swansea bends deviation will be finished by December 1992. When that deviation is completed, the Swansea bends will

be used only as a local road. Scenic Drive, Caves Beach, will become a local road as well. People travelling through Swansea will have a first-class road. Though there is always some possibility of an accident, it will be minimal.

I do not wish to get into an abusive mood or get red in the face - that will not help the family of the young woman who died. However, I earnestly request the Government, and particularly the Deputy Premier, to consider bringing forward funding which was not to be available until next financial year so that the Swansea bends deviation can be completed earlier than was anticipated. I am not suggesting that this is an easy thing to do. I know that completion of the Swansea bends deviation will require a few million dollars. The Swansea bends have been notorious for years. As has come to light in very dramatic form recently, Scenic Drive, Caves Beach, is even more dangerous. Whatever the difficulties of bringing forward this funding, I very earnestly request the Deputy Premier to consider this so that the Swansea bends deviation can be completed well before the end of this year. In engineering terms, that is quite possible. Road hazards will vastly diminish in the area, and the many millions of dollars that have been spent so far will begin to yield a benefit. *[Time expired]*

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Mr W. T. J. MURRAY (Barwon - Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads) [5.54]: I thank the honourable member for Swansea for his comments and advice on this matter. On behalf of all members I extend our sympathy for those who have died on our roads, and particularly this 17 year-old-girl who was quite well-known in that area. Scenic Drive is a local road, under the care and control of the Lake Macquarie City Council. As such, the terms, conditions and quality of that road are the responsibility of that Council. The road is also used by a lot of traffic for local access and by highway traffic to bypass the Swansea bends section of the Pacific Highway. Speed limits on the drive are 70 kilometres an hour and 60 kilometres an hour. The fatal accident occurred in the 60 kilometres an hour zone.

Two serious accidents occurred on Scenic Drive in the past week, including the fatal accident of Marie Thurgood on 14th March. Both of the recent accidents involved northbound vehicles running off Scenic Drive. Indications are that neither of the vehicles were avoiding the highway as part of the journey they were undertaking at the time. There are many signs on Scenic Drive indicating the tight curves. The signs are in good condition. There is considerable local controversy about whether Scenic Drive should connect with the Pacific Highway and be available for through traffic. The local community is fairly evenly divided on this question. However, despite that fact, it is a matter for resolution by the Lake Macquarie City Council as to what the condition, times and operation of that road should be. The Swansea bends will be completed this calendar year and will be in operation by the end of the year - I do not have an exact date with me. It is important to state, as I have said often lately, that this Government has introduced as many legislative measures and restrictions as was considered necessary to reduce the road toll. The biggest problem we now have is the human element and getting the message across to people who drive on our roads.

Private members' statements noted.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Tink) left the chair at 5.57 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Third Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms ALLAN (Blacktown) [7.30]: Earlier I was speaking about the small community of Greystanes my electorate of Blacktown. In particular I was referring to the great inconvenience experienced by that community in recent years as a result of the construction, first, of the freeway and, now, the tollway. During the past 18 months the community of Greystanes has mobilised to win the construction of a vehicle bridge over Beresford Road, an important link on the F4 Freeway. A deal of sentimental support has been expressed for the proposal by authorities such as the Roads and Traffic Authority, but unfortunately resources have not yet been made available. My Liberal opponent in the May 1991 election raised the issue of the bridge, and the Deputy Premier, as the responsible Minister, has attempted to generate discussion of the issue within the wider community. It was certainly discussed but unfortunately no resources were made available. The original plans prepared by the Roads and Traffic Authority provided for the construction of the bridge. The community expected the bridge to be built but unfortunately, when the missing link between Mays Hill and Prospect was almost completed, the vehicle overbridge was simply not there. Despite massive public outcry, the bridge has not been built. The Holroyd City Council has indicated some willingness to contribute towards the cost of the bridge, but the bottom line is that the bridge is not there, and that is a source of great distress in the community.

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I do not wish to refer merely to roads when dealing with transport matters in my contribution to the Address-In-Reply debate. A number of public transport issues have been of concern to my constituents, particularly train timetables. I am aware that other honourable members have been raising this matter with the Minister for Transport for some time. Unfortunately my electorate - which includes the railway stations of Pendle Hill, Toongabbie, Seven Hills and Blacktown - has been severely disadvantaged by the implementation of new train timetables. Insufficient trains are stopping at some of the smaller railway stations, particularly Pendle Hill and Toongabbie, in both peak and non-peak periods. Constant complaints are made about cuts in State Rail Authority staffing levels, the closure of railway station toilets, and security for State Rail Authority employees and commuters. Whether an assault occurs on a train or a railway station, the community at large demand that increased resources be allocated to public transport to ensure that such offences do not occur. Dare I raise the issue of public buses in western Sydney? I am pleased to note that it is possible that in the current negotiations between the Federal and State governments about the allocation of \$8 million under the Federal Government's better cities program, western Sydney will receive some money for public transport infrastructure. I congratulate Blacktown City Council on having prepared a specific submission for Federal Government funding for trolley buses to ferry passengers from outlying residential suburbs to Blacktown station. That proposal should be supported by the State Government. Bringing public bus transport to western Sydney would certainly set a historic precedent.

I wish to refer briefly to a number of other issues. In relation to education, if honourable members had the opportunity to travel through my electorate, they would see that many public schools have had recent major maintenance work carried out on them. A number of schools have undergone wonderful repainting jobs. I refer particularly to the work that has been done to maintain the beautiful appearance of the historic Toongabbie public school. But, teachers and pupils at schools in my electorate are not merely interested in cosmetic exercises. They want improvements in the quality of education.

As I travel around my electorate and talk to my constituents I am very much aware that class sizes and the number of composite classes have been substantially increased. I request the Government to address that problem in the near future. Many of my constituents rely on the services of the Blacktown TAFE College for their further education. A number of my constituents travel to the Granville TAFE College. Both of those TAFE colleges are suffering from deficiencies in the resources required to meet the growing expectations of the public. I do not believe the Government is addressing that problem at present. I want to pay tribute to the University of Western Sydney which, although it does not have a campus within the electorate of Blacktown, has campuses on the eastern and western extremities of my electorate. Many of my constituents are enrolled in those campuses. I have a close working relationship with the University of Western Sydney. I would like to see a greater acknowledgment by the State and Federal governments of the work of that university.

I should like to conclude my remarks by talking about the environment as it relates to the electorate of Blacktown. Earlier in my comments I referred to the basic requirements of shelter, health, transport and education, which are really the basic concerns of the majority of my constituents. Many people in western Sydney take the environment for granted. When people think of the environment of western Sydney, they often think only of Dr David Hughes, an articulate spokesperson for the environmental movement particularly in relation to the Hawkesbury River-Nepean River basin. A number of electorates between Parramatta and Penrith have major environmental problems. I certainly regard Blacktown and other suburbs within my electorate as being in need of attention from environmental authorities. Despite the fact that the missing link

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in the F4 Freeway will traverse the boundaries of my electorate and major industries being located in and adjacent to it, my electorate still does not have air pollution monitoring equipment. The electorate of Blacktown experienced the bulk of the evacuation during the Diversey fire in December 1989.

The electorate has the constant problem of carbon monoxide and other hazardous gases settling there because of the geographic nature of western Sydney. The lack of air pollution monitoring equipment is a major source of concern in my electorate. The present Government and perhaps former governments have largely neglected heritage issues in my electorate. An important heritage site in the electorate is the Seven Hills poultry station site. It is a testament to the heritage of the area that many previous and present residents were poultry farmers. I am a patron of the local poultry station. I hold that position with some degree of pride. At present the Department of Housing is seeking to further develop the open site of the Seven Hills poultry station. The matter is being considered by Blacktown City Council. I am well aware that the Department of Housing is anxious to push the development, but the matter is one of grave concern to the local residents and the constituency of my electorate at large.

The area has historic as well as natural environmental value, in that it is one of the few areas within my electorate where there are many original trees and large areas of natural growth. The area is worthy of protection, and I ask the State Government to provide that protection for the long term. I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating what I said earlier: that Her Majesty the Queen's visit generated a deal of political debate within Australia about the future of the Australian Constitution. It is important also that we discuss the basic issues to which I have referred in my speech so that we members of State Parliament, as well as members of the Federal Parliament, can get on with the job of servicing those basic concerns.

Mr D. L. PAGE (Ballina) [7.40]: I welcome the opportunity to participate in this Address-in-Reply debate and to support the general thrust of the Government's reform for the coming parliamentary session. The Premier referred to a number of reforms planned for this parliamentary session, including parliamentary reforms, defamation law reform, changes in the Commonwealth-State relationship - particularly as it relates to roads and transport, which is of particular interest to me - and the implementation of the privatisation policy, where deemed to be appropriate. The Premier, and indeed the Deputy Premier referred to the tough economic climate in which we find ourselves in New South Wales today. They referred also to the unacceptably high levels of unemployment, and to the difficulties which will arise in the framing of the 1992-93 Budget. The Premier said that, so far as the current fiscal year is concerned, expenditure is on target with budget, but that revenue is approximately \$300 million down on what was projected in September last year. Overall, New South Wales is looking at a deficit of approximately \$1 billion.

It is not a happy climate in which to be formulating a budget. However, I am sure honourable members will concede - if they are honest with themselves - that we are in this situation largely as a result of the extreme monetary policies that were pursued for far too long by the current Prime Minister when he was the Federal Treasurer. Unfortunately, we are all living with the consequences of that misguided policy. Fortunately, however, because of the good management of this State by the present Government, the size of the deficit has been restricted. Indeed, under extremely difficult circumstances, New South Wales has maintained its triple-A credit rating - one of only five States of all the States of Australia and America to achieve such a rating. The rating is very important in terms of interest savings that would otherwise be dead money.

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Those savings can be allocated to such important projects as hospitals and roads. One of the challenges for members who represent strong growth areas, such as I do, is providing the level of infrastructure necessary to accommodate growth. After all, irrespective of the economic times, people continue to get sick, people continue to go to school, and people continue to need police protection. There is an ongoing need for both capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure, irrespective of the budgetary situation. This is particularly relevant in my electorate.

I represent possibly the second fastest growing electorate - after the Tweed area - in New South Wales. During periods of strong growth there is a tremendous demand for government services. A problem I experience as the local member is trying to keep up with the level of infrastructure demand - commercial infrastructure such as roads, and social infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. I wish to highlight a number of matters of need that I perceive for my electorate, and I hope they will be borne in mind by the Government when it formulates its budget. On the capital works side, Ballina high school should receive high priority. At present the high school has 1,327 pupils enrolled - not a situation which anybody seeking quality education would find terribly acceptable. The high school is overcrowded. I am pleased to inform honourable members that recently the Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs, the Hon. Virginia Chadwick, wrote to me to advise that she has approved planning for the particular project, although she has not as yet approved the capital works implementation component of it. I ask the Minister, when she is formulating her priorities for this year's capital works budget in education, to keep Ballina high school very much to the fore. The Department of School Education owns land in Ballina and plans have been drawn up for a new high school that will cater for 800 students in the long term. Initially it will be developed to cater for only 600 students.

When the Minister visits my electorate in the near future to open the \$3 million

development at Byron Bay primary school I hope to show her the site for the proposed new high school at Ballina and, if time permits, to draw her attention to some of the problems that exist at Alstonville high school, which was completed in 1986. The first stage involved the construction of a core high school. However, because of the rapid population growth in the area, there are now 14 demountables at the school and the classrooms are overflowing. More than 1,000 students are enrolled at the school. As I have said on previous occasions, where we have strong growth projections and we know enrolments will increase, governments should look more closely at constructing permanent buildings sooner, rather than erecting the traditional core building and providing a series of demountable buildings which are then removed after construction of a second structure. When student demand is indicated, governments should look to build the second stage sooner. The economics of that equation are more in favour of a permanent structure than demountables.

There are a number of important road projects in my electorate. Indeed, back in 1988 when I was elected as the member for Ballina - indeed the first member for Ballina as it was a newly created seat - the hottest issue on the agenda was that of roads. The region had suffered from 12 years of Labor neglect. There had been absolutely no increase in road funding in that northeastern corner of New South Wales. A classic example was a piece of road known locally as the Ballina cutting, which was part of the Bruxner Highway. The previous Labor Government had commenced construction of that project seven years prior to my election as the local member. Within two years the project was completed. Ninety-five per cent of the funding to develop that project to its present condition was expended by the Greiner-Murray Government.

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Another important road project which I should like to refer to is the Bangalow Bypass. It is a large project - costing \$19 million - which is warmly welcomed by the community. That project was also put very much on the back burner by the previous administration. Indeed, I have seen a letter signed by the former Minister for Roads, Laurie Brereton, dated about 1987, which said there was no way that the Bangalow Bypass would come on line within at least 10 years. Under the present administration, we are two years into a \$20 million project that will be completed in approximately 1994. The Brunswick Bypass is another project which is under way and which had absolutely no prospect of getting on the board prior to this Government's taking office. The Alstonville Bypass is yet another project which I should like to see developed as soon as the Ballina cutting is completed. Another high priority is the Lismore-Bangalow Road, which is in need of a lot of attention. The Government proposes to spend \$800,000 on an additional overtaking lane on Springvale Hill, to allow vehicles to overtake with safety on a very dangerous section of road. A tremendous amount of money will be spent to straighten out that very ordinary piece of road.

Recently as Assistant Minister for Transport I had the opportunity to visit Victoria and speak with senior executives of Brown Boveri (Australia) Pty. Limited, which is based in Dandenong. The purpose of my visit was to check on the progress of the building of the XPTs which will service the Sydney to Melbourne route, and also the new sleeper cars which will become part of the New South Wales XPT fleet. The Government will introduce the new Explorer trains to the Sydney to Canberra and the Sydney to Werris Creek lines. It is expected that when the train reaches Werris Creek half the train will go to Armidale and the other half to Moree. Upon its return to Werris Creek the service will again become one. This \$120 million Government investment will improve passenger train services across New South Wales, particularly in the northeast corner of the State. A few years ago I was vocal when the old locomotive

hailed sleeper carriages were taken out of service. That caused a high degree of community concern. I am pleased that the Government has decided to include sleeper cars on XPTs. The people on the North Coast will be pleased to know that progress on the construction of the sleeper carriages is proceeding according to schedule. It is expected that the first sleeper carriages for the Melbourne to Sydney, Sydney to Brisbane and Sydney to Murwillumbah lines will be available and fully operational next year.

Another important and pet project of mine is the extension of the railway line between Murwillumbah and Robina. As honourable members would be aware, the New South Wales and Queensland governments decided in March 1990 to conduct a jointly funded study into feasibility of that extension, which would extend the Casino-Murwillumbah line to the Gold Coast. It is important for that area of the North Coast to have rail access to that rapidly growing part of Australia. The study was carried out and the extension was proved to be feasible. The second stage was the benefit cost analysis, which is due for release in about a month or so. If that benefit cost analysis is favourable, a little more work will need to be done on the economic and environmental evaluation of the preferred route. Four possible routes are being considered, starting with the Coolangatta airport and moving further west. I await with interest to read the recommendations. I also favour the construction of a light rail link between Lismore and Ballina, extending up through Lennox Head to Byron Bay, connecting with the existing line between Byron Bay and Lismore. There are many reasons to support, when money permits, the development of a light rail system to connect those important towns.

Another important project in the Clarence electorate is the development of the port of Yamba, which will have implications for the development of North Coast trade. I have a particular interest in this project not merely because I am the Assistant Minister

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for Transport and I have an interest in everything the Maritime Services Board is involved in, but because this project was a vision of my grandfather, who was the Federal member in that part of the world for 41 years. If he were alive today, he would be pleased to know that the port of Yamba is being developed. At present it is possible only to export from that port. It has no port of first entry status so nothing can be brought into it. Products from that port are exported to the Pacific Rim. The problem is that products can be exported from the port but ships have to return to the port empty. That affects the economics of the operation. I look forward to the granting to that port of first port of entry status. It will make the shipping industry in that port much more economically viable and will open up a range of opportunities for primary products and other materials produced in the region to be exported to Pacific Rim markets.

I turn now to the matter of policing. Before I became a member of this Parliament I made a promise to the electorate that I would upgrade Ballina police station to 24-hour status. At that time the crime rate was very high, and people believed, and rightly so, that a more visible police presence and a 24-hour police station would help to reduce the crime rate. I am pleased to say that I have honoured that promise. Police numbers at Ballina have increased from 14 to 28. Since that time the population of Ballina increased also as have a number of social problems. Basically the crime rate has reduced in accordance with what one would expect with increased police numbers. We cannot, therefore, afford to have any reduction in police numbers. Ballina is a rapidly growing area and the Government should not allow the authorised total strength of 38 units, including nine highway patrol units, to be decreased. At present a work load analysis is being carried out, the results of which will be made available, but I put the Government on notice that if it tries to downgrade the Ballina police station to less than a 24-hour police station, it will have one hell of a fight on its hands.

Perhaps more important in the short term is the situation at Byron Bay. As honourable members are aware, Byron Bay has become the tourist attraction of the month, as it were, with such notable celebrities as John Cornell residing there. Club Med has indicated that it wants to move in to the area. Byron Bay has many backpackers hostels, and the long and the short of it is that tourism is really booming. However, many of the people who are attracted to the area are what we one might call the less desirable types - young people who consume copious quantities of alcohol and wander around the streets seemingly aimlessly destroying the town's resources. That situation needs to be monitored closely. I have made a speech in this House previously seeking support for an upgrading of that police station to a 24-hour police station. The issue of unemployment was alluded to by the Premier. The North Coast has a 15 per cent unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate of about 30 per cent. At present Ballina council is seeking to augment its sewage services. It has a secondary treatment ocean outfall arrangement which the council wants to upgrade to a tertiary treatment plant to accommodate the growth in the area. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

A minority of people have indicated that they will oppose the tertiary treatment plant no matter what procedure the council follows. A couple of weeks ago a local newspaper featured an article entitled, "Freeze on new land releases while sewage project delayed". The main body of the articles reads:

Residential development in the Ballina-Lennox Head area could grind to a halt in about two years if the shire council can't get its sewage augmentation project approved.

If economic activity picks up in the meantime, two years could be optimistic.

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Currently no one will predict a time scale for the augmentation, the only probability being the project's opponents will mount a challenge in the Land and Environment Court.

Last week the council froze the release of any further residential land in the Lennox Head sewage treatment work's catchment area until its planned additional treatment and disposal capacity was available.

If these people are successful and there are no further land releases in that area, first, the price of blocks of land will go up, which is bad news for young couples - and many young couples have moved to that area. The only people who will benefit from that will be the big developers, who will be able to put their land on the market more slowly and therefore get higher prices for it. Second, thousands of people employed in the building industry would not benefit from such a move. In many ways the North Coast has been cushioned from the impact of the recession because of the migration of people from other parts of Australia, particularly from Melbourne and Sydney. The building and related industries have provided a tremendous amount of employment. My worry is that if the augmentation project does not go ahead any activity in the building industry will be frozen and thousands of people will be thrown out of work.

I came across some interesting information comparing the average daily discharge of effluent into the ocean from the outfall at Skennars Head, which is near Lennox Head, with that which is discharged into the ocean from the Richmond River. The Richmond River is five or six kilometres to the south of Skennars Head. The average discharge from the treatment plant is two megalitres per day, with a maximum of 12 megalitres per day. From the Richmond River at Ballina 6,500 megalitres of water is discharged into the ocean every day. From the treatment plant 240 kilograms of

suspended solids is discharged per day. From the Richmond River 260,000 kilograms of suspended solids is discharged per day. On an ordinary day 60 kilograms of phosphorous is discharged from the treatment plant and 975 kilograms is discharged from the Richmond River. I think I have made my point. People carry on about the problem of ocean outfalls, but when we compare this with the nasties released through a river into the same ocean in many cases the pollution level is increased by a factor of 100 or 200 - the situation can be up to a thousand times worse. I caution those who actively seek to hold up the augmentation of the Skennars Head sewerage plant. They should think very carefully of the implications of their actions, in particular the impact on land prices because of the failure of the council to release new blocks of land and of the impact of land prices particularly on young families. They should give commonsense consideration to the impact of their actions on the environment.

I have mentioned several times that the population in my electorate is growing rapidly. Most people think of the North Coast as a place to retire. That is true, but the area also has a number of people in the under-15 age group greater than the State average. We do not have in the area many people in the middle range of age, but a lot of older and younger people. The significance of that is that a great number of families on the North Coast, who by and large are not wealthy, have a great need for pre-school services. There is no doubt in my mind that this Government has to do a little more in the provision of such services. Most people would be aware that funding has been capped for a couple of years now. It was interesting to read a precis of the second report on the proposed revised funding arrangements for children's services, otherwise known as the Ross report. The arrangements were deliberately designed to produce some winners and some losers. The feedback from constituents gives me the impression that under that funding formula there are more losers than winners. The main area of concern is the operational subsidy. It is not a good idea to provide funding on a quarterly basis, as this would involve more bureaucracy than such funding being provided on an annual

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basis. It is more difficult for people to plan if it must be done on a quarterly rather than on an annual basis.

Also subsidies to long day care centres are provided on a 52-week basis - predominantly by the Commonwealth. However, pre-school subsidies are provided on a 41-week basis. Staff in long day care centres and pre-schools operate under similar arrangements. Those who operate such services must pay wages, superannuation, insurance, rates, rents, et cetera, for a full 52 weeks of the year even though the pre-school might only operate for 41 weeks a year. I ask the Minister to look at that matter because there seems to be an inequity in the system. The economic subsidy raises another issue of equity. It offers a subsidy only on the basis of a client's receipt of either full benefits - step one - or a family allowance supplement - step two. Families that do not claim government handouts, such as rural farming families or those on low earned incomes, will not be eligible for fee relief. I applaud the improvements in relation to the disability subsidy. The problem is that those improvements will be at the expense of other children who will miss out. I hope that the Minister, before he makes a final decision on implementing the funding formula proposed by Mr Ross, looks at it very carefully because it seems to present some big problems, especially for children from country areas.

I will now speak on roads and transport. Generally speaking, the Government's actions in the area of roads has been a big winner for this Government, and it will continue to be. I am pleased to see from the remarks of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads that he intends so far as possible to continue over the next few years the good programs currently in place. It is a fact that \$5.5 billion

worth of road construction was carried out in the three years to June 1991. Despite the downturn in the economy, the State Government has allocated \$1.7 billion to roads in New South Wales in this financial year. I welcome the extension of the 3 x 3 program. I remind the House that the Labor Party opposed that program when it was introduced, saying that it would have a terrible effect on inflation. Now Opposition members think it is wonderful that they as local members are receiving kudos as a result of the spending of that money. They can say to their constituents that they helped them get a new road, but the reality is that the road was built only because the Government had the guts to tell the people that it proposed to charge an extra 3c for every litre of petrol sold over three years. That period was extended recently. People do not mind paying that extra 3c if they know that that money is being spent on roads. In our case they can be sure of this because the money is put into a trust. That is in great contrast to the attitude of the Federal Government to a fuel tax. It collects roughly 30c a litre and puts about 6c a litre of that towards road construction. We collect 6.5c a litre and put all of it into roads - and that is precisely where it ought to go.

It is fair to recognise that there has been a reduction in the road toll. The number of deaths is still too many; in fact, any death is one too many. In 1991 the road toll was 671 deaths, which is unacceptably high, but that is the lowest road toll that this State has had since 1950. When the increased number of cars on the road today is compared with the number in 1950, one can see that that is not a bad effort. Even members of the Opposition, who would treat the road safety issue in a bipartisan way, would have to acknowledge that that reflects some of the improved road safety measures, the amount of extra money put into roads and the introduction of random breath testing. The Government is justified in claiming some credit for reducing that road toll to a level commensurate with that which applied in the 1950s. The big pluses in the general area of transport reform have been the increases in the numbers of passengers and volume of freight coming back to the rail system. It is interesting to note the productivity increase

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of about 30 per cent in all rail operations - no mean achievement over a period of three years. I note from discussions with the Minister for Transport that we can expect those types of increases to occur in the next couple of years. CityRail has the highest cost recovery of any Australian urban rail system. CountryLink has the highest cost recovery of any country passenger rail service in Australia, though none of them make any money. Ultimately a decent rail system cannot exist without a relationship between the cost of running the service and the prices charged. If too much discrepancy occurs between the cost of a service and the prices charged, it may have to be closed down so that funds may be directed to some other operation. I again urge the Government to keep its reform agenda going. Thinking people in New South Wales understand what we are about. Many misconceptions in the community are being fanned by members opposite but I hope truth and good government will win through and that the Government's policy of putting resources on the North Coast will continue. [*Time expired*]

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [8.10]: Her Most Gracious Majesty, on her opening of this the Fiftieth New South Wales Parliament, made a memorable speech. The Premier has moved the Address-in-Reply motion and delivered a speech on which I wish to comment. Before doing so I wish to draw to the attention of honourable members some historical notes about what the Premier, the Hon. J. J. Cahill, the honourable member for Cooks River, said in this Chamber after the Queen had opened the Parliament in 1954:

I am proud to move that this Parliament conveys to our beloved Sovereign the Address that has been outlined. I know that it is the wish of all members of this Chamber to express the gratification and the deep sense of privilege which Her Majesty has bestowed upon us by coming here to-day and giving royal lustre and added splendour and dignity to our old institution which

will shortly enter upon its second century of existence.

That speech in reply was reinforced by the contribution made by the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Treatt, the honourable member for Woollahra, who said:

This Chamber today is witnessing a remarkable event - the moving by the Premier, and the seconding by the Opposition without debate, of the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to Her Majesty's speech. These proceedings are without precedent, but the occasion that has created them is itself without precedent. . . Such an occasion is the present one when this State, indeed the entire continent, the whole nation is welcoming onto its soil for the first time our Sovereign, the Queen of Great Britain, of our neighbour New Zealand, and of all the other far-flung nations of the British Commonwealth.

For the first time in the history of our nation, our Sovereign has opened a session of an Australian legislature.

The Deputy Premier at that time was Mr Heffron, the honourable member for Maroubra, who later became Premier. I note that the present honourable member for Maroubra, the Leader of the Opposition, will shortly become the Premier. On 4th February, 1954, Mr Heffron said this in his Address-in-Reply speech:

Today has been a memorable one in the long and fruitful history of our Parliament - the Mother of Parliaments in Australia. It is a day that will be proudly recorded on the scroll of our march to full nationhood. We have had - and when I say "we" I mean all the people of this great State, and in fact all the people of the Australian Commonwealth - a great and signal honour conferred on us by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Only a few hours ago our young Queen stood in this ancient Parliament and delivered to us a message which I know made a profound impression on all who were privileged to hear it. In her calm and dignified manner, Her Majesty spoke in tones and terms that touched the heartstrings of all who heard her. Her presence here to-day has been an inspiration and a challenge to us all.

I am not endowed with the flowery gifts of speech of those long-departed learned and
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honourable gentlemen but I concur with the sentiments expressed by them after the opening of our Parliament by Her Majesty 38 years ago. If the honourable member for Burrinjuck and the honourable member for Lane Cove could control themselves for at least 38 seconds, which from any knowledge of the history of New South Wales Parliament is difficult, they might learn something from what I am about to say. I believe that Her Majesty's opening of this Parliament this year will be her last, if time is any measure. I was greatly honoured to be able to see Her Majesty open the Parliament. Irrespective of one's views about the future of our nation, Her Majesty's opening of this Parliament is a great honour for all of us. I say that on behalf of my constituents and I concur with the sincere comments made about our noble Queen by this State's leaders, some of them of Irish extraction - the Hon. J. J. Cahill and the Hon. R. Heffron - and the then Leader of the Opposition Mr Treatt. On behalf of my constituents, I welcome Her Majesty's opening speech and I wish her the best for the rest of her reign. But I say to the House and to the House alone that Australia in general and New South Wales in particular are not the same as in 1954. I turn to the Premier's contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate and his final assessment of the financial position in New South Wales - that is to say, the big fraud. I wish to quote what the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Maroubra, the future Premier of New South Wales, said yesterday in reply to the Premier's Address-in-Reply speech:

Some of us can recall the debate in this House on the very eve of the last State election

when we had an iron assurance from the Premier -

The Premier being the current Premier:

- that the budget would be balanced "this year and next".

... As the honourable member for Smithfield says, it is another lie. The even more brutal truth is that the true budget deficit is between \$1.75 billion and \$2 billion. The Premier gratuitously lectured honourable members on this side of the House to be "conscious of the impact which the recession is having on the State's revenues". He blamed the recession for a revenue collapse. The reality is that tax receipts, in this the highest taxed State, will rise by more than 7 per cent, even with the \$300 million shortfall. This is over double the inflation rate.

The Minister for Justice has interjected again. I wish to quote from a document entitled "State of New South Wales Monthly Financial Statement of the Budget Sector for the Period 1 July to 31 January 1992". That document is a deadly Opposition document because it is in my hands but it was created by the Government. That document contains total results of budget estimates and budget projections over a period of seven months. The document shows a \$1,366 million deficit for the seven months. The projected budget deficit estimate is \$1,090 million. At the present moment the Government is approximately \$300 million over the projected deficit for this year. If one then takes into account the extraordinary item referred to in the paper as "Sale of GIO", which is estimated to bring \$1,750 million, a surplus of \$661 million will be produced for this financial year. But the Government has already exceeded its projected deficit by \$300 million. The State deficit is already \$350 million more than estimated. Projecting the figures, even if the GIO is sold there will still be a deficit. The prospectus for the GIO has not been issued. Six to eight weeks is required for the issuing of the prospectus and another two to four weeks for the sale of shares. At the end of the financial year New South Wales will be in the biggest financial mess in its history thanks to the Greiner Government. The evidence is in black and white to be seen. The document covers the period 1st July, 1991, to 31 January, 1992. It is not even up to date. When a senior Treasury official was questioned about that document and the document on New South Wales public sector liabilities the response was, "The people who compiled this were working for the Premier". That would be a great way of getting oneself out of a bad situation.

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Mr Griffiths: Another Carr lie.

Mr NAGLE: It was not a Carr lie. The only time the Minister for Justice interjects is when one cuts close to the bone. I did not interject on the honourable member for Ballina but Government members are interjecting on me because they do not like what I am saying. Because of the policies of this Government my electorate of Auburn has high unemployment and lacks proper facilities to look after its large ethnic community. The Government moved the ethnic affairs office from Auburn to Ashfield. How will the poor ethnic people in my community afford to travel to Ashfield for advice? My electorate has many old people and many young people, and there is a lot of youth unemployment. The Premier said that he would provide \$90 million to deal with youth unemployment. In response I issued a press release stating that the funds allocated by the Greiner Government to deal with youth unemployment are too little too late. The Greiner Government has been sluggish in responding to job training initiatives for young people in my electorate. However, it was very quick to provide \$90 million for Eastern Creek. On 23rd August, 1991, the date of the announcement of this funding, it eliminated the positions of five apprentices at Lidcombe Hospital - a painter, a plumber,

an electrician, a carpenter and refrigeration mechanic. Since then untold youth positions have been lost in the State Rail Authority and other public sector bodies. A cartoon in the *Newcastle Herald* on 4th December, 1991, is accompanied by a small editorial, which states:

The Minister for Sport, Mr Souris, was adamant yesterday that NSW taxpayers would bear none of the costs associated with the State Government's success in winning the childish tug-of-war with the Victorian Government to host the Australian motor cycle grand prix. Taxpayers already have paid out or acted as guarantors for at least \$50 million worth of bills associated with the Eastern Creek raceway, so they can only hope that Mr Souris's confidence will prove to be more solidly based than the other ministers who have been involved in the two-year comedy of errors surrounding the grand prix.

Mr Griffiths: A financial success.

Mr NAGLE: Show us the records. Stop hiding them from us. Let us have access to them so that we can see how successful it is for the expenditure of \$100 million. The cartoon accompanying the editorial has corners signposted "Tobacco Sponsorship Detour", "Souris Double-back", "the Pits", "Greiner U-turn", "Living Standard Decline". St Joseph's Hospital in Auburn had existed for 100 years. It had survived the Depression and every recession for 100 years. But it could not survive the Greiner Government. I received 775 letters about the closure of the hospital. The Premier received 1,459. The Minister for Health and Community Services received 363. The Minister for Health Services Management received 364. The honourable member for Bligh received 389. The honourable member for South Coast received 395. The honourable member for Manly received 398. The honourable member for Tamworth received 394. Altogether 4,537 letters were sent by various people concerned about the closure of St Josephs Hospital. But this Government allowed the hospital to close. A formal parliamentary petition on the subject contained 25,169 signatures and a petition which did not comply with the rules contained 11,990 signatures - a total of 37,159.

There were more than 15,000 signatures to stop the closure of Lidcombe Hospital and 5,000 earlier. Because of the closure of St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn

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District Hospital has had to take the increased load. In 1990 the accident and emergency department attendances at that hospital were 24,419, outpatient attendances were 52,172, and daily and short-term admissions were 1,840. These are the figures for St Joseph's Hospital: in 1990 there were 2,170 operations; in 1991 there were 2,388. In the casualty department there were 35,992 attendances in 1990 and in 1991 there were 35,659. Inpatient day only patients in 1990 were 4,566 and in 1991 the number was 4,468. What has happened to the people who previously would have gone to St Joseph's Hospital? They are now going to Auburn District Hospital or Westmead. If they are really special cases they can be treated at Lidcombe Hospital. Mr Jack Thomas has been very ill for the last decade. He needed intensive hospital care at Auburn District Hospital after finding it hard to breathe. He could not gain admission at that hospital. He went there with his wife and his sister-in-law, who is an alderman on Auburn council. They saw that there were beds in the corridors. The beds could not fit into the rooms. That is disgraceful and it is a result of the Government closing St Joseph's Hospital. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I turn to the competence of the Greiner Government in regard to railways. Being a former railway employee, one of my greatest concerns is the breaking down of safety standards by the Greiner Government. Honourable members opposite may laugh as much as they want but when there is a major catastrophe on the New South Wales

railway system it will be the Government's fault. Honourable members opposite seem to forget that they have been in government for four years. Drivers are being overworked and forced to work overtime. The carriages are old, irrespective of what the Minister for Transport says. Proper maintenance is not being carried out on trains and the work improvement standards have been decreased. There is a problem with bridges. We should remember the Bold Street bridge in Granville. I have sent numerous letters to the Minister for Transport concerning the disastrous problem with the rail timetable for the stations of Regents Park, Berala, Lidcombe, Birrong, Sefton, Yagoona and Auburn. In response I received a letter from the Hon. Don Page, assistant Minister for Transport, which :

Thank you for your representations of 29 January 1992 on behalf of the Birrong Boys and Birrong Girls High School, concerning the introduction of the new timetable.

The letter continues:

. . . the new timetable has been formulated to meet the requirements of the majority of its customers.

It goes on:

I am sure you will appreciate that with more than 800,000 CityRail passenger journeys each day, it has been necessary to design a timetable that addresses those areas of greatest demand . . . CityRail is carefully monitoring the new timetable . . .

The Birrong boys and Birrong girls high schools could not persuade the Government to change the timetable to suit the students of those two schools. However, Penshurst Girls High School achieved a change to the timetable because it is in the electorate of the Minister for Justice. If one is a member of the Government, one can change the timetable. Everyone else got a "Dear John" letter from the honourable member for Ballina, the assistant Minister for Transport. God save all of us if he continues as the Assistant Minister for Transport. Now the pensioners are under attack. A cartoon by Warren in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* has the caption "Travel concession cut". It shows a pensioner saying, "We'd better be more careful - who knows what's around the corner?". It shows the Premier about to hit the pensioners over the head. That is the
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situation. I am quite happy to pay for my rail fare if the Government is happy to give the pensioners a fair go. That is the problem we have and it will remain because the Government is continually hitting the pensioner.

Mr Turner: Discrimination, what do you expect?

Mr NAGLE: The honourable member for Myall Lakes says that it is discrimination. I am glad he admits that his Government is discriminating against the senior citizens and pensioners of New South Wales. I am very pleased to see that he finally concedes that his Government discriminates against all sorts of people. I refer to a problem with compulsory third party insurance which has occurred as a result of the Government's motor traffic legislation. This matter was brought to my attention by Mr John Burns, who asked me to raise this matter in this debate. Mr Burns received an AAMI compulsory third party insurance slip for which he had to pay \$222. As honourable members will understand, the purpose of third party insurance is not to protect the person who causes the injury but to compensate the person who suffers an injury because of the negligence of the insured. Mr Burns was on his way to pay the \$222 to AAMI, but decided to read the letter which was sent to him. It stated:

If you aren't on Maximum 60% No Claim Bonus, your CTP premium is \$272.00 and this is the amount you should pay. Would you please alter the 'Green Slip' to show this premium before you make payment.

That is totally misleading. People think that they have to pay only \$222. The problem is that if a person does not disclose the full extent of his no claim bonus, and pays only the \$222, he would not be covered by insurance.

Mr Turner: He would be struck off.

Mr NAGLE: The honourable member for Myall Lakes ought to be struck off.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Myall Lakes to order.

Mr NAGLE: When the honourable member for Ballina was speaking I did not interrupt him until the end of his speech. The honourable member for Myall Lakes is being his usual petty, petulant and stupid self. The sooner he is defeated by his constituents the better we will be. I am concerned about the AAMI matter. It may be totally innocent, but it is misleading. People who do not fully disclose that they do not have a 60 per cent no claim bonus could be personally liable and may not have the capacity to reimburse someone who is seriously injured because of their negligence. I refer to a matter about which the honourable member for Myall Lakes knows nothing - law and order. I refer specifically to court delays. Unfortunately, the Minister for Justice has left the Chamber. He knows nothing about this, although he pretends that he does.

I was recently told by a senior administrator in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, that under this Government of four years, if two judges sat five days a week every week, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. without a break, it would take 42 years to complete the personal injury list, subject to settlements. We have been told by the Government that it has done very well. That problem could be resolved very easily if the Government proclaimed its District Court legislation, which would increase that court's jurisdiction from \$100,000 to \$250,000. That legislation was rushed through this Parliament with great haste, late at night. Though that was nine months ago, it has yet to be proclaimed. Let me hear from the Minister for Justice, in any future contribution, as to why he has

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not proclaimed the legislation and when he will proclaim it. It would significantly reduce the workload of the Supreme Court. I refer now to the July sittings of the Supreme Court, which we have heard a lot about. I hope that the July sittings will complete many of the cases for which people have been waiting around for seven, eight or nine years. The only problem is that there is no incentive for insurance companies to settle. In future we will need to persuade people to settle, either by way of pecuniary penalties in the form of interest, cost penalties, or establishing, as I know the Minister for Justice is quite keen to do, a better mediation and arbitration system. I support that.

There are a lot of other problems with the system. Lidcombe Local Court has been closed and moved to Burwood. That is an absolute disaster because there are no parking facilities anywhere near the court. The cost of moving prisoners from police stations at Auburn, Lidcombe and Flemington and from Minali and Minda is enormous. Costs will not be saved by combining those courts at Burwood. It will cause enormous unrest and inconvenience to the police. There are unisex toilets at the Lidcombe courthouse. I mention next a booklet entitled *Your Rights 1991* written by John Bennett. I hope it has not been financed by this Government. It deals with people's rights under

the law, with areas such as anti-white racism, multiculturalism, anti-white history, anti-German racism, television sagas, the reduction of Asian immigration, new white racism and what has happened in South America. Mr Bennett states:

Historical revisionists, such as the UK historian David Irving whose books are in libraries and bookshops throughout the western world, Professor Faurisson, Professor Butz and myself, who, after much research, much of it uncontradicted, have concluded there was no plan to exterminate Jews in World War II, there were no mass gassings; and fewer than one million Jews died of all causes, face such vituperation.

O'Brien a member of the "thought police" in Orwell's novel **1984** said that "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past".

This book was sent to me as a member of Parliament. It is the most racist piece of literature ever published. I hope that no government in this country, Federal or State, sponsored this material. To the Greiner Government's eternal credit, it introduced the racial vilification legislation, which was designed to stop racism and attacks on Jewish and Asian people. This so-called book published under the title *Your Rights 1991* is the greatest piece of racial discrimination ever perpetrated on the people of New South Wales. I hope no government will ever sponsor Mr Bennett and his so-called Australian Civil Liberties Union. The book has upset many of my constituents and it has upset me. It also gives advice to taxpayers and that terrifies me as well. [*Time expired*]

Mr TURNER (Myall Lakes) [8.40]: I have great pleasure in responding to the speech to this Parliament of Her Majesty the Queen. It was a great day for me and my family when the Queen graced our Parliament and delivered the speech to which honourable members are now replying. My wife and I had the momentous privilege of meeting both Her Majesty and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. Controversy surrounded the visit of Her Majesty, controversy that was promoted by the pretender to the presidential throne of the republic of Australia, Paul Keating. If he created the banana republic, I suppose he might as well be its first president. My constituents in the Myall Lakes electorate and I soundly reject the thought of a republic and a president. We certainly reject the disgraceful, almost treasonable, act of suggesting that our flag changed. The people in my electorate are happy to be part of the Commonwealth of Australia and enjoy their present constitutional monarchy. For the Prime Minister of Australia to deliberately and politically promote the argument for a republic in the present climate while Her Majesty was in Australia was nothing less than scandalous. Using

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good British vernacular, one would say he was a scoundrel of the first order.

Events that have taken place in this Parliament in the past few weeks have changed the political complexion of New South Wales. The people of New South Wales have now realised that the Government must create jobs, jobs, jobs. Last Tuesday when honourable members saw 3,000 or 4,000 workers in Macquarie Street scream for the blood of the Labor Party, there was no doubt in my mind that the tide has turned in New South Wales. The Labor Party no longer represents the workers. The workers screamed for the Labor Party to show its colours, and it showed them: it voted against the timber workers in favour of the greens in the community. I do not know what Opposition members thought they were doing when they voted that way, whether they thought that would get them re-elected. I can assure honourable members that the whole of the community I represent, not only the timber workers, has become fundamentally disenchanted with the Labor Party, which has let them down.

On Tuesday the honourable member for Mount Druitt spoke to me when we

were leaving the Chamber. He said, "How do you feel?" I said, "I feel great, you blokes have just added another 5 per cent to my majority". He could not believe it. That was reinforced when I visited timber workers at the Boral plant at Gloucester the following Thursday. I felt as if I had won the grand final. I was welcomed by the workers. One of the union representatives said to me, and this sums up the whole matter, "Mr Turner, why didn't Bob Carr support the workers on Tuesday?" He did not say it once; he said it three or four times. He was completely amazed. I said, "You will have to ask Bob Carr that". He said, "We tried to ask Bob Carr that but he didn't bother to come out". He probably hid from the workers under his wooden desk. The Labor Party has lost its direction. The National Party and the Liberal Party realise that what is important in an economy that has gone through the floor as the result of the actions of the would-be president of the republic of Australia is jobs, jobs, jobs. The sooner the Federal Government gets off this tack of trying to divert the argument from the economy to a republic and gets back to jobs, jobs, jobs, the sooner Australia will drag itself out of the recession. Honourable members read some nonsense yesterday about Australia recovering from the recession. It seems that even the journalists have been carried away. Growth of 0.3 per cent! What a marvellous achievement after 18 months!

Mr Causley: In my electorate the unemployment rate is 24 per cent.

Mr TURNER: The Minister for Natural Resources refers to the unemployment level in his electorate. I can assure honourable members that there has been no recovery. This Government is determined to create jobs.

Mr Amery: Which is the Minister's electorate?

Mr TURNER: Government members know where their electorates are. You blokes are so vague, grey and indecisive that we do not know where you are from.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! Debate in this Chamber will be conducted through the Chair and not across the table.

Mr TURNER: The Budget handed down by the Premier recognised the job component. I am pleased to say that \$36 million was allocated to my electorate for capital works. One of the most significant beneficiaries was our long neglected roads.

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The National Party has represented the North Coast so well that the Labor Party cannot get a look in. When Neville Wran and Barrie Unsworth were in office, the Labor Party adopted the siege mentality and tried to starve the North Coast of funds. The North Coast received nothing. Nothing was allocated to the Pacific Highway, a road on which many people were killed until the coalition parties attained office and allocated funds to upgrade it. I will say no more than that Opposition members should have a look at themselves and the road toll on the Pacific Highway before the coalition parties came to office. That toll is now significantly lower because the Government has allocated increased funds to it. Overtaking lanes have been constructed, the road has been recambered and resealed, and dual carriageways have been provided where possible. In my electorate \$22 million has been spent on roadworks. Most of that amount was spent on the Pacific Highway. The Government got off its tail and took action.

The Liberal Party is to be congratulated for recognising that country areas had a problem. Under the 3 x 3 program 65 per cent of the moneys are collected in city areas, but country areas are now receiving 60 per cent of those funds to compensate for the mess in which the previous Labor Government left them. Opposition members want to tar their own electorates because they have no representation in country areas. Dual

carriageways have been provided at Rainbow Flat. Recently I was in Bulladelah celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Volunteer Rescue Association. The celebration was attended by representatives of the State Emergency Service, the fire brigade, the police and other rescue organisations.

They made a point of telling me how pleased they are that the Government has allocated funds and as a result the road toll has been reduced. They no longer see the death and maiming that occurred previously. The Government has provided money for roadworks. The funds are not going into consolidated revenue, as was the case under the previous Labor Government. The Taree bypass will go ahead. It will eliminate significant areas of winding and dangerous road. The Government will outlay \$1.5 million for the construction of overtaking lanes on the Pacific Highway. I travel that highway almost daily and I notice that motorists are slowing down because they know there will be an overtaking lane within a reasonable distance, something which did not exist four years ago. Because of the expenditure by the Greiner-Murray Government, motorists are able to feel safer on the roads in New South Wales.

I have spoken about jobs, and the necessity for the Government to always remember that that is what is necessary. I am pleased to observe that the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs today announced the appointment of a rural counsellor in my electorate - one of seven appointed throughout the State. Difficulties are being experienced in country areas at the present time, not only from droughts and floods but also from the recession. I do not believe in media hype. The Prime Minister has difficulty talking about economic matters, let alone trying to tell Australians where they are going in the future. He has been endeavouring to tell us for some time, but we are still in a recession.

The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs has announced the appointment of the rural counsellor to service the Gloucester-Taree-Great Lakes-Hastings-Maitland area. The honourable member for Maitland is present in the Chamber. I know he is as pleased as I am that such a counsellor has been appointed to the area. The appointment will be an asset to the region. It is a plus for the Government. Another plus for the New South Wales Government is the announcement of the formation of the Manning-Gloucester Enterprise Centre, which will assist businesses within the Manning-Gloucester region. It is having a spontaneous effect as people are coming into the area, inquiring

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of the expertise of this group, and are setting up businesses within the Taree and Gloucester areas. A direct initiative of the Government, through the Minister for Consumer Affairs, is the small business outreach centre and the consumer affairs outreach centre in the Forster-Tuncurry and Taree region.

The Minister for Industrial Relations has approved significant grants for assistance to people who have recently become unemployed, those who would otherwise have had gainful and long-term employment but for the Federal Government's financial policies. There is wide recognition of the need in the agricultural area for the rural counsellor, the enterprise centre and the small business and consumer affairs outreach centres. These are coming into play as a result of the initiatives of the Government. The Government is also assisting the recently unemployed. In that regard, due credit must be paid yet again to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Further Education, who has provided significant funds for various State schemes and the revamping of TAFE to train young people and those out of work to enable them to re-enter the work force. In my electorate the TAFE organisations play a significant role in providing employment-generating courses. Tuncurry-Forster TAFE recognises the hospitality

requirement for the tourist industry and is working with young people in an endeavour to meet that need when the economy picks up, as I am sure it will when the Federal coalition's fightback policies are put into place. TAFE will be in a position to fill the demands which will be created in the hospitality and tourist industry, particularly in my electorate of Myall Lakes. The Taree TAFE has promoted automotive and engineering skills. It fills a significant niche in that area of my electorate, which has a significant manufacturing base.

Apprenticeship courses are provided as well. The TAFE courses being offered at the initiative of the Minister are being structured to generate employment. The Labor Party was concerned that this would disrupt the whole TAFE system. About 52 per cent of the TAFE courses in my electorate were quaintly called hobby courses. Not one person has approached me to ask why the Government was changing the direction of TAFE towards employment-based courses with particular application to young people. Not one person has complained to me about the removal of the hobby courses. Responsible people in the community know that the Government must create jobs, particularly for the younger people in the community. I congratulate the Minister for Industrial Relations. The change of direction has been excellent for TAFE. It has given the young people in my electorate pride in what they are doing and has given them an identity. I attend their graduations, whether they are students in fast food preparation, hospitality, landscaping, or the automotive industry. These young people can stick out their chests as though they have achieved something. They have achieved something because of the initiatives of the Government in providing courses, changing the emphasis, and providing job opportunities for young people. Also of significance is that in the last budget \$5 million was allocated for housing in my electorate. The Government has recognised that my electorate has a high pensioner population as well as others receiving social security. The Government is providing housing. In Tuncurry 40 units are to be erected and 10 units are to be erected in Taree.

Mr Blackmore: That is still not enough.

Mr TURNER: The honourable member for Maitland said that is still not enough, and he is right. HomeFund is filling the gap. It has been an outstanding

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success, particularly in the Forster-Tuncurry region. After 12 months HomeFund has been enormously successful. The Government led the way by introducing the rent-buy scheme into country areas, and it has taken off. It would have been impossible for many young people to buy their own homes had it not been for the HomeFund scheme. I am excited about the HomeFund scheme because it provides an opportunity for young people to get going. I spoke a moment ago about the young people who have completed TAFE courses. They have a certificate, they are confident, and they are ready to go. Nothing pleases me more than to see a young couple who have received their HomeFund loan and are starting on their home. They have confidence and ability and the will to go further. That is probably one of the most outstanding achievements of this Government.

Last week in this House honourable members heard the Minister for Housing pay tribute to the Labor Party for starting the scheme. I acknowledge that, but this Government has extended it so that it is within the reach of people who never before had been able to obtain a HomeFund loan and who may well have been consigned to Department of Housing homes. The HomeFund scheme has been an outstanding success in my electorate and it will go from strength to strength. I am very proud of the four hospitals in my electorate, three of which are publicly funded and one of which is a co-operative. The people in my electorate would welcome some public beds in the private hospital. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The Manning Base Hospital is a large hospital. It is extremely well run, it has maintained its productivity gains, and it is providing a service within its budget. It is to be congratulated for the manner in which it is conducted. Perhaps the most significant aspect is the networking between hospitals. The resources and strengths of the various medical outlets are necessary ingredients for networking. I am sick and tired of Opposition members saying that there should be a hospital on every corner. My electorate has a hospital at Taree; there is another 75 miles away at Gloucester; and another a further 75 miles away at Bulahdelah. Opposition members argue that if one has to travel for more than three minutes, another hospital should be built. The three hospitals I spoke about network brilliantly. If people have problems in one area they are transferred elsewhere, or professional people are brought in to attend them. That is how it should be. We should share resources and not adopt this selfish parochialism that exists in the city, with people wanting hospitals on every second street corner. Members of the Opposition should visit country towns to see how the system works. There are 12 hospitals within six kilometres of this Parliament. That is almost obscene compared with what we have in the country. Country people realise that hospitals must network, and work together. They do not fight each other over services. They provide an important health system service. I congratulate rural area health boards on their ability to interrelate and work together without the selfishness and parochialism that we see particularly from Labor Party members, who want gilt-edged scalpels.

The Gloucester Memorial Services Hospital has an acute-care bed capacity, and through the assistance of the State Government and, indirectly, the Federal Government - which contributed some funds - it is now providing nursing home services. That interrelationship will keep patients their own environment at Gloucester. The State Government loaned the hospital \$200,000 for this project and provided an additional grant of a little more than \$100,000. The people of Gloucester were pleased to receive that assistance. I have spoken about a \$100,000 grant but members of the Opposition talk about grants of \$1 million. The Gloucester residents were grateful to receive \$100,000 for their hospital. Country people can make \$100,000 work for the benefit of their community. Education is high on the list of priorities of the Government and my electorate, which is a growth area, particularly the Forster-Tuncurry-Taree region. The
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former Minister for School Education in his wisdom - and one wonders what his view would be today - allocated funds for the construction of a \$16 million high school, which is almost completed. It is a magnificent achievement. Children in the Myall Lakes electorate will move into that high school in the near future. The current high school, which was built in 1978, will be used as a primary school after it is significantly upgraded to the tune of about \$2 million. The Forster-Tuncurry region is pleased with the Government's response to the community's education needs.

Last Friday the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads responded magnificently to a request by the community for a cycle way to connect the school with the community. At present children cycle to school via the Lakes Way, which is a main road. I requested funding for the cycle way only three weeks ago and, though times are tough and money is tight, the Government reacted quickly to provide funding for this safety measure. The children, and in particular the parents of the children, will be eternally grateful to the Deputy Premier. I pay tribute also to the Minister for School Education for taking action with regard to the Taree High School. Not long after the 1991 election I was asked to visit the industrial arts block at Taree High School. It was an absolute disgrace. It was unsafe, archaic, and in need of repair. When I put my views and thoughts to the Minister she reacted positively and quickly with a \$900,000 grant to upgrade the industrial arts building. Industrial arts is a significant

curriculum course in Taree. The people got what they required in a short period of time. This Government is pro-active when it is shown that a need exists. To use the catchcry of this Government, it is managing better by putting people first.

In the last Budget Taree High School was allocated funds for a gymnasium. It will benefit not only to the students but also to the community of Taree, because it will be available for use by everyone. There is no doubt in my mind that this Government has got it right, particularly in my electorate. In fact it has got it right across New South Wales. In almost every area, whether it involves young people, the future leaders in our community - and I note that a group of scouts are present in the gallery - or the elderly in the community, the Greiner-Murray Government knows where it is going. From all the available economic indicators New South Wales is in the best position of any State to come out of this recession, which was caused by the putative president of the republic of Australia. The people of New South Wales will be able to return to the lifestyle to which they were accustomed before the Keating-Hawke days. They know that their children will have a future.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt) [9.7]: I join with other honourable members of the House in responding to Her Majesty's Speech of 20th February. Some of the comments of members on the Government benches, not the least being the honourable member for Myall Lakes, tried to cloud the issue by introducing the republican debate. It was interesting to hear the honourable member for Myall Lakes and other Government members crowing aloud about the voting intentions of people as a result of the demonstration last week by the timber workers. The honourable member for Myall Lakes wanted to know where the Labor members were and why the Leader of the Opposition did not speak to the timber workers on that occasion. But not once in any of their contributions did they mention where they were on the occasion when the nurses demonstrated outside this Parliament. That was one of the most enthusiastic demonstrations ever held. Members on the Government benches hid in their bunkers during that demonstration, as they did when the representatives of the unions from the New South Wales Trades and Labor Council, including many public service unions, enthusiastically demonstrated outside this Parliament last year. Where were the Government members then? After one demonstration by the timber workers, these

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fellows opposite scurried around taking the issue to heart. Government members hid in the bunker when virtually every other union in New South Wales representing every other industry demonstrated outside the Parliament on almost every Tuesday of last year. Now they crow about one demonstration. Their arguments ought to be a little more constructive and balanced.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! If other members wish to converse, they should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr AMERY: It is always heartening to hear from the honourable member for Myall Lakes and other Government members the comment, "Jobs, jobs, jobs". The Opposition endorses that slogan. It gives us a warm inner glow to know that members of the Government are quoting the speech of the former Premier Neville Wran at the Australian Labor Party annual conference at the opening of our election campaign. Parliamentary staff and the executive of this House should be congratulated on the preparations for the visit of Her Majesty. Those invited to the opening were all impressed with the show. Though members are often involved in cross-party political issues and are critical of each other, sometimes on official occasions we witness friendly rivalry between this House and the Legislative Council. I recall that prior to the unveiling of the portrait of the Queen both Presiding Officers spoke. The President of

the Legislative Council read a few nice words from an embossed binder. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly spoke off-the-cuff. My parliamentary colleagues on this side of the House all said, without any prompting, how impressed they were with the way the Speaker handled that official function on behalf of the Legislative Assembly. I ask that you, Mr Acting-Speaker, pass on the best wishes of the Opposition to the Speaker and congratulate him on a job well done.

Mr Griffiths: The Legislative Assembly is the workers' House.

Mr AMERY: It is the workers' House, as the Minister says. Perhaps I should say that it was a jolly good show. The Queen said in her Speech that she had been to New South Wales on about eight occasions since she first opened this Parliament in 1954. No doubt, when the Queen reads the media coverage of her most recent trip, she will realise that little has changed with regard to the way in which the media covers such tours. This tour was reported as a low key affair. There were reports of small crowds. That was the fact. There were the usual headlines about so-called breaches of protocol by the Prime Minister. Honourable members may recall that some loyalists criticised the Prime Minister's touching the Queen at one official function. It was a bit of a beat-up. Here and overseas there was press coverage of Mrs Keating's not curtsying to the Queen on at least one occasion. There was media comment about the Premier's wife, Mrs Greiner, wearing the same coloured outfit as the Queen at the opening of Parliament. None of that behaviour was meant as a snub to the Queen; rather, during fairly boring and official visits, such occurrences have been good copy for newspapers and royal watchers. There was similar press coverage in 1954 when the then Lord Mayor of Sydney, Mr Pat Hills, assisted the Queen up a flight of stairs by touching her elbow. The normal hysteria of royal watchers was expressed on that occasion. The Queen could be forgiven for thinking that in this respect very little has changed.

The tour coincided with debate about the move by Australia towards becoming a republic and changing the Australian flag. After listening to the comments of the honourable member for Myall Lakes, I considered not speaking on this matter because I would hate it to be said that in any broad sense we might be of the same opinion on some issue. The honourable member for Myall Lakes said that it was treasonable for

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anyone to express support for Australia's becoming a republic or changing its flag. That is typical of the hysteria which clouds this debate. The passions of some of our conservative opponents are stirred almost to the point of extremism. I find it very difficult to get excited about this debate. I am one of the members on the Labor side of politics who is yet to be bitten by the republican bug, although I accept that there is a certain inevitability in Australia's becoming a republic. However, even if this occurred, I would not see this as automatically leading to a change of national flag.

The debate on republicanism should be undertaken far more calmly and with a full understanding of the implications of such a move. Advocates for either side of the argument have commented that there would be no change, but I am sure that people voting in a referendum, wanting to make an objective decision, would want to know what effect republicanism would have on the structure of our legal and political system. Until that is spelt out in the form of a contract or agreement, we should not be involved in hysterics and tugging the forelock and so on. We should fully understand the benefits to the population of such a move. The same could be said for changing the flag. Ultimately, these matters will be dealt with by way of referendum. That was how the debate on the National Anthem was dealt with almost 20 years ago. Apart from some extreme comments, that debate was fairly rational. I am yet to be totally convinced about republicanism, and, whether or not it comes about, I doubt that I will ever be

convinced that there is a need to change the Australian flag.

Of far more importance to our community is the standard of living of our population and the ability of people to get and keep a job. I am talking not only of the timber industry but also of the public service, the nursing profession, the State Rail Authority and all those who have demonstrated outside and to whom a number of Government members turned a blind eye. We have to look at the more important issue of the ability of governments to provide a reasonable level of service to our electorates, rather than responsibilities being handed over to private enterprise. That seems to be the favoured approach of this Government because it is running out of money to run the public service. As is the case for many members with electorates in western Sydney, numerous issues are of far greater importance to the every day than the academic questions of republicanism and the Australian flag.

Many honourable members who spoke on health matters may have had on their minds the fact that this afternoon this House condemned the Government for its role in seeking to privatise health services. We discussed how associated issues have hurt electorates on a town-by-town basis. One of my constituents who attended the Mount Druitt polyclinic seeking dental treatment for a broken tooth - a very simple routine - stated that she was told by the polyclinic that it was too busy to provide treatment and that an appointment would not be made for her as she was not over 60 years of age. On the face of it, it seems that a little licence was taken. I should have thought that such limitations would not usually be the case. Inquiries were made of the polyclinic's dental policy. We were advised that the emergency treatment policy is to provide pain relief to patients after patients with appointments for morning and afternoon sessions have been attended to. Bookings are not made for patients seeking pain relief, and there is no guarantee that persons will be seen by a dentist. Patients are advised that they may go to Westmead hospital, where patients are seen the same day as it has many more dentists in attendance.

The reason for that policy is that a Mount Druitt polyclinic has a two-and-a-half
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year waiting list: 2,000 people are waiting for dental care. In August 1991 the waiting list was closed off because it was not considered practical to add further names to it. The Government has conceded defeat by not providing a suitable dental service to the people in the Mount Druitt electorate. Yet the Minister for Health Services Management boasts every day about the health service. One might ask whether the money is going to child care centres and other government services in the electorate. Recently I received an inquiry from Mundarra Aboriginal Youth Service Incorporated which wants to build a new building at 28 Pringle Road, Hebersham. That organisation has been given Housing Department accommodation at Doonside. Money for the project was allocated five years ago but that organisation is still chasing the Minister for Housing to issue the money from the bowels of his department. The Government should be called upon to answer for not delivering those services. I hope that the Minister responds quickly to my representations about that matter.

Black accident spots in the Mount Druitt electorate are supposed to be rectified by the 3 x 3 tax, yet members opposite crow about funding for bypasses and other roadworks on North Coast highways. The one nation package announced by Prime Minister Keating will bring great benefits and additional funding to New South Wales. The honourable member for Myall Lakes spoke about the extent of roadworks in New South Wales. Federal Department of Finance figures, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, indicate that New South Wales will gain \$788 million of the additional \$2.1 billion in infrastructure spending, or 36.9 per cent of funding, compared with the State's

34.2 per cent population share. The roadworks on North Coast highways that the honourable member for Myall Lakes crow's about are being funded mostly by Federal money. Departmental figures show that of the extra top up from the one nation package the Sydney to Brisbane national highway scheme will receive \$11.6 million.

The Government has been quick to criticise the package but has not knocked back the money. The Government may claim to be contributing to the cost of roadworks but the Mount Druitt electorate in western Sydney has received only a small share of the State 3 x 3 petrol tax. A Mount Druitt black spot that will be in the news if remedial action is not quickly taken is the intersection of Duke Street and Woodstock Avenue, Rooty Hill. For many years that intersection has been the scene of major accidents, especially since a local traffic authority, I assume, decided to place "give way" signs to control traffic in Woodstock Avenue. Despite the fact that Woodstock Avenue is the main street running through the intersection, right of way has been given to traffic in Duke Street, contrary to motorists' normal driving habits at a T-intersection. The need for a roundabout is obvious but the Government has such a poor record of funding in Mount Druitt that we could at least expect a change in the location of the "give way" signs. I hope that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads, in response to representations by the Blacktown City Council, will expedite a decision about that roundabout. In the meantime he should examine traffic flow affected by the inept decision to place the "give way" signs in their present location. Unless authorities do something about that intersection soon, the community will continue to pay not only by way of bigger insurance premiums through increased accident rates and consequent car repairs but also further injuries and fatalities. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The State Government, is doing very well by selling off the silver and it should not be crying about the lack of Federal Government funding. From the one nation package New South Wales will receive \$82 million for the Sydney to Brisbane rail upgrade, \$110 million for the Melbourne to Sydney line, \$71 million for the Campbelltown to Enfield link dedicated from the national freight line, \$28.2 million for

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upgrading the Sydney to Melbourne national highway - which the honourable member for Monaro should applaud - and an additional \$60.7 million for the Adelaide to Sydney national highway extension. I refer again to trains and transport. The Premier and Deputy Premier did not mention trains in their Address-in-Reply speeches. That the new train timetables have not been well received and have not improved so-called on-time running. In fact, the Minister has admitted in an answer to a question on notice - despite years of refuting my claims about the level of on-time running - that the State Rail Authority does not keep statistics on trains arriving at and departing from the Mount Druitt railway station. For a number of years the Opposition has been monitoring on-time running of trains, though the Minister has criticised those figures as shonky when he has compared them with SRA figures. I draw attention to answers to questions on notice of 24th October, 1991. I asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the on-time running performance of trains arriving and departing from the Mount Druitt Railway Station over the past 12 months?

(2) How does this compare with the metropolitan on-time running record of CityRail?

I asked those questions in light of the Minister's strong denials of Opposition surveys of on-time train running. The Minister's answer was interesting:

(1) At present, statistics are based on trains arriving at Central and at those stations

where trains terminate their journeys. Nevertheless, the progressive installation of CityRail's computer signalling system will provide the capacity for more detailed recording of on-time running at individual stations.

(2) In view of (1) above, a comparison cannot be made at this stage.

The Minister for Transport has misled the House and the public by denying Opposition claims that on-time running of trains is about 20 to 25 per cent below CityRail estimates. Chalk is being compared with cheese.

Mr Griffiths: Do you have the statistics?

Mr AMERY: We do. We do our own computer surveys using statistics from various stations throughout the metropolitan area. The Government compares only on-time running statistics of trains arriving at and leaving Central. Bad luck for commuters travelling between Penrith and Parramatta! I hope the Minister read his own answers to my questions on notice for they confirm that he has been misleading the House about on-time running of trains. For the record, monitoring of trains at Mount Druitt shows an average of 65 per cent on-time running and never more than 70 per cent - 20 per cent below the shonky figures released from time to time by the Minister. Further, express trains leaving Mount Druitt stop at more stations, causing travel delays and overcrowding. Train commuters in the Mount Druitt electorate welcome the review of the timetables announced by the Minister - a review announced, I might add, only months after the timetables were first introduced. The Premier, in his speech, stated that he will introduce legislation on a number of initiatives, including, as the Leader of the Opposition noted, legislation on age discrimination. Despite that yearly broken promise, the Premier has made no statement of his position on the bill that I have put before the House on behalf of the Opposition. There was not even a statement from the Premier of his position on the bill that I have brought before this House on behalf of the Opposition. The second reading speech was given in December. I hope that the bill will be given a second reading, this week or next week. We await the Government's vote when the matter is put to the House. Despite calls by the New South Wales Pensioners Association and the New South Wales Council on the Ageing, the Premier keeps saying that he will
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introduce bills but does not produce a bill or even say that he will support the Opposition amendment on the matter.

Compulsory third party property insurance will also be the subject of a private member's bill. We await an indication of the Government's position on this issue. The Opposition proposes to introduce the bill during the present session. I hope to give notice of it within the next fortnight. Briefly, the bill will require all motorists in New South Wales to have a property damage insurance policy covering their vehicles. I believe this policy was adopted by the National Party at its annual conference in 1989, and I look forward to the support of National Party members. Particulars of the policy number and the name of the company will have to be declared on the back of a registration form before registration is effected. Damage caused to vehicles and property is of major concern, despite claims by the insurance industry to the contrary. A working party report to the Minister in Victoria shows how serious the problem is. It is estimated that there are at least 300,000 motor vehicles being driven around New South Wales without any property insurance. In Victoria uninsured vehicles cause 19,000 collisions of the 38,000 motor vehicle accidents. Using that yardstick, half of the road accidents are caused by uninsured motorists.

The Victorian estimate is that damage to property and other motor vehicles

amounts to \$32 million, of which only \$12 million is recovered through the court system. We can conclude that this is at least a \$20 million problem for the motorists of New South Wales. Currently this amount is paid for by about 90 per cent of motorists through their insurance premiums, loss of no claim bonuses and increased excesses, and of course through payment from their own pockets for vehicle repairs. I would be pleased to debate this matter more fully when the bill comes before the House. However, compulsory insurance will ensure that motorists share the collective financial responsibility of putting motor cars on our roads. I will welcome the support of all honourable members when the bill is introduced.

The issue of flooding was raised this afternoon by the honourable member for Blacktown. It is the ultimate political football. The State Government and the Minister have been vocal about the lack of Federal Government funding for flood prevention works in New South Wales. Some years ago I included the Federal Government in my criticisms of all levels of government for not providing reasonable funds to even scratch the surface of the problem. From all the talk, the State Government just wasted a golden opportunity to match Federal Government funds. I refer to the case mentioned by the honourable member for Blacktown. The Federal Government has given the immediate go-ahead for vital flood mitigation works on the Budgeree Road-Pendle Hill Creek flood mitigation project. It will proceed bilaterally with the Federal Government on the one hand and the Parramatta City Council and the Parramatta River Trust on the other. The Federal Government will provide 50 per cent of the cost of the total scheme with the council and the trust sharing the other 50 per cent. The total cost of the scheme is approximately \$1.1 million. It is expected that half the project will be completed this financial year. The major regret is the refusal of the Greiner Government to co-operate in the western Sydney drainage initiative, of which this project is the first to be undertaken.

Clearly, the Greiner Government does not share the desire of the Federal Government and local communities to make all homes in western Sydney free of flooding. Flood mitigation programs in nearly all parts of the State, particularly under the Federal water resources assistance program, are funded on a 2:2:1 basis - 40 per cent from the Federal Government, 40 per cent from the State Government and 20 per cent

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from the council. This is the first occasion when the Federal Government, frustrated by the lack of the will of the State Government to match a \$970,000 grant for western Sydney, has gone alone with local government and local government instrumentalities and funded the project. The unhealthy side of the story is the precedent that has been set. Local councils frustrated by the lack of will by this Government will keep going to the Federal Government to ask for more money, bypassing the State Government because of its very poor effort in funding these projects.

In addition to the electorates of Mount Druitt and Blacktown, Cabramatta also is in need of flood mitigation programs. The honourable member for Cabramatta has been fighting for a long time for those programs, for housing funds and for retrospective funding of housing projects for people who became frustrated at waiting for government assistance to build their homes. The Opposition will review these matters in our new policy document leading up to the next election. I welcome the strong representations by the honourable member for Cabramatta in supporting the residents in their housing projects. With other honourable members, I am pleased to respond to Her Majesty's Speech to this House. I again say that all the staff of this Chamber concerned in the proceedings can take credit for the professional way in which that official day was handled. I ask honourable members who make contributions to this debate to bear that in mind.

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [9.37]: I join other honourable members, the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads, and Opposition members, in replying to Her Majesty's Speech. It was a great personal honour for me to be among members in the Legislative Council Chamber when she delivered her Speech. I confess that I am an unashamed royalist, loyal to the Crown, loyal to the Commonwealth and loyal to the country. I can give pleasure to the Opposition by saying that I will dedicate my entire speech this evening to the matters referred to in recent weeks in the media concerning the monarchy, the future of the Commonwealth, our relationship with the monarchy, the flag, Australia's history and our future as a constitutional monarchy. I was thoroughly ashamed of the behaviour of the Prime Minister and the actions of his wife in failing to curtsy to Her Majesty. I think it was a shameful display and a deliberate display.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Merton): Order! The honourable member will be heard in silence. He does not need any accompaniment.

Mr COCHRAN: The actions of the Prime Minister and his wife were part of an orchestrated campaign taking place in Australia over a period of years. The left-wing of the Australian Labor Party, now joined by the Prime Minister, has an ambition to transform Australia from the existing constitutional monarchy into a republic, something to which I will object so long as breath is in my body. The history of how Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne is a fairy-tale story in some respects. This lady has taken over the most arduous duties on behalf of the Commonwealth. She has served with a great deal of integrity and credibility. Princess Elizabeth, as she was then, was born on 21st April, 1926, the eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York. At the time of her birth there was no reason to suspect that she would ever become the Queen of England and the Queen of Australia. That occurred by a strange turn of fate. Her destiny was settled when her uncle King Edward VIII abdicated and her father was proclaimed King George VI in December 1936. The Queen came suddenly and unexpectedly to the throne. At the time her father was quite ill and Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh were visiting Africa on behalf of the King. King George VI died suddenly and she immediately assumed the throne. At the time of the declaration of the

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Privy Council, she said:

I shall always work, as my Father did throughout his reign, to uphold the constitutional government and to advance the happiness and prosperity of my peoples spread as they are all the world over.

I wonder where we would get a person from the Labor Party to make that sort of commitment to Australia and give the same sort of dutiful service in the way that Her Majesty the Queen has done.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order.

Mr COCHRAN: Perhaps the Labor Party would nominate Bob Hawke or Paul Keating at the termination of his period in office - which we expect to be fairly soon - to replace the Queen: perhaps Joan Kirner will be the first replacement of the Monarch. Unlike the Queen's European counterparts, her rights as a sovereign have never been curbed by a written constitution, but there is no question of her exercising powers of her own. The Queen has to act in consultation at all times with the Ministers. The Monarch is invested with wide powers, which prevents others from assuming that power. The

Queen's constitutional rights are the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn. I believe that that is truly representative of what the people of Australia would want from the representation of the Queen on the throne. I refer now to the Commonwealth and its evolution.

Mr Iemma: There are an awful lot of republics.

Mr COCHRAN: It is interesting to hear an interjection from the Labor Party. I will quote at a later stage the words of one of the Labor Party's more prominent leaders who, in fact, was very supportive of the Crown, the Monarch and the flag. I have quoted this person quite often in the Chamber. It should be enough to shut the Labor Party up for a while. The Commonwealth, our relationship with Britain and the Queen are still evolving. The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent, sovereign states responsible for their own policies, consulting and co-operating in their common interests in the promotion of greater international understanding. The Queen, in her Christmas broadcast in New Zealand in 1953, said:

The Commonwealth bears no resemblance to the empires of the past. It is an entirely new conception built on the highest qualities of the spirit of man: friendship, loyalty, and the desire for freedom and peace.

What greater aspirations could a Commonwealth or a nation have? One wonders what the likes of Paul Keating would have us replace the Commonwealth with. Later I will refer to some of the republics which the Opposition may like to see us copy. The declaration of Commonwealth principles establishes the credibility of the Commonwealth, the Crown and the constitutional monarchy. I refer to the declaration of Commonwealth principles, as quoted in the *Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth*, which is available from the library, which states:

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

Members of the Commonwealth come from territories in the six continents and five oceans, include peoples of different races, languages and religions, and display every stage of

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economic development from poor developing nations to wealthy industrialised nations. They encompass a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions. Membership of the Commonwealth is compatible with the freedom of member governments to be non-aligned or to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance.

Within this diversity all members of the Commonwealth hold certain principles in common. It is by pursuing these principles that the Commonwealth can continue to influence international society for the benefit of mankind.

Honourable members should listen to those words. There is no greater ambition or aspiration for a nation or Commonwealth than to represent those views. The Secretary of the Commonwealth described the Commonwealth's central attribute as follows:

Surely it's the ability to bridge racial, ideological and economic divides and inequalities, assisted by its common language and common heritage.

Mr Keating has said in recent times that we should change our flag. I refer to an article that appeared in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* of Tuesday, 17 March. Mr Keating, in marking St Patrick's Day, said that it was time to change our flag. I was amused with

some of the analogies he drew with respect to the future of Australia. The article states:

Mr Keating said that the public attitude to the flag was already changing. I would be very surprised . . . if the Australian community wanted to keep the current flag. Mr Keating praised the Irish spirit of national independence, saying Australia had to emulate it. We have got to be in this country like the Irish are: proud without being silly, parochial without being unworldly, culturally secure without being culturally arrogant.

He has to be joking. He goes on to say:

That the one thing the Irish can teach us in their history and destiny is forever their own.

If that is the sort of republic Mr Keating would like to see us have, it will be a sad day for Australia. Those on the Opposition benches should look at the history of the Australian flag and recognise that it is symbolic of the foundation of our nation. When Australia became a Federation, on 1st January, 1901, the six colonies agreed to unite under the Commonwealth of Australia and for our people to become one nation. Those in the Labor Party would recognise the words "one nation". A competition was conducted throughout the world to design the Australian flag. Over 30,000 entries were submitted in the competition. The flag that we recognise today was not the design they first came up with. The federation star had only six pointers, representing the six States. It was not till 1908 that the Government decided that the seven pointed star was symbolic of the States and Territories and should replace the six pointed star. It is interesting to note that in February 1947 the then Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, issued a press statement encouraging the application of a direction given in 1941 by the then Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, that there should be no restriction on flying of the Commonwealth flag. Its greater use on public buildings, schools and by private citizens was encouraged by Ben Chifley, provided it was flown in a manner appropriate to the international emblem. That is another kick in the teeth to Ben Chifley, a person for whom I have a great deal of admiration. The Labor Party of today does not recognise its previous leaders and does not understand the great hope it had for its flag, its country and the Commonwealth.

Mr Keating's attitude to the flag seems to change from day to day. Wherever he is he seems to adjust his story to suit the occasion. I cannot help but think that if Paul Keating had his way, Australia would most probably have a green flag with a yellow banana and a laurel wreath of marijuana around it. That is the sort of representation one would expect from a person of his ignorance. What is a republic? Different definitions

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are to be found in different encyclopaedias and dictionaries. The definition I found in the Parliamentary Library is in Blackwell's *Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions*, which refers to some Greek terminology. Republicanism is defined as the term used to signify adherence to and advocacy of republic as a form of State and style of politics. It is also used in a more restricted sense in some countries, for example the United States of America and France, to which I will refer in a moment, relating to the names of political parties. The second meaning of republic refers to a style of politics, emphasising equality, political democracy, political participation and public spiritedness. The intended contrast is both to liberalism, with its private orientation, and to socialism, involving authoritarian State policies. Those descriptions of a republic are probably encouraging to some members on the Opposition benches.

When one starts to analyse the history of world republics, one finds that none on record has achieved the status of a republic without a civil war or some form of major revolution. One wonders if it is all worth while and what will be achieved by Australia's becoming a republic. Who is behind this thrust for Australia to become a republic? It

must be recognised that Paul Keating is the great divider. He has divided Australia at a time when unity is needed more than anything else. He has become known as the con man of the century. Not long ago it was claimed that he could best serve Australia's interests by becoming a used car salesman on Parramatta Road. In a fortnight the sales yards would be cleared out. He also invented the J-curve. He invented it in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987. The grim reaper still talks about the J-curve. He is also the person who told Australia that the present recession was the recession we had to have. He has spent the past few weeks attempting to divide Australia and create as much confusion as possible to establish the republic he so dearly wants.

Paul Keating is creating confusion with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. As I have mentioned before in this Chamber, in recent days the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has launched a systematic attack on the credibility of politicians. In the early days of this Parliament in 1988, during the investigations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation attacked the National Party. In recent weeks the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has deliberately attempted to discredit the police force with outrageous claims of racism. It has attempted to discredit the church with scurrilous allegations based on a two-year-old study from the United States of America. What part of the establishment is it likely to attack next? One would have to assume that the judiciary would be next in line. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I should like to compare the history of republics throughout the world. I refer first to the United States of America. Those who espouse the virtues of a republic often seek to compare Australia with America. I am using as a reference the *Political Handbook of the World: 1991* which is sub-titled "Governments and Intergovernmental Organisations." The history of America is one of constitutional crisis, corruption, and a period of general instability including revolutions and assassinations. America began as a group of 13 British colonies along the Atlantic Seaboard which were known as the "united States of America". Those colonies declared themselves independent on 4th July, 1776. They gained recognition as a sovereign nation at the end of the revolutionary war in 1783. That is the first example of a revolution occurring in the process of establishing a republic. The constitutional foundation of the Union was severely threatened only by the Civil War in the years 1861 to 1865.

I should refer also to the assassinations that have occurred in America: of President Kennedy in 1963, of Martin Luther King Jr, and of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. I draw attention also to the indictment of Richard Nixon and the tragedies surrounding Watergate. I could continue to relate the history of the United States of America and the various crises that have surrounded the American Constitution and the republic itself. I remind honourable members of the Spiro Agnew affair. He resigned as Vice-President after having falsified a federal income tax return. One American problem which concerns me greatly relates to its legal system. In Australia there is a separation of power, with the monarch as the pinnacle of our legal system. America does not have such a system. Its Federal judiciary is headed by a nine-member Supreme Court and includes Courts of Appeal, District Courts and various special courts created by Congress. Federal judges are appointed by the President.

The National Party is gravely concerned that Australia will lose its great legal system, which provides for the defence of individuals free from political interference, whereas in America legal and judicial appointments are made by the President and Congress. That should concern everyone. France is another republic which, for most of the century after its revolution in 1789, experienced periodic alternation between

monarchical and republican forms of government, the last monarch being Napoleon III, who was deposed in 1870. Overall, the republican tradition in France has given rise to five distinct regimes, every one of which ended in revolution: the French Revolution, the Second Republican Revolution, and so on. France had five revolutions during its transition from a monarchy to a republic. If that is the sort of thing Australians want, I am gravely concerned for our future. Presumably that is what our future president, Paul Keating, wants. Chile is another republic. After winning its independence from Spain in the years 1810 to 1818, Chile experienced a period of alternating centralised and Federal Constitutions.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Merton): Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order for the second time.

Mr COCHRAN: The political struggles between conservative and liberal elements culminated in the civil war of 1829 to 1830, with the conservatives emerging victorious. There was a win there for someone. Is this the type of revolution we want in Australia? Do we want the same sort of division in Australia as is being advocated by Paul Keating and those on the Opposition benches? I think not. If honourable members were to extend the argument to the history of Chile and the reports of the Pinochet regime, I do not believe a great deal would be gained by the creation of a republican Australia. I believe what Australians should do is to consider what we have in Australia which we value so highly; what it is that we have established over 200 years. We have established a bond with the British Commonwealth; we have established a bond between our servicemen and the Commonwealth; we have established investment opportunities for the British in Australia, and vice versa; we have established trade connections between Australia and Britain; and we have established a heritage of which we are extremely proud. For 200 years in Australia we have been attempting to establish some form of heritage, some form of culture. We cling to our traditions and our culture, so that we can continue to establish a culture to be proud of.

If honourable members compare the culture of the Chinese, the Greeks and the Italians, the ancient nations which over thousands of years of have background established their culture, Australia is such a young nation. We cling dearly to those treasures of heritage which it has taken 200 years to establish. The socialists and those on the Opposition benches seek to divide Australia. The Opposition seeks to divide Australia's legal system. I feel sorry for honourable members on the Opposition benches who have

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not had the opportunity to recognise the connection which exists between the Crown and the Australian defence forces. If honourable members have not had the opportunity to visit one of the grand military parades in Australia, I suggest they do so. I suggest they attend a graduation parade at Duntroon. I suggest they listen to the band and to the commands and traditions of the Royal Military College, those from Sandhurst, those of whom we are extremely proud, and ask themselves - as the servicemen march past with their colours, with the Queen's colours and the Australian flag - whether it is worth while forming a republic. Ask yourselves if we should throw all this away and form the sort of republic which I have just described, which exists in the United States of America, France or Chile. Is it all really worth while? What will Australia gain?

[Interruption]

We have a clown on the backbenches, who has been interjecting all night. I ask him if he has at any time served in the defence forces and experienced the exhilaration of marching on a parade ground to the beat of the drum and the sound of the national

anthem; following along behind the Queen's colours? It is a great experience. It would bring a lump to the throat of any serviceman. What is being talked about is an entire change of lifestyle for all Australians. There will be no Crown on the badges which people wear on their lapels. That will probably please the Opposition. We will see a change to the crest on our coat of arms. That will not be there any longer. It has been there ever since the establishment of the Parliament. That will go. Honourable members do not realise what they are talking about when they speak of establishing a republic and breaking the ties with the constitutional monarchy.

I would ask members on the Opposition benches to speak to any servicemen, or to any police officers and ask their views about the establishment of a republic. Ask them for their views as to their allegiance to the Crown. Ask the servicemen who line the streets on Anzac Day, and who have served in theatres of war, exactly what they think of the idea of casting our flag aside and forming a republic. I believe that the Labor Party has made a tragic error of judgment, as has Paul Keating, in believing that the Australian people will be duped by his attempts to form a republic and become the first president of that republic. The people of Australia will soundly reject Paul Keating and his policies. John Hewson is correctly pointing to our allegiance to the Crown as something we should look forward to for generations to come. I believe an education process for our younger people, to explain to them the importance of the allegiance to the Crown and the Commonwealth, will do a great deal to unite our nation. Australia at the moment is being divided by those who advocate republicanism. I call on both sides of the House to reconsider the advocacy of a republic. I believe that unless the people of Australia demand that a republic be established that notion should be cast aside without further consideration. The people of Australia will demonstrate at the next Federal election not only that they do not want a republic, but that they do not want Paul Keating.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Mills.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.
